

Worksheet for Clients

Name _____ Date _____

Mindfulness Exercises for Anxiety and Other Intense Emotions and for Cognitive Defusion

This worksheet includes exercises to help you manage anxiety and other intense emotions and to practice cognitive defusion. You can use these exercises on your own or with the help of a therapist. They will help you become more aware of your emotions, build willingness to experience them, and challenge unhelpful thoughts.

Exercise 1 Say No/Yes to the Sensation

This exercise will help you become more aware of your emotions by focusing on an anxious or uncomfortable feeling. Follow these steps:

Step 1: Focus on an anxious or otherwise uncomfortable sensation or feeling, and imagine mentally saying “No” to it. “No, it can’t be there, just no.”

Step 2: Observe what that feels like.

Step 3: Shift to saying “Yes” to the feeling. Imagine mentally saying, “Yes,” “Yes, there’s room for you.” “Yes, you can be here.” Notice what that feels like.

Step 4: Practice mentally saying “Yes” or “No” whenever a difficult feeling arises.

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Write down a selected sensation/feeling.	
What did you feel when mentally saying “No”?	
What happened when you said “Yes”?	
What do you think produces this difference?	

Exercise 2 Cognitive Fusion and Defusion

This exercise targets defusion, the ability to separate from unhelpful thoughts. Try this exercise to notice and defuse from problematic thoughts.

Step 1: Notice a thought like, “I’m not good enough.”	
Step 2: Ask yourself what it feels like in your body when you think it that way.	
Step 3: Try it again, with you thinking or saying instead, “I’m noticing that I’m	

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having the thought that I'm not good enough," and see how that feels. An alternative to this is saying the thoughts aloud in a silly voice.	
Which way worked better for you?	

Exercise 3 Notice Your Emotions

This exercise will help you become more aware of your emotions. Focus on an intense feeling and ask yourself the following questions:

Write down the selected feeling	
Where do you feel the _____ (write your selected feeling) in your body?	
Where is it the most intense?	
What other sensations do you notice in your body?	
If there was a temperature to the _____ (write your selected feeling), what would it be?	
If you could touch it, what would the texture feel like?	
How big is it? Is there a shape to it?	

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Notice if it moves or if it is still.	
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Reflect: Write down your general thoughts and reflections after completing these exercises. Try to focus on the relationship between your emotions and thoughts so you understand how they are related.

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