



Emotional Regulation and Thought Management

Living with racing thoughts and intense emotions can be overwhelmingly disruptive. It's important to acknowledge how these experiences can deeply impact your daily life, relationships, and overall well-being. Despite these challenges, there are effective tools and exercises that can help you regain control and alleviate these distressing feelings. This worksheet provides practical exercises drawn from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and other therapeutic approaches that can aid in managing overwhelming emotions and thoughts.

Tools and Exercises:

TIPP Technique

PURPOSE: To manage acute stress and regulate emotions quickly.

INSTRUCTIONS: Use **T**emperature to change your body heat by splashing cold water on your face, **I**ntense exercise to burn off energy and stress, **P**aced breathing to calm the nervous system, and **P**rogressive muscle relaxation to release physical tension.

EXAMPLE: If you feel a panic attack coming on, splash cold water on your face to help shock your system back to calm.

Radical Acceptance

PURPOSE: To accept reality as it is, which can reduce suffering from fighting against the unchangeable.

INSTRUCTIONS: Acknowledge the facts of a situation without judgment. Identify areas where you are fighting reality, and consciously work to accept them. Use affirmations like "It is what it is" to help embrace the situation.

EXAMPLE: If you're upset about a recent breakup, instead of ruminating on what could have been, focus on accepting the situation and moving forward.

Guided Meditation and Breathing Exercises

PURPOSE: To center your thoughts and calm your mind.

INSTRUCTIONS: Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and take slow, deep breaths. Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat for several minutes.

EXAMPLE: Before an important meeting, take five minutes to perform a breathing exercise to center yourself and clear your mind.



exercises cont...

Journaling

- PURPOSE:** To process emotions and clarify thoughts through writing.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Write about your day, how you feel, and any thoughts that are bothering you. Focus on getting all your thoughts out on paper, which can make them easier to manage and understand.
- EXAMPLE:** After a stressful day at work, write about the events and your feelings to decompress and prevent overthinking at night.

Behavioral Activation

- PURPOSE:** To counteract depression and inertia by engaging in proactive activities.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Create a weekly schedule that includes activities you enjoy and tasks you need to accomplish. Rate your expected pleasure or achievement for each, and review how you felt afterwards.
- EXAMPLE:** Schedule a 30-minute walk in the park. Expected pleasure: 7/10. Actual pleasure: 8/10.

Thought Record Sheet

- PURPOSE:** To challenge and alter negative thought patterns.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Write down a specific negative thought that is bothering you. Next, list the evidence that supports this thought and the evidence against it. Conclude by writing a more balanced thought based on the evidence.
- EXAMPLE:** Thought - "I always fail." Supports - "I did not pass my last exam." Against - "I have passed many other exams." Balanced Thought - "Sometimes I succeed and sometimes I fail."

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

- PURPOSE:** To enhance communication and assertiveness while maintaining self-respect and strengthening relationships.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice the DEAR MAN technique to assert your needs or desires effectively: **D**escribe the situation, **E**xpress your feelings, **A**ssert your needs, **R**einforce the benefits, stay **M**indful during the conversation, **A**ppear confident, and be willing to **N**egotiate.
- EXAMPLE:** When you need to discuss a sensitive issue with a colleague, use the DEAR MAN technique. Describe the problem without blame, express how it affects your work, clearly state what you need, explain how the change will benefit both, and be open to hearing their side.



exercises cont...

Self-Soothing Techniques

- PURPOSE:** To calm and comfort yourself in moments of distress using the five senses.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Create a self-soothe kit that includes items that please each of the senses: something to touch (like a soft blanket), taste (like a favorite snack), smell (such as essential oils), see (a photo of a happy memory), and hear (a calming playlist).
- EXAMPLE:** When feeling overwhelmed or sad, open your self-soothe kit and spend a few moments with each item. For instance, wrap yourself in the soft blanket, enjoy the snack, diffuse some essential oils, look at your photo, and listen to soothing music. This practice can help stabilize your mood and bring comfort.

Mindfulness of Current Emotion

- PURPOSE:** To observe and experience emotions without judgment.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Focus on your emotions without trying to change them. Observe what you feel, describe the sensations, and let them pass without reaction.
- EXAMPLE:** If you're feeling angry, sit quietly and notice where in your body you feel the anger, describe the sensations, and allow them to dissipate without acting on them.

Grounding Techniques

- PURPOSE:** To divert focus from distressing emotions or thoughts back to the present.
- INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the 5-4-3-2-1 technique: identify five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.
- EXAMPLE:** During moments of anxiety, perform the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding exercise to help bring your attention back to the present and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

Final Thoughts

These tools are designed to be used as needed, depending on the situation and your specific needs at that moment. Regular practice of these exercises can greatly enhance your ability to manage thoughts and emotions more effectively. Remember, it's also beneficial to discuss these tools with a mental health professional who can provide guidance tailored to your personal circumstances.