



Individual Resiliency Training (IRT)

Session Cheat Sheet

IRT Session FAQs

How long do IRT sessions take? IRT sessions typically take 45–60 minutes to complete, depending on participant needs.

How often do IRT sessions take place? These sessions occur on a weekly or biweekly basis. The IRT standard modules typically take 4 to 6 months to complete.

Where do sessions take place? Sessions can occur in the office, in the participant's home, or elsewhere in the community.

How do IRT sessions work with family sessions? Modules 1, 3, and 4 coordinate with the Family Education Program. For participants engaged in family sessions, these modules provide an opportunity to go deeper and reflect on the discussion during the family sessions.

Which resources do I use during sessions? IRT is a modular intervention that relies on a manual to guide the psychotherapist and the participant through the process. Each module contains Clinical Guidelines and Participant Handouts. *Clinical guidelines* provide instructions and tips for administering the participant handouts. They include both general guidelines (for example, an overview of session structure, general teaching strategies, and instructions) as well as specific guidelines (such as materials needed, suggested agenda and pace, teaching strategies, and tips for addressing common problems and evaluating progress). *Participant handouts* are divided into topics with accompanying clinical guidelines.

What are the differences between modules, topics, and sessions? The IRT manual includes 14 modules, seven standard modules and seven individualized modules. Some participants may not use any of the individualized modules, while others may use all, depending on their needs. Modules cover multiple topics that group related basic information and skills. They typically take more than one session to complete. The clinical guidelines provide suggestions for how to pace the sessions, which you can modify to meet individual needs.

For example, the handout for Module 3, Education about Psychosis, includes an introduction and covers four topics (see pages 129–173 in the IRT manual):

- **Introduction**
- **Topic 1.** What Is Psychosis? (page 130)
- **Topic 2.** Medications for Psychosis (page 145)
- **Topic 3.** Coping with Stress (page 159)
- **Topic 4.** Strategies to Build Resilience (page 173)

IRT Sessions

The tables below list module numbers and topics, as well as the suggested number of sessions; for example, complete Module 1 over the course of sessions 1 and 2.

Module Number	Standard Modules	Number of Sessions
1	Orientation	1–2
2	Assessment/Initial Goal-Setting	2–4
3	Education about Psychosis (coordinated with Family Program)	7–11
4	Relapse Prevention Planning (coordinated with Family Program)	2–4
5	Processing the Psychotic Episode	3–5
6	Developing Resiliency—Standard Sessions	3–4
7	Building a Bridge to Your Goals	2–3

Module Number	Individualized Modules	Number of Sessions
8	Dealing with Negative Feelings	7–12
9	Coping with Symptoms	2 (per symptom area)
10	Substance Use	11–20
11	Having Fun and Developing Relationships	3–27
12	Making Choices about Smoking	2–4
13	Nutrition and Exercise	2–4
14	Developing Resiliency—Individualized Sessions	2–10

Standard Modules

Module #1: Orientation (1–2 sessions)

Goal: To familiarize participants and their relatives/supporters with the program and IRT and to collect background information.

- Provide information about program components, IRT, and an overview of the topics in IRT
- Set positive expectations for active participation in IRT
- Address immediate concerns from participant and relatives
- Teach a relaxed breathing technique to use as a strategy for participants and relatives who are feeling anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed

Tip: If possible, participants and relatives/supporters should meet with the IRT clinician.

Module #2: Assessment/Initial Goal Setting (2–4 sessions)

Goal: To instill hope and help the participant realize that resilience is a characteristic that can help him or her overcome an initial psychotic episode.

- Help participant to define what *recovery* means to him or her
- Define *resiliency* and help participant think about his or her resilient qualities
- Assess participant's strengths and areas for improvement
- Review the steps of setting a goal
- Help the participant set a long-term meaningful goal, then break the goal into one to three short-term goals

Tip: Some participants may not be ready to set long-term goals at this point, which is okay. At the end of this module, you can help the participant start by setting a short-term goal.

Module #3: Education about Psychosis (7–11 sessions)

Goal: To teach participants and their relatives/supporters basic information about psychosis and the principles of its treatment.

- Elicit information about the participant's and relatives' understanding of symptoms, causes, course, medications, and the impact of stress on their life
- Provide psychoeducation that addresses gaps in the participant's and relative's knowledge about psychosis, substance use, medication, and strategies to cope with stress
- Discuss strategies to build resilience

Tip: In addition to individual sessions, it can be helpful for the participant and their relatives to meet for educational sessions with the Family Education Program (FEP) clinician.

Module #4: Relapse Prevention Planning (2–4 sessions)

Goal: To teach participants and their relatives/supporters basic information about relapses and how to prevent them.

- Provide information on factors that contribute to setbacks or relapses, such as early warning signs and triggers
- Help the participant develop and implement a relapse prevention plan

Tip: It can be helpful to provide an option for including family members in developing and practicing the relapse prevention plan.

Module #5: Processing the Psychotic Episode (3–5 sessions)

Goal: To help the participant understand how the psychotic episode affected their life.

- Help the participant process the psychotic episode
- Help the participant identify positive coping strategies used and resiliency demonstrated during this period
- Help the participant identify and challenge self-stigmatizing beliefs about the psychosis experience
- Develop a positive attitude toward facing life's challenges ahead

Tip: For some participants who are reticent to discuss their experience, personal accounts of other individuals with first-episode psychosis may be helpful.

Module #6: Developing Resiliency—Standard Sessions (3–4 sessions)

Goal: To help the participant build resiliency.

- Provide information about resiliency and help participant identify with the resiliency process
- Use strengths and paying attention to the good things that happen to build resiliency

Tip: This module is in two sections that include topics for both the standard sessions and individualized sessions.

Module #7: Building a Bridge to Your Goals (2–3 sessions)

Goal: To use collaborative decision-making to help the participant decide how to proceed in his or her treatment.

- Help the participant identify a personal goal (if not set earlier) or review the goal set in Module 2
- Review progress toward his or her goal and make modifications if necessary
- Help the participant decide whether they will continue in treatment, and if so, which individualized modules they will follow

Tip: Use the Personalized Treatment Plan to help the participant decide which modules they want to engage with and their next steps in progressing toward their goal(s).

Individualized Modules

Module #8: Dealing with Negative Feelings (7–12 sessions)

Goal: To provide information about various areas of emotional distress and offer specific approaches to targeting and decreasing emotional distress.

- Teach the skill of cognitive restructuring as a self-management tool to help the participant deal with negative feelings
- Help the participant use this skill to deal with negative feelings (such as depression and anxiety), including negative feelings related to self-stigmatizing beliefs, psychotic symptoms, non-psychotic symptoms, suicidal thinking and behavior, and PTSD symptoms

Module #9: Coping with Symptoms (2–4 sessions for each symptom selected)

Goal: To help participants who do not report significant distress, but who experience persistent symptoms that interfere with activities, goals, or enjoyment.

- Assist participant identify persistent symptoms that interfere with activities or their enjoyment of life
- Help participant identify symptoms that interfere the most and select relevant handouts to address these symptoms
- Assist participant select coping strategies that they are most interested in learning
- Teach coping strategies in sessions, using modeling and role playing whenever possible
- Assist participant practice coping strategies in their own environment, using home practice assignments and, in some instances, conducting sessions at off-site locations

Tip: Encourage participants to practice coping strategies in session before trying them at home.

Module #10: Substance Use (11–20 sessions)

Goal: To address substance use for participants whose use resulted in significant problems (for example, precipitating symptoms, problems in social functioning, family conflict, victimization) or for participants who use substances regularly but have not developed a clear substance use problem.

- Provide basic information about substances, common reasons for using, and negative effects of substances on psychosis and personal goals
- Enhance motivation to reduce or stop using substances
- Teach skills for managing urges to use substances, coping with symptoms that precipitate substance use, and dealing with social situations involving substances
- Develop a personal substance abuse relapse prevention plan

Tip: This module does not require that the participant be motivated to stop using alcohol or drugs, only that they be willing to talk about substance use and explore its effects.

Module #11: Having Fun and Developing Good Relationships

Goal: To help participants who are looking for fun activities and experiences and/or who would like to form new connections with people or improve current relationships.

- Help participant renew old fun activities and develop new fun activities
- Get the most enjoyment out of fun activities by learning how to appreciate the “3 stages of fun”
- Connect with people by contacting old friends and meeting new people
- Improve the quality of relationships by developing skills to better understand other people, communicate more effectively, manage disclosure, and understand social cues

Tip: This module is composed of three sub-modules: Having Fun (3–6 sessions), Connecting with People (5–9 sessions), and Improving Relationships (5–9 sessions).

Module #12: Making Choices about Smoking (2–4 sessions)

Goal: To guide participants through the steps of identifying their personal benefits and concerns about smoking and quitting.

- Provide information about available smoking cessation treatment options
- Help participants take stock of their willingness to make changes in their smoking behavior
- Assist participants who are willing to change their behavior to develop a plan for tobacco reduction or abstinence

Tip: Normalize concerns about quitting and suggest strategies to cope with concerns.

Module #13: Nutrition and Exercise (2–4 sessions)

Goal: To provide a rationale for improving nutrition and increasing exercise and to identify skills that lead to improved nutrition and increased exercise.

- Identify strategies and skills to make changes in diet and exercise.
- Help participant take stock of their willingness to make changes in diet and exercise behavior
- Work together to develop a plan for making specific changes in diet and activity level, for participants who are willing

Tip: Address possible concerns about changing diet and increasing activity level.

Module #14: Developing Resiliency Individualized Sessions (2–10 sessions)

Goal: To teach participants additional skills for building resiliency.

- Teach participant strategies to build positive emotions and facilitate resiliency
- Help participant build resiliency through practicing skills of gratitude, savoring, mindfulness, active/constructive communication, life summary, and acts of kindness

Tip: When participants have chosen to complete one or more individualized modules, they may also consider completing one resiliency exercise at the beginning of each module.