

Introduction

Our minds are powerful storytellers. Sometimes, the stories they tell are helpful, but other times, they can be unhelpful and restrict our lives. This worksheet will help you learn to diffuse from your thoughts and feelings, understand their nature, and take actions that expand your options rather than restrict them.

Step 1: Understanding the Storytelling Mind

The Storytelling Mind

- Our minds constantly create stories about our experiences.
 - These stories can be helpful or unhelpful.
 - It's important to recognize when our mind is telling us a negative story.
-

Step 2: Practicing Mindfulness

Stop, Breathe, Feel, and Step Out

1. **Stop:** Pause for a moment.
 2. **Breathe:** Take a deep breath in and out.
 3. **Feel:** Notice the sensations in your body.
 4. **Step Out:** Imagine stepping out of your thoughts and observing them from the outside.
-

Step 3: Chatting Back to the Storytelling Mind

Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

- When you notice a negative story, chat back to your mind.
 - Ask yourself:
 - Is this thought helpful?
 - Is this thought based on facts or assumptions?
 - What would I tell a friend in this situation?
-

Step 4: Validating Your Emotions and Feelings: Knowing When Emotions and Feelings Are Valid

- All emotions and feelings are valid and have a purpose, even if they are painful.
- It's important to give them space and validate them without getting stuck.

How to Give Space and Validate Emotions:

1. **Acknowledge:** Notice and name the emotion you are feeling (e.g., "I am feeling sad").
2. **Accept:** Allow yourself to feel the emotion without judgment.
3. **Reflect:** Understand why you are feeling this way and what message the emotion is sending.
4. **Breathe:** Take deep breaths to create a calming space for the emotion.
5. **Express:** Write about your feelings or talk to someone you trust.

Exercise:

1. Write down an emotion you are currently experiencing.
 2. Acknowledge and accept this emotion without judgment.
 3. Reflect on the reason behind this emotion.
 4. Take a few deep breaths and notice how your body feels.
 5. Express your emotion through writing or talking to someone.
-

Step 5: Getting Unstuck with Opposite Action**Identifying Stuck Feelings**

- Some feelings can contribute to getting stuck, leading to avoidance and restricted life options.
- Ask yourself:
 - Is this feeling preventing me from taking action?
 - Is this feeling causing me to avoid important tasks or responsibilities?
 - Is this feeling leading to procrastination or withdrawal?

Opposite Action

- When you notice avoidance due to negative feelings, try the opposite action.
- Opposite action means doing the opposite of what the unhelpful feeling urges you to do.

Example Exercise:

1. Identify a situation where you felt stuck or avoided something.
2. Write down the thought and feeling associated with it.
3. Identify the unhelpful action you took (e.g., avoidance).
4. Plan an opposite action you can take next time.

Step 6: Expanding Your Life**Focusing on Expansion**

- Reflect on how unhelpful thoughts and feelings have restricted your life.
- Think about actions that can expand your options and bring you closer to your values.

Exercise:

1. Write down a recent experience where unhelpful thoughts restricted your actions.
 2. Identify how you can expand your life by taking a different action aligned with your values.
-

Summary

- Recognize the storytelling mind and its role in creating helpful or unhelpful thoughts.
- Practice mindfulness by stopping, breathing, feeling, and stepping out of your thoughts.
- Challenge unhelpful thoughts by chatting back to your mind.
- Understand thoughts and feelings as messages, identifying helpful vs. unhelpful ones.
- Validate your emotions and give them space without getting stuck.
- Identify when feelings contribute to getting stuck and use opposite action to counteract avoidance.
- Focus on actions that expand your life rather than restrict it.