



In this monthly group therapy update (March 2026), we apply the cognitive behavior therapy model of how thoughts, feelings, behaviors impact each other and systems we interact with, and use the REST -Relax Evaluate Set Intention Take Action- to view some maps, territories, and journeys.

When a group member brought up the suicide of an acquaintance, I remembered the first time I came to know about suicide. This was in Poona (now Pune), Maharashtra, Western India, in the 1970s. The wife of one of my father's colleagues took her own life- everyone knew, but they did not want to discuss it. One of my family members has suicided, suffering from chronic pain, from which he saw no way out. Many decades later, we still do not mention him. In medical school, every year, a colleague or student took their life.

The example of Solomon Thomas's journey after his sister Ella took her own life and the ripples that had in his individual life, family, football community, and wider world is a case in point. We then dissect a scenario using the IS PATH WARM framework for suicide awareness. This will show how, after the initial grounding and ABCDE sheets, STOPP tools of CBT and third-generation adaptations such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy can be developed further to chart our journeys.

**Existential Framework:** Unemployment and Burnout are things we discussed. To develop a perspective, here are some rates of unemployment in Canada-2025.

### **Overview of Youth Unemployment in Canada (2025)**

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In 2025, Canada's youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24) averaged around 13.8%, peaking at 14.7% in September—the highest since 2010 outside pandemic years—before easing to 13.3% by December. This marked a sharp rise from 10.8% in 2023, driven by weaker entry-level job markets, student summer challenges, and population growth among young temporary residents.

### Key Statistics by Age Group (Q3 2025)

Youth unemployment disproportionately affected younger groups, with rates roughly double those of core-aged adults (25-54 years at 5.8%).

Age Group	Unemployment Rate (Q3 2025)	Change Since Q3 2022
15-19 years	20.8%	+8.2 pts
20-24 years	11.3%	+3.2 pts
25-29 years	8.2%	+2.4 pts
30-34 years	6.1%	+1.7 pts
Core adults (25-54)	5.8%	+1.0 pt

Teen (15-19) rates nearly doubled from 2019 levels, hitting 20.8% amid the worst student summer job market since 2009.

### Demographic and Regional Breakdowns

- May 2025 (ages 15-24): Black youth at 22.3%, racialized at 18.0%, Indigenous at 18.2%; youth with disabilities at 18.8% (vs. 11.9% without). (Statistics Canada, 2025)

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- NEET Rate: ~914,000 youth (15-29) or 11.5% not in employment, education, or training—up 201,800 since 2023.
- Provincial (Dec 2025, youth rates): Ontario ~16%, Newfoundland & Labrador 16.3%, Alberta ~15%, BC ~14% (gaps of 5.5-8.2 pts over overall rates).

## **GROUP SUPPORT-PRINCIPLES**

Applying CBT in group therapy, we try to develop a safe space and a social microcosm of the real world, create stable, secure attachment relationships, and practice support in the here and now. Grounding exercises like breath, body awareness, and Metta Loving Kindness meditation are some ways to develop and deepen these practices.

The in-person group meeting summarized some insights about expressing emotions amongst men, and we looked at compulsive patterns through a compassionate lens, trying to increase our understanding of the cultural nuances.

Four pivots to develop Group Awareness are

**MINDFULNESS:** Being aware of the present moment without judging it. Try taking a few slow deep breaths and noticing any sensations in your body right now.

**LIVING KINDNESS:** Wishing yourself and others safety, happiness, comfort, and freedom from pain. Practice by silently saying to yourself, "May I be safe and well," and, if you feel comfortable, extending this wish to others in the group.

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**FOCUSED ATTENTION:** Choose one area to work on, such as self-care, self-esteem, or relationships. Set a small goal for the week related to your chosen area, like drinking more water or reaching out to a friend.

**OPEN AWARENESS:** Try to notice more of what is happening around and within you. Take a moment to glance around the room and notice three things you can see, hear, or feel.

### Group Therapy Example

Theme	Example in group session	Comment
Mindfulness	Mindful eating versus Mindless eating Eating when emotions tell us to eat (sad, anxious, tired) versus when body tells us to eat (stomach growling, low energy)	Though food is a way to connect, the soup and Hakka Rice Noodles, wafers were a bit too much.  Do Different: We will try to limit overeating and be accountable

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Living Kindness	May the persons in the group be safe, happy and at ease, while being open about their struggles which they can discuss in a confidential manner and get professional feedback	When group members opened up about their issues relating to education, employment and future vision, we did some processing into the Cultural Context and pressures -especially from Immigrant parents of South Asian and Chinese backgrounds
Focused Attention	Self care of one's sexual self was discussed.  The point for journaling on the desire, arousal, action, orgasm cycle was suggested to know better the patterns	When group member was asked whether they have had relationships and they answered no, the discrepancy was pointed out.  A fantasy can lead to a relationship. How this will impact an actual partner dyad with a real person in the future was discussed

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Open awareness	<p>In the Here and Now- to defuse from obsessive thinking we went into three sights, two sounds, one taste and linked it with something positive and healing</p> <p>Eg- Sights of rounded shapes were identified, but after closing eyes were asked how many rectangular objects are in front of us.</p>	<p>This helps increase our awareness of our Biases, Beliefs, Self Take and also teaches us to Detach, Defuse and Develop Equanimity- not getting hooked to Negative Self Talk</p>
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BACKGROUND:

### **The Ripple Effect of Loss: Lessons from Solomon Thomas's Journey**

NFL defensive lineman Solomon Thomas's story powerfully illustrates how suicide creates devastating waves that extend far beyond the individual loss. When Thomas's sister Ella took her own life in 2018, the impact reverberated through every layer of his world—transforming not only his personal identity but also reshaping his family's foundation and his relationship with the broader community.

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On an individual level, Thomas experienced what many survivors describe: a complex mix of grief, guilt, and searching questions that no amount of professional success could answer.

His family found themselves navigating an entirely altered landscape, where shared memories became both sources of comfort and painful reminders, and where the simple act of gathering for holidays took on new weight and meaning.

Within the NFL community and beyond, Thomas's openness about mental health challenges sparked crucial conversations about vulnerability, strength, and the importance of seeking help.

His advocacy work has created ripples of awareness that reach young athletes, families, and communities who might otherwise suffer in silence. This tragedy-to-purpose transformation demonstrates how one person's willingness to share their pain can become a lifeline for others, turning personal devastation into a force for prevention and healing.

Thomas's journey reminds us that while suicide leaves permanent scars on those left behind, survivors can choose to honor their loved ones by building bridges of understanding and hope for others walking similar paths.

#### IS PATH WARM-FRAMEWORK FOR SUICIDE AWARENESS

Scenario: A group member mentioned that a community contact committed suicide around ten days ago. Is the path warm

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Warning Sign</b>	<b>Manifestation in This Scenario</b>
I	Ideation	With a friend's recent suicide (2 weeks ago), combined with multiple stressors, this individual may be experiencing suicidal thoughts or preoccupation with death.

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S	Substance Abuse	Porn addiction as a compulsive behavior used to cope with emotional pain, stress, and loneliness. This can function similarly to substance abuse in providing temporary escape.
P	Purposelessness	Unemployment creates lack of daily structure and purpose. Immigrant status may compound feelings of not belonging or having a meaningful role in society.
A	Anxiety	Anxiety about finding employment, caring for a family member with neurological disease, financial stress, and relationship difficulties (hesitation to relate to female partners).
T	Trapped	Feeling trapped by immigrant circumstances, unemployment, family caregiving responsibilities, and the cycle of porn addiction. Limited options may feel overwhelming.
H	Hopelessness	Friend's recent suicide may create despair about things ever improving. Multiple ongoing challenges (job, family health, addiction) can make future seem bleak.
W	Withdrawal	Social isolation due to shame about porn addiction, grief over friend's death, or depression. May withdraw from support systems when most needed.
A	Anger	Anger at circumstances, self (for addiction), the healthcare system (family member's disease), or the friend who died by suicide. May be internalized or expressed indirectly.

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R	Recklessness	Could manifest in risky sexual behaviors online, neglecting self-care, or other impulsive actions as a way to numb emotional pain.
M	Mood Changes	Significant mood swings due to grief, stress, addiction cycles, and hormonal/neurochemical effects of compulsive porn use and depression.

## AFTER THOUGHTS

While none of the members said they had active suicidal thoughts, they all agreed that negativity was a way to cut oneself with a thousand paper cuts- self-sabotage. They will bring a list of ways they talk to themselves, cutting each other with small paper-cuts.

You can download worksheets here.

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