Activities that work over the phone

**Counting Fruits**
Teach your children to count to 10 when they are feeling upset. First the child chooses a topic (i.e. fruit). Next, they begin counting: “1 apple 2 banana 3 orange 4 plum 5 watermelon 6 peach 7 grapefruit 8 kiwi 9 cantaloupe 10 strawberry”. This helps them move to their “thinking mode” and makes it easier to calm themselves.

**Guided meditations**
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uKIFQmGNTn0XV9qtTiN2wqH2bDZAsZUnXbdyzqYjU64/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uKIFQmGNTn0XV9qtTiN2wqH2bDZAsZUnXbdyzqYjU64/edit?usp=sharing)

**Telephone scavenger hunt**
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1toMFFfEfsK8hhcYkBSA-WZt6Y0M-mEpwsdf7p3TAJm4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1toMFFfEfsK8hhcYkBSA-WZt6Y0M-mEpwsdf7p3TAJm4/edit?usp=sharing)

**Five senses check in**
Name 5 things that you can see
Name 4 things that you can hear
Name 3 things that you can feel
Name 2 things that you can smell
Name 1 thing that you can taste

**Deep breathing prompts**
Pretend you are inhaling the fresh cookie smell, then exhale deeply to blow the hot steam off of the cookies
Pretend you are a dragon. Light a fire with your breath!

**Drawing challenge**
Have your client draw a picture and describe what they are drawing. Then try to copy that drawing without looking. Show them your creation when you are done! They are sure to laugh.
**Read my fortune**
Read an online fortune or horoscope. Ask the client what they think about their fortune. Clients read their birthday zodiac description from “astrology.com” and decide if they feel like this description is accurate and/or inaccurate, and if so, how. Clinician observes how clients respond to an outsider’s [largely uninformed] perception of themselves—if they are likely to readily adopt an outsider’s view, resist (“Nobody knows who the real me is”), have a strong sense of self, not really affected, temporary Rosenthal effect, etc.

**Rules game**
Have the children make up their own rules. If you do something or say something, you have to do the silly consequence. (If you say the word “friend” quack like a duck)

**Blanket fort**
For a video chat, cover your head and laptop with a blanket to simulate the feeling of a blanket fort

**Fact or Fiction “Two truths and a lie”**
In this game each person takes turns telling two things that are true about themselves and one thing that is not, the other players must then guess what is fact and what is fiction. Younger kids may not quite ‘get’ this conversation game, but often their additions to the conversation are hilarious anyhow.

**Questions Only**
Everything anyone says must be stated in the form of a question. This conversation game is incredibly simple, has no real winner or concrete ending, it will keep you giggling and like it or not it may just crop back up hours after you thought it was finished

**20 Questions**
One player thinks of an object, letting the others know only whether it is animal, vegetable, or mineral. Then the other players ask questions that can be answered only with yes or no. For instance, if the object is a car (mostly mineral), the players will ask, “Is it bigger than a laptop computer?” or “Can it move?” The object: Guess the answer in fewer than 20 questions.

**Alphabet Chain**
Choose a category and take turns naming an item that fits the category following the sequence of letters of the alphabet. So the first person chooses a word starting with a, the second person a word beginning with b, the third person with c, etc. The category can be anything at all – animals, countries, names, superpowers, etc
What’s Better? X
This fast paced game simply asks kids about their preferences between two things – • “What’s better – banana or apple?” • “Banana” • “What’s better – banana or cheese?” • “Cheese” • “What’s better – cheese or chocolate?” • “Chocolate” • “What’s better – chocolate or ice cream?” Of course, you don’t have to choose food – books, prizes, games, sports – anything is fair game. Debates about different choices that children make provide lots of insight into their individual personalities and preferences

Music based

My songs X
Clinician asks each client to choose 5 songs that make them feel a strong emotion. Clinician screens songs for explicit content and then creates a playlist. The clinician can also share their own favorite songs. Then clients listen to the songs and jot down a few emotion words or thoughts that they associate with each song in the playlist. Discuss how emotions are expressed through rhythm, lyrics, etc.

Lyrics X
Analyze song lyrics for their underlying meanings. Change the lyrics together to better suit a topic, or to apply to the client better.

Left-brain right brain connection/EMDR X
Clients draw an infinity symbol to the rhythm of the music. The clients then do “butterfly tapping” (slow, rhymically, right knee, left knee) Clinician monitors for ability to stay grounded during the activity.

Compassion/Tolerance/ hope for change X
Clients listen to the songs “where is the love by black eyed peas and “we shall overcome” by Nahko and discuss the meaning of the lyrics.

Shake It Off X
What you need: shakers that make noise, upbeat and fun music As you play the upbeat and fun music, let the children use their new shakers to shake to the beat. Continue the activity as long as everyone is still having fun! “Our big idea this month is forgiveness, which means that we will not stay angry when someone does something wrong. We can shake off the anger. Shake your whole body to show how you
would shake it off. Now, let’s play some music and use our new shakers to the beat. Let’s practice shaking it off!”

“It feels good and puts a smile on my face to move and have fun. Whenever you are angry, focus on doing something fun for a while. When you move and shake, it’s hard to stay angry. Let’s say our bottom line and do our hand motions together: I will not stay angry.”

**Discussion based**

“Enneagram”
[https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/type-descriptions/](https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/type-descriptions/)
(self-discovery) Clinician shares the enneagram and its significance. The clients decide where they fall on the gram and which strengths weaknesses, fears and qualities they have.

**Animal adaptations**
Maladaptive + adaptive coping skills.
Clients discuss how animals adapt to different situations and how humans do too, such as camouflage. We discuss ways that adaptation can have good intentions, but be unhealthy too.

**Setting goals**
Clients set goals for today, next week, next year, and 5 years ahead. They look at what can get in the way of these goals, what they need to achieve them, and how they can start—today!
Clinician assesses Ct.’s current stage of change and if they create goals that are related to their presenting problems.

**Anger iceberg**
[https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-iRfTWtYlca0/WCtUICATcyI/AAAAAAAAA9s/d8fKiGeCS_AqoVakSLo6rGpqTns8-ACEw/s1600/Anger-Iceberg-1.png](https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-iRfTWtYlca0/WCtUICATcyI/AAAAAAAAA9s/d8fKiGeCS_AqoVakSLo6rGpqTns8-ACEw/s1600/Anger-Iceberg-1.png)
Discussing the “anger iceberg”. What emotions, thoughts, and feelings might underlie anger; also discuss how anger is often a more acceptable or comfortable emotional expression.

**Non-verbal communication:**
Signs, symbols, other forms of speech. (Braille, body language, facial expressions) How would you get your way around Tokyo if you don’t speak Japanese? Clients brainstorm an imaginary day where they do whatever they want in Japan, but have to figure out how to communicate/navigate a foreign place.

“Cheat Codes”: Identifying treatment goal and coping skills/resources
Clinician introduces the metaphor of video games; “cheat codes” are like shortcuts. Coping skills and using resources can help us defeat our obstacles. Clients identify what their “boss battle” is: their most challenging treatment goal. Then they create a “code” of a combo of resources/ skills (4+) that can defeat the boss battle.

One bad apple
Clinician uses the proverb “Don’t let one bad apple ruin the barrel.” to help discuss the concept of negative peer influence with clients. The clinician has a “bully” puppet and the clients must act out a scene with their own puppets of how they would/could respond pro-actively to negative peer influence.

What would you do questions
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dM-JZUJsyQgWprPtB0mZh0EEMt1Ykf7JBo7GeqSFZY/edit?usp=sharing

Serious versus silly:
Clients play the “serious vs. silly game” which gauges when it is or isn’t appropriate to behave silly.  

Self esteem check in
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GbeEd_qwyMmNBvLltUNrdW-jJnhdL6nbewdp9LOP9Cw/edit?usp=sharing

Fill in the blanks questions
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W_avpXJsZygca-Sv8I8VMVpGSi_jUrszkBxxXzCuk/edit?usp=sharing

The miracle question
Clients have a discussion about what would have to change in their lives for them to be happy. What would you wish for?

Integrity
Focus Area: Integrity, applications to safety Clients discuss famous figures in history who had or did not have integrity. We discuss what integrity means, and how it keeps us safe.
Psychoeducation

Planting seeds / moderation
Clinician presents the metaphor of how a flower grows, compared to how a human changes over time, is a product of their environment and what they consume, etc. Too much water or too much sun can be bad, yet a flower needs these resources in moderation.

Spoon theory
Clients explore the “spoon theory” proposed by Miseradino (2003) and discuss the metaphor. Clients color in how many spoons they feel like they have left today, and identify what efforts/activities made them “lose” spoons. Clinician validates client’s experiences that different people will need more or less willpower for certain tasks, and that this is normal.

Thinking errors:
Clinician reviews these CBT principles with the clients, and challenges them to identify times that they have operated under these systems in the past: Ignoring the good, blowing things up, fortune telling, mind reading, negative labelling, setting the bar too high, self-blaming, feelings as facts, should statements

Sleep Hygiene:
Clients learn about how the blue light from digital devices can alter the circadian rhythm and result in trouble falling asleep. Clinician suggests clients write down the apps Twilight and Flux to use on their devices to help filter blue light. Discuss the importance of sleeping at a regular time, and not too late. Clients look at a checklist of new ideas to improve their sleep hygiene, and choose some options to try tonight.

Physical activities

Feelings Yoga
Children choose an emotion, and we talk about how we express it with our bodies. We then make up yoga pose to convey it. We hold the yoga pose and focus on our breathing. We talk about our 5 senses and how we can use them to stay grounded.

Art based

Magic geodes.
create a glitter clay geode and process symbolic meaning throughout. Clients discuss a geode and how it looks different inside from outside. Try to draw connections between self identity inner feelings how we look, if we like ourselves, etc. First impressions etc.

**Clay Beads**
Clients work with clay to create a bead that they will later put onto a necklace and put essential oil on. Smelling the necklace is a coping skill to help keep them grounded. While sculpting the clinician discusses how mindfulness relates to our favorite smells. Clients are asked to name their favorite smell and what memories go along with it, to be able to recall this happy place. Clients complete their sensory necklace now that it is dry and add bells and different texture string/beads for auditory/touch stimulation as they prefer. Continue to discuss basic sensory grounding principles while completing craft.

**My guardian angel/bodyguard/watch-dog/ knight in shining armor**
Clinician shares famous art images of guardians, and discusses the feeling of being protected/safe. Clients paint an artistic rendering of what gives them hope. They are encouraged to visualize it into a human, animal, or anthropomorphized being. They work with clinician through group discussion to each create this sort of character that helps them stay strong when they are upset and express it through a visual rendering.

**Family crest:**
Clients decorate a crest to pictorially represent the defining aspects of their family---values, culture, how they get along, favorite pastimes together, etc.

**Graffiti walls (personal expression)**
Clinician tapes up large amount of poster paper and allows the clients to draw “on” the wall. Clinician observes what clients write. Clinician discusses social reasons why people are motivated to write graffiti. Discussed positive messages that we can share without property destruction. Clients create a flag together with a positive statement for display.

**Paper bag puppets**
Clients create their own puppet that represents themselves, and then act out a scene at the lunch table, pretending to be themselves at lunch. Clinician encourages authenticity of performance, and gauges to see how clients perceive themselves as behaving, versus how they behave in reality.

**Color scales: visual representation of emotions**
Clients use different color paint chips from a hardware store (with varying shades of
darkness/lightness) to symbolize intensity of emotions. Clients describe a life experience for
each level of intensity. Ex: Light red is an incident that made them slightly mad, medium red is
something that made them quite mad, and dark red is something that made them furious.

**Power Bracelets (sense of self, identifying goals)**
Clients discuss different character traits they identify their strengths and then identify a trait
they would like to gain. They make a bracelet that reminds them of their strength or goal, using
their beads or colors to represent this.

**My room, my dream house: (Art therapy)**
Clients are prompted to draw themselves in their rooms at home. Clinician processes with them
why they included certain elements (or didn’t), discuss how they drew themselves, etc. Then
the clients are prompted to draw themselves sitting in their dream house. The clinician also
asks the clients to add in depictions of their family in this drawing.

**Slime**
Following directions/sensory skills for mindfulness
clients make slime and discuss how engaging the 5 senses calms the nervous system. Clinician
observes to see clients ability to follow linear directions and how they respond to any needed
redirection.

**Fears (clay sculpture “squish the monster”)**
Clients played with clay to make shapes of different topics and then made a monster. We talked
about each others monsters and what frightens us. Then we squished the monster.

**Heartfelt feelings:**
Clients fill in a drawing of a heart to visually express what emotions they are currently
experiencing, and to what extent.

**“The animal in you”**
Clients identify an animal that they relate to and create a mask to represent it. The clients act
out different emotions while participating in guided imagery. How does your animal respond to
stimuli?

**Make your own Pokemon**
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qBhS-N8EAVXYVYhEhVeqHlEnNP_IGHHPG_SU5ylpzUA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qBhS-N8EAVXYVYhEhVeqHlEnNP_IGHHPG_SU5ylpzUA/edit?usp=sharing)
Cootie Catcher
Make a cootie catcher that has coping skills under each tab
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CG1j9P8WmRbV3fU4Tk0yv0mjFI_2J-QVKiowOhl8ps/edit?usp=sharing

You’re a star
Focus on identifying strengths. Clients write a positive character trait for each letter of their name. They cut it out, decorate, and hang up for visual affirmation.

99 coping skills poster
Clients create a banner of as many coping skills as they can. We continue to discuss whether the coping skills are actually avoidance (sleeping, watching TV). Clients that were actively participating are rewarded by getting to glue decorations onto the flag.

My classroom: (Art therapy/guided imagery)
Clinician asks Ct.s to each draw their classrooms at their schools. Clinician processes the drawings with clients. Clinician then leads clients in guided imagery. The clients must imagine they are back at their schools, and they are in math class, then english class, etc. They are guided to interact with their best friend, their least favorite teacher, etc. Clinician makes note of any exclamations that clients interject with. Clinician asks each client what stood out to them in each mental scene.

Weighted stuffed animals
Clients create their own weighted stuffed animals with the assistance of clinician. Discussed how the weight of these toys can be comforting and mimic comforting touch of a safe person/friend.

Affirmation Eggs
Clients fill up easter eggs with positive statements and affirmations, and hide them around the building for others to find. Discussed random acts of kindness, kindness without respecting something in return, etc.

Erase the Mad Face
(Art/Creativity) What you need: clear gallon zipper bags, washable paint in various colors, clear packing tape Before the activity: Pour about a ½ cup of paint into the gallon zipper bags. Make sure all the air is out of the bag before sealing it closed. Then, use clear packing tape to tape over the zipper closure as added security.
What you do: Give each child a bag with paint in it. Have them lay the bag flat on the table and smooth out all the paint. This will be like finger painting, but without the mess. They should be able to draw designs in the paint and see what they draw through the bag. Let them explore by drawing things of their choice for a few minutes. Then, instruct them to draw a mad frowny face. You may need to assist younger children and draw the face for them. Then, tell them that they can ‘erase’ it and make it go away and draw a smiley face instead. This symbolizes that they can choose to forgive and love instead of staying mad and angry. Let them continue making faces as long as they are interested. What you say: “Who is in charge of your attitude and your feelings? You are! When someone does something that makes you mad, it doesn’t feel good, does it? Let’s draw what our face would look like if we were mad or angry. Now, when we choose to forgive and love that person anyway, what can that make us feel like? It can make us a little more joyful or a little happier. Let’s erase the mad face and draw a happy face now.”

**Writing based**

“Take one”
Focus Area: Positivity
Clients fill out their own “take one” fliers that have little tabs on the bottom. EX: “Take some hope”. Ct.s write a different affirmation on each tear-off tab. Clients then hang up their posters somewhere in the treatment building to feel empowered by making a positive impact in their community [https://www.weareteachers.com/take-one-posters/](https://www.weareteachers.com/take-one-posters/)

Writing an apology
Clients write an apology letter to a family member or a peer for something that they did in the past

Turning over a new leaf: (Goal identification)
Clinician checks in with clients to see what they identify as their primary presenting problem, or at least, what adults in their lives tell them to change. Clients can color in the leaf coloring page, if they wish, to create a visual representation. Group discussion to share goals.

Letter to my future self
Clients write a letter to their future self, giving them advice, and writing about what is currently on their minds this week.

Open-ended writing prompts
My autobiography  
Focus area: creating a personal narrative  
Clients complete a paper activity-- the "back cover" of their autobiography. Clients draw a self portrait, write a summary about themselves, and title and price their book. Clinician uses art therapy principles to observe how clients identify, perceive themselves/present themselves to others, and how they value themselves/their story. Clinician verbally processes activity with each client.

Video-based  
Focus area: “It was just a joke” (empathy)  
Clients watch a video about homeless individuals reading out loud hateful comments made about the homeless that were posted on social media. Clinician processes with the clients how it feels to see other people in pain over statements that may have been “jokes.” We discuss the impact of our words, how a joke can be taken seriously, and how this applies to their own treatment/communication with others.

Meet Julia (Autism psychoeducation)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKCdV20zLMs  
Today we discussed the word “diagnosis” and one diagnosis in detail, autism spectrum disorder. We watched a sesame street clip that demonstrates some symptoms on the spectrum, and discussed what we saw.

The Big Idea  
STEP ONE: Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SkiSBvPsho&list=PLVXqh1woV2T0aSNcA0VdpGVMLC_ajt87&index=33&t=0s  
STEP TWO: Talk about the Big Idea  
• How do you think Ryan felt when his machine broke?  
• What could he have done to his friend? Why do you think he made the choice that he did?  
• What would you have done if you were Ryan? Why?

STEP ONE: Watch the video:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMr0uU5y8xA&list=PLVXqh1woV2T0aSNcA0-VdpGVMLC_ajt87&index=32&t=0s  
STEP TWO: Talk about the Big Idea  
• How do you think Gemma felt when
her sister picked her friends over her? • Why did Gemma yell at her mom? How do you think that made her mom feel? • What happened when she chose to forgive her?

STEP THREE: Write about the Big Idea • Draw a picture of what it feels like to be angry. Draw a picture of what it feels like to forgive.

STEP FOUR: Activate the Big Idea in Your Life

SEL COMPETENCIES: EMPATHY

SUPPLIES NEEDED: A copy of Potato Pants by Laurie Keller (available on YouTube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycMpvobD5sM), paper hearts, writing utensils

ACTIVITY: Read Potato Pants by Laurie Keller and discuss forgiveness seen in the story. Let the children decorate a heart with the forgiveness definition.

STEP ONE: Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SkiSBvPsho&list=PLVXqh1woV2T0aSNcA0VdpGVMLC_ajt87&index=33&t=0s

STEP TWO: Talk about the Big Idea • How do you think Ryan felt when his machine broke? • What could he have done to his friend? Why do you think he made the choice that he did? • What would you have done if you were Ryan? Why?

STEP THREE: Write about the Big Idea • Draw a picture of what you thought of when you watched the video.

STEP FOUR: Activate the Big Idea in Your Life

SEL COMPETENCIES: IMPULSE CONTROL, STRESS MANAGEMENT

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Varies. See below.

ACTIVITY: With the following activities, discuss how forgiveness is related to remaining calm and avoiding anger.

1. Provide samples of lavender to smell.
2. Play calming music during the morning.
3. Throughout the day, take breathing breaks. Teach them to do deep breathing. Inhale through your nose for the count of 5. Hold that breath for the count of 5. Exhale through your mouth for the count of 5. Repeat this cycle 2-3 times.

WRAP UP: “There are many ways to reduce anger, which helps us not be as quick to want revenge. Think about which technique works best for you and try it out when you get frustrated this month.”

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**Story-time based**

**Psychoeducation: Enabling**

Many clients feel that being re-directed is “mean”. Clinician explains how enabling is harmful, with the story of The Emporer’s New Clothes, a simplified medical model of a sick child that keeps eating candy, etc. Clinician then provides scenarios and asks if the clients feel the adult in the scenario is enabling or not

“Dear teacher”
Clients read the fictional letter signed by “That kid” which expresses the hope that teacher will not give up on her/him, because underneath her/his problematic behaviors s/he is struggling.

**Little Monkey Calms Down**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vCf4k3NZuE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vCf4k3NZuE)

What you say before reading:
“Little Monkey is having a bad day. He is angry. He needs to learn ways to calm down. Let’s read to find out what he learns about not staying angry.”

What you say after reading:
“Little Monkey learned how to calm down and not stay angry or mad, even when he was having a bad day. What are some ways that he calmed down? You can use these same things to help you calm down when you are angry.

**Mouse Says Sorry**

(Literacy) What you need: The book Mouse Says Sorry by Michael Dahl

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERE9Wk2jjQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERE9Wk2jjQ)

What you do: Sit with the children and read Mouse Says Sorry. What you say before reading:
“This is a story about a little mouse who continues to make mistakes. Let’s read to find out what he learns about saying sorry.”

What you say after reading: “In our story, Mouse is rushing to get home and makes many messes and mistakes. He learns to say that he is sorry to his friends. A good friend forgives others. When you decide to not be angry with your friends, you are forgiving them. Let’s say our bottom line and do our hand motions together: I will not stay angry.”

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**Group activities**

**Anonymous jar**
Focus area: Relating to others/empathy. Clients write things that happened to them on slips of paper and put them into the anonymous sharing jar. Clinician reads the submissions and then we discuss them as a group--how we relate or don't relate, or any advice that they may have for the person.

**Privilege walk**
Clients completed the “privilege walk” where they step back and forth for privileges and disadvantages in their lives we discussed where we ended up standing, how it felt to be there and why, and how we can be thankful for what we have.
**Spectogram**
Focus Area: clients move around the room as a visual representation of how much they agree or disagree with a statement. Example statement: “I have somebody that I can trust”

**Boomwhackers**
Clients use Plastic “boomwhacker” instruments to keep the beat to songs they children are observed if they can be safe/ acknowledge boundaries contain their excitement, get along with peers etc.
Self control, team building left brain - right brain, connection.

**Emoji bingo (identifying emotions)**
Clients play emoji bingo. If they win they have to read off each face and share a time that they felt the same way. Sometimes we interpret the faces differently; we also discuss multiple ways that the same emotion can be expressed.

**Friendship Scavenger hunt**
Target content: Identity formation, emotion identification, relating to others.
In this group clients completed an activity titled "In the same boat?" where they complete the following questions:
My parents make me feel __ ; My siblings make me feel ___; This is how I feel about how I look ___; When I don’t get enough sleep I feel __;
Clients then look for other peers who wrote similar answers to each of the questions.

**Coping Skills ASMR psycho education**
we watch “satisfying video compilation” on youtube and discuss ASMR. clients are expected to handle excitement appropriately during the videos.

**Chat pack: Team building**
Group discussion of the questions in Kid’s Chat Pack. Clinician explores clients’ level of ability to not interrupt each other, and to respect each others’ opinions.

**Decorating hollow ornaments**
Focus Area: Positivity
Clients decorate an ornament with positive statements. They write a positive statement for each of their peers. Coping skills, mantras, things that give them joy, etc.

**Cranium: Whoonu game**
Focus area: Team building, identity formation
Clients play the "Whoonu" game, which centers around identifying others and self's interests. Children draw a hand of 5 cards and take turns being "it". All children put in 1 card from their hand. The client that is "it" chooses from the pile what their favorite is. A point is awarded. Client that Clinician observes how clients interact/relate with others, and how they resolve conflict (such as feeling misunderstood, frustration with not "winning")

Resource Websites

https://www.weareteachers.com/
https://www.teacherspayteachers.com
https://www.pbisworld.com/
https://www.therapistaid.com/