



HANDOUTS

Coping Strategies to Promote Occupational Engagement and Recovery



Scenarios

You are being kept on the phone by a salesperson trying to sell you something you don't want.

You would: _____

You are sitting in a movie and the people behind you are talking.

You would: _____

You would like to return something to the store and get a refund.

You would: _____

You are standing in line and someone moves in front of you.

You would: _____

Your friend has owed you money for a long time—money you could use.

You would: _____

A family member is not doing a fair share of the work around the house.

You would: _____

A friend asks for a favour that you don't want to do.

You would: _____



Communication styles

Passive—behaviour that does not directly express one's thoughts, feelings or needs. The individual often sacrifices his/her own needs for those of others by not speaking up or by agreeing to do things that he/she would rather not. If the person does speak up, it is often with statements such as "I really shouldn't be complaining, but..." or "I'm not sure, but..." (McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 2009).

Aggressive—behaviour that expresses personal wants, feelings, and needs while being disrespectful of others. Tactics used in this style include blame, humiliation, sarcasm, and put downs toward others (McKay et al., 2009).

Passive-aggressive—behaviour that combines qualities of both the passive style (such as not expressing personal wants, feelings, or needs directly) and the aggressive style (in that there is a goal to hurt or upset the other person). An individual may agree to do something while rolling her/his eyes, dragging her/himself toward the task, or doing it poorly. At some point, behaviour will surface that expresses the true underlying anger or hostility (Paterson, 2000).

Assertive—behaviour that expresses thoughts, feelings, and needs clearly and directly, pursuing the individual's best interests while being respectful of others. It allows for setting limits, refusing requests, and asking for help as needed in a manner that protects one's rights and dignity without resorting to the shaming or intimidation of others (McKay et al., 2009).

REFERENCES

- McKay, M., Davis, M. & Fanning, P. (2009). *Messages: The communication skills book* (3rd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.
- Paterson, R. (2000). *The assertiveness workbook: How to express your ideas and stand up for yourself at work and in relationships*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Verbal and non-verbal components of communication behaviours

	PASSIVE	AGGRESSIVE	ASSERTIVE
1. VERBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apologetic words ▪ Excuses ▪ Veiled meanings ▪ Difficulty coming to the point ▪ Hedging ▪ Staying silent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accusations ▪ "You" messages that blame or label ▪ Absolute terms such as "always" or "never" indicating no wrongdoing on the aggressor's part ▪ Putdowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct requests and refusals ▪ Objective words ▪ Clear meanings ▪ "I" statements ▪ Honesty ▪ Statements of feelings ▪ Open to negotiation and compromise
2. NON-VERBAL			
A. General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actions instead of words ▪ Hoping someone will guess what you want ▪ Looking like you do not mean what you say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sarcasm ▪ Attacking ▪ Exaggerated ▪ Threatening ▪ Intimidating ▪ Air of superiority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attentive listening ▪ Assured manner ▪ Empathy
B. Voice tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Soft ▪ Whispering ▪ Hesitant ▪ Wavering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loud and demanding ▪ Cold and tense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well modulated ▪ Relaxed ▪ Firm ▪ Warm
C. Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downcast ▪ Look down or away ▪ Pleading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staring ▪ Narrowed ▪ Expressionless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct but not glaring ▪ Open
D. Posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stooped ▪ Slouched ▪ Head nodding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stiff ▪ Hand(s) on hip(s) ▪ "In your face" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Straight on, facing listener ▪ Relaxed ▪ Balanced
E. Hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fidgety ▪ Clammy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clenched ▪ Pointing ▪ Pounding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relaxed motions

(Inspired by McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 2009)

REFERENCE

McKay, M., Davis, M. & Fanning, P. (2009). *Messages: The communication skills book* (3rd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.



Communication styles mix and match

ASSERTIVE STYLE

- Veiled meanings
- Hoping someone will guess what you mean
- Blaming
- Downcast eyes
- Stooped posture
- Threats
- Rambling content
- Air of superiority
- Honest statement of feelings
- Intimidation

AGGRESSIVE STYLE

- Objective words
- Manipulation through power
- Direct statements
- “I” messages
- Demanding, authoritarian
- Attentive listening communicating caring and strength
- “In your face” attitude
- Respectful of self and others
- Meeting personal needs at the expense of others
- Direct eye contact
- Caving in to the needs of others at the expense of your own
- Straight, relaxed posture
- Overbearing posture

PASSIVE STYLE

- “You” messages
- Sarcasm



Communication styles mix and match answer sheet

ASSERTIVE STYLE

- Direct eye contact
- Direct statements
- “I” messages
- Respectful of self and others
- Attentive listening communicating caring and strength
- Straight, relaxed posture
- Honest statement of feelings
- Objective words

AGGRESIVE STYLE

- Manipulation through power
- Blaming
- Threats
- Demanding, authoritarian
- Air of superiority
- Overbearing posture
- “You” messages
- Sarcasm
- Intimidation
- “In your face” attitude
- Meeting personal needs at the expense of others

PASSIVE STYLE

- Hoping someone will guess what you mean
- Downcast eyes
- Stooped posture
- Veiled meanings
- Rambling content
- Caving in to the needs of others at the expense of your own

(Inspired by McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 2009)

REFERENCE

McKay, M., Davis, M. & Fanning, P. (2009). *Messages: The communication skills book* (3rd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.



Samples of assertive responses

Here are examples of different interpersonal situations with assertive responses. Identify what characterizes the response as assertive.

Situation: Your significant other gets silent rather than saying what is bothering him/her. You respond...

"I am wondering if you are uncomfortable talking about something. I think we can sort it out and make the situation better if you tell me what is bothering you."

Situation: At a family dinner, one person often interrupts you when you are speaking. You say...

"Excuse me. I would like to finish my statement."

Situation: A neighbour is waiting to chat with you after you have had a very long day, and you want some time to start preparing dinner. You say...

"I am just getting home from a really long day. I need some quiet time and would like to start my dinner. Instead of talking right now, can I stop by in a couple of hours to have a chat?"

Situation: You are at the store checkout when someone behind you with one item asks to go ahead of you rather than wait. You respond...

"I understand you don't want to wait in this line, but I was ahead of you and I really want to get this finished. I need you to wait until I have checked out."

Situation: Your roommate often leaves her dirty dishes in the sink and surrounding area, and this makes it difficult for you to have enough counter space to prepare your food. You say...

"I know you like to relax after you have eaten, but when the dishes are left on the counter I feel annoyed because I don't have space to prep my meal. I would like to discuss some strategies for kitchen tidiness that would work for both of us."

Situation: Your eight-year-old child has interrupted you with a non-urgent matter for the third time while you are speaking on the phone. You say...

"I can't listen to you while I am talking on the phone. I will finish my phone call in a few minutes and then you and I can talk."

Situation: Your friend is asking to borrow something of yours, but the last four items he borrowed have not yet been returned, and it has been several weeks. You say...

"I feel uncomfortable lending another item, as the other things I loaned you have not yet been returned, and you have had them for several weeks. Please return those items first."



Benefits of being assertive

1. Briefly describe a current stressful situation.

2. Check off at least two assertive behaviours you could use to help meet your needs in the above situation. Refer to the characteristics of assertive behaviour.

- ☐ use clear messages
- ☐ use "I" statements
- ☐ express my feelings, needs, and wants
- ☐ assume an assertive body posture
- ☐ show good eye contact
- ☐ use good volume

3. Check off three benefits of using an assertive style to deal with the above situation.

Being assertive could help me...

- ☐ To improve my self-awareness of feelings and of knowing what I want;
- ☐ To show that I have the right to ask for what I want;
- ☐ To gain self-respect;
- ☐ To gain the respect of others;
- ☐ To gain the satisfaction of getting what I want and need;
- ☐ To keep communication lines open with significant people in my life;
- ☐ To let others know how I am feeling;
- ☐ To make and keep friends;
- ☐ To be valued at work;
- ☐ To have my children respect and trust me;
- ☐ To ensure my sexual needs are met.

4. Describe the benefits of using an assertive style in a personal situation.



DESC communication tool

Assertive communication can be very helpful for dealing with difficult or uncomfortable situations. Four steps of assertive communication, as outlined by Bower and Bower (2004) in the book *Asserting Yourself—Updated Edition: A Practical Guide for Positive Change*, include: **D**escribe, **E**xpress feelings, **S**tate wants/needs, and **C**onsequence. It is important to keep your message brief, honest, and respectful, refraining from attacking the other person while showing an interest in having a positive outcome for both of you.

D: Describe the problem situation. Be specific and include facts only.

E: Express how you are feeling. Begin this section with “I feel...” followed by an emotion (e.g., frustrated, sad, annoyed, uncomfortable). Avoid using “I feel that you...” as this can lead to the other person feeling blamed or attacked.

S: State your wants or needs. State the desired change you want made, again being as specific as possible. It is helpful to start this section with “I need,” “I would like,” or “I want” and add the specific behaviour.

C: Consequence. Indicate what the positives would be if your need is met, or what the negatives would be if the problem or behaviour continues. An effective negative consequence would include the way you will protect your needs if the request is ignored.

Example scenario. Your sister has a habit of asking you to watch her young son at the last minute because she is unable to arrange babysitting service. This is exhausting for you and makes it difficult to carry out your planned activities.

Describe. You say: ***“I usually have little notice when you want me to watch your son because you do not have a babysitter.”***

Express feelings. You say: ***“When this happens, I feel frustrated because I cannot get my own work and errands done, but I also feel guilty if I say no.”***

State your wants/needs. You say: ***“I need you to look at other possible options for childcare, such as by getting a list of babysitters in your neighbourhood. If you do need my help, I would like a week’s notice so that I can arrange my schedule.”***

Consequence. Positive reinforcement: ***“This will put less stress on our relationship, and when I am with your son I will be more relaxed and fun to be around.”*** Negative consequence: ***“If you keep calling me at the last minute, I will have to start saying no to your requests. Then you may miss your outings.”***

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Differentiating communication styles

Examples of assertive responses

Situation: Your housemate criticizes what you are wearing at a party in front of new friends. You pull your housemate aside and say...

“When you criticize my appearance around others, I feel embarrassed and hurt. If you have something you would like to say, please tell me before we leave home. That way, if I agree something needs changing, I have a chance to do it.”

Situation: You and a friend have been organizing a vacation together and he calls to say he has had a change in plans. You have invested a lot of time and research and were just finalizing the details. You say:

“I was just about to arrange the final details of this vacation, and now you tell me you can’t go. This has really taken me by surprise and I am feeling stunned. I need to have some time to process this and then I would like to call you back to discuss it further. That way I will be able to think more clearly.”

Examples of non-assertive responses

Situation: A friend from a group you attend has asked you to volunteer to canvas for a charity. You already have other volunteer commitments and are worried this may really stretch you thin and affect other activities you need and want to do. You say...

“Well, um, I guess I could try and fit it in. I am doing some other volunteer things, but maybe this is such a worthy cause I shouldn’t say no.”

Situation: The family in the apartment above you is having a loud karaoke party that has gone past 11 pm. You respond...

“Hey, knock off the noise. You guys are pathetic and the screeching is giving me a headache.”

Situation: You are having trouble understanding some of the information from a class you are attending. You say to the teacher...

“I really must be dumb, but I just can’t figure out what you meant in the last part of the lecture today.”

Situation: Your sister is insisting she knows a shortcut to a park to which you are both cycling for an outdoor concert. You are unsure and say...

“Well if you think that’s the right route to take, we’ll do it. Hopefully it won’t be like the last time you got us totally lost and made us late for the event.”



DESC template

Four steps of assertive communication, as outlined by Bower and Bower (2004) in their book *Asserting Yourself—Updated Edition: A Practical Guide for Positive Change*, can be very helpful for dealing with difficult or uncomfortable situations. The steps include: **D**escribe, **E**xpress feelings, **S**tate wants/needs, and **C**onsequence. It is important to keep the message brief, honest, refraining from attacking the other person while showing an interest in having a positive outcome for both of you.

D: Describe the problem situation: Be specific and include facts only.

E: Express how you are feeling: “I feel...” and add an emotion (e.g., frustrated, sad, annoyed, uncomfortable).

S: State your wants or needs: “I need,” “I would like,” or “I want” and add the specific behaviour.

C: Consequence: State the positives if your need is met or the negatives if the problem or behaviour continues. Start with “This way...” or “If this continues, then I will...”

Positive reinforcement:

Negative consequence:

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Guidelines for refusing requests

- Say “no”
- Acknowledge the request
- State your feelings (and explain your reasons, but only if you want to)
- State what you want or need
- Offer an alternative or compromise if you wish

Keep explanations short and honest, without excuses.

Options might include: “No, I am not interested,” or “No, thank you.”

Allow yourself time to consider your decision before giving a firm answer, one way or the other.

If you are often in the position of having to say “no” and this causes you to feel guilty or uncomfortable, it may be helpful to look at your situation and find ways to lessen the demands made upon you.

Reasons people don’t say “no”

Sometimes we find it hard to say “no” because, at some level, we hold beliefs about our obligations or about the consequences of refusing, such as:

- Feeling obligated to return a favour
- Feeling indebted to the other person
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of provoking an argument or confrontation
- Fear of hurting the other person’s feelings (so whose feelings get hurt instead?)
- Valuing self as a “giving” person so that saying “no” seems in conflict with that value

(Inspired by Bourne, 1995)

REFERENCES

Bourne, E. (1995). *Asserting yourself. The anxiety and phobia workbook*. (pp. 271-298). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



DESC template for refusing requests, with example

Four steps of assertive communication, as outlined by Bower and Bower (2004) in their book *Asserting Yourself—Updated Edition: A Practical Guide for Positive Change* can be very helpful for dealing with difficult or uncomfortable situations. The steps include: **D**escribe, **E**xpress feelings, **S**tate wants/needs, and **C**onsequence. It is important to keep the message brief, honest, and respectful, refraining from attacking the other person while showing an interest in having a positive outcome for both of you.

D: Describe: Acknowledge the request. Include facts only.

"I know you would like to have a loan to help pay your rent this month."

E: Express feelings: Explain your reason, including feelings.

"I feel uncomfortable lending money."

S: State your wants or needs: Say "no" clearly.

"So, no, I am not going to lend you any money. I need you to find another way to solve this problem and not ask me for money again."

C: Consequence (or compromise): Suggest an alternative if you wish.

"It would be much better for our relationship not to have any money issues standing between us."

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Counterproductive beliefs

Sometimes we find it hard to say “no” because we hold beliefs about our obligations or about the consequences of refusing. Is this true for you? Consider these alternate ways of thinking about the situation.

1. “It’s such a worthy cause, I shouldn’t refuse.”
 - Can I support all worthy causes?
 - I may want to, but I’m not obligated to.
 - It may indeed be worthy, but does that mean I must support it?
2. “After this person has spent so much time on me I can’t refuse”.
 - Their choices are theirs.
 - I can show my appreciation in other ways. I’ll “pay it forward” to someone else.
 - I came to this store to buy what I want, not to please the sales clerk.
3. “If I refuse, he/she won’t like me or will think I’m selfish.”
 - Saying “yes” does not guarantee people will like me; in fact, people often respect someone more when he or she can take a stand.
 - A friend would probably understand my decision.
 - I cannot please everybody, nor can I be perfect in all that I do, so there is always a risk of incurring negative opinions somewhere along the line.
4. “I will avoid conflict if I give in.”
 - Will I really, in the long run? Won’t I simply be postponing the next occasion of conflict?
 - I may be reinforcing the other person’s pattern of manipulative behaviour, and then I will have to face the pressure of trying to avoid repeated requests.
 - Would a conflict really be worse than the way I’ll feel if I am manipulated into accepting something I don’t want?
5. Being afraid of hurting the other person’s feelings.
 - Do I have to sacrifice my feelings instead?
6. Valuing being a giving person, so saying “no” seems to contradict that value.
 - I can show respect for others by being generous while at the same time showing respect for myself by setting limits on that generosity.

It is important to say “no” to requests that are not in our best interests.



Strategies for standing your ground

Most often when you are assertive, people will respect and cooperate with you. There will be times, however, when others may attempt to manipulate you into abandoning your request. In such a case, you need to use your techniques of persistence:

The broken record technique: In this communication strategy, your request is stated repeatedly in a calm manner. It is most effective if the request is short, simple, direct, and avoids explanations or excuses that the other person can argue against. The other person gets the message that you will persist and eventually tires of trying to change your request or boundary.

Example: A co-worker is often short of cash and asks to borrow money from you.

Co-worker: Can I borrow \$5 for my lunch today?

You: No, I don't lend money.

Co-worker: But I haven't got a thing to eat and I feel faint.

You: I'm sorry, but I don't lend money.

Co-worker: I know you have the cash because I saw you stop at the bank machine this morning.

You: I don't lend money.

Co-worker: How about just \$3 so I can get a soup? I'll pay you back, you know.

You: No, I don't lend money.

Co-worker: You really are quite stingy. If I don't eat something, I will feel sick.

You: I hear your concern that you won't feel well later, but I don't lend money.

Co-worker: I guess I will have to ask someone else then.

Fogging: This communication strategy can be an effective tool in taking the wind out of someone who is criticizing you and in preventing further escalation or argument. Essentially, you agree honestly to a part of the criticism, even if you do not believe all of it, without becoming defensive. The other person will likely back off without further critiques.

Example: Your friend says she would have decorated your apartment in a different style and makes fun of some of your belongings.

Friend: You should have painted with some bright, modern colours in your new place so it isn't so drab.

You: You could be right—my style isn't for everyone.

Friend: What's that blanket on your couch? It looks like it's from the seventies.

You: Yes, it has been around a while.

Friend: You should really buy some decorating magazines and spruce this place up.

You: Decorating magazines do have the latest styles in them.



Friend: You will probably get lots of comments from others about what to do with your place.

You: You could be right—I hadn't thought too much about that.

Friend: Shall we go out for a walk by the river now?

You: Sounds like a great idea. I'm ready.

Content-to-process shift: This is a helpful strategy when a discussion or topic important to you is being undermined or dismissed by others (e.g., the other person laughs at the request, becomes irritated, or tries to change the topic). By using this technique, you shift the conversation from the content to the behaviour. Using a calm voice and manner is important to ensure the other person does not feel under attack.

Example: Your partner and you have discussed limiting drinking when going out to parties.

You: I'd like you to have only two beers tonight at the party.

Partner: Who made you the liquor control board?

You: Sarcasm is getting us sidetracked from my message.

Partner: Why do we have to have this discussion now? I want to catch the six o'clock news.

You: I really need to hear that you will limit yourself to two beers tonight.

Partner: You know what, if you don't want to come to the party, you can stay home.

You: You are missing my point and I am feeling very frustrated. I want to go to the party with you and I want you to limit the alcohol to two beers.

Partner: Alright, I will only have a couple of beers tonight.

You: Thanks. I appreciate it.

(Inspired by Bourne, 1995)

Sample scenarios

Imagine the following situations and practice your assertive responses. Try all three of the techniques and see which one feels best in the situation.

1. Your friend is asking to borrow money, which you would rather not lend, even though you could afford to do so.
2. A new friend is hitting on you and you would rather keep the association platonic. You do not appreciate this kind of attention.
3. A friend is asking to borrow your car, and you would rather not lend it.
4. An old associate is asking you to party with him or her and you are trying to stay out of that scene.

REFERENCE

Bourne, E. (1995). *Asserting yourself. The anxiety and phobia workbook*. (pp. 289–296). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



DESC template for refusing requests

Four steps of communication, as outlined by Bower and Bower (2004) in their book *Asserting Yourself* can be very helpful for dealing with difficult or uncomfortable situations. The steps include: **D**escribe, **E**xpress feelings, **S**tate wants/needs, and **C**onsequence. It is important to keep the message brief, honest, and respectful, refraining from attacking the other person while showing an interest in having a positive outcome for both of you.

D: Describe: Acknowledge the request. Include facts only.

E: Express feelings: Explain your reason, including feelings.

S: State your wants or needs: Say “no” clearly.

C: Consequence (or compromise): Suggest an alternative if you wish.

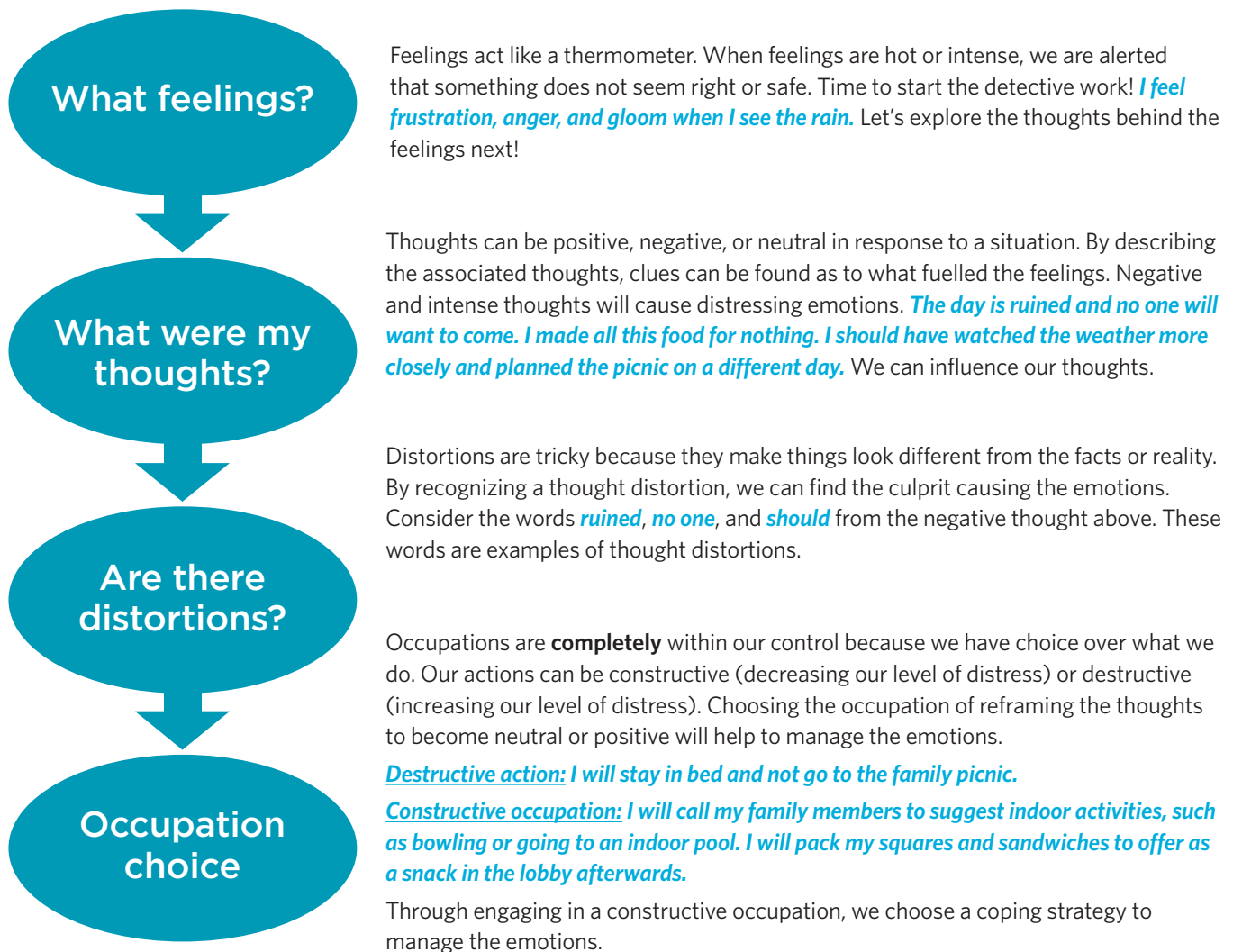
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The “feeling detective”

There is a relationship among factual events, our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours (Beck, 1979). The following explanation shows the role of the different players (feelings, thoughts, occupations). We can moderate our emotions by changing our thoughts and occupations. Negative distorted thoughts can lead to more intense emotional experiences and can paralyze our ability to engage in our daily occupations and routines.

The process starts with a fact-based situation that we cannot change; then comes our personal interpretation of the situation, which could be positive, negative, or neutral; followed by an emotional result based on our interpretation; and, finally, all this leads to our choice of occupation. However, to manage this process, it is essential to start with awareness of feelings—this is the cornerstone of detecting what is happening and figuring out what to do about it. Let’s review the steps below, resulting from the example situation: *It’s raining on the day of our family picnic.*



REFERENCE

Beck, A. (1979). *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*. Madison, CT: Penguin.



Types of thought distortions – the dirty dozen

Negative distorted thoughts can often fuel intense distressing emotions. See below for examples of thought distortions.

Polarized thinking: You see things in extremes—often referred to as black-and-white thinking. For example, if you make a mistake on a project, you say, “I’m a total failure!” or “This is worthless.” This is perfectionistic thinking and leads to feelings of inadequacy, because you cannot meet the unrealistic expectations set for yourself. Rarely is anything 100% good or bad. Watch out for words such as never, always, absolutely, totally, and hopeless! Your mood swings can be a roller coaster, running the gamut between “My life is great!” and “My life is horrible.”

Overgeneralization: You take a single incident and see it as representing an ongoing pattern of negative events. For example, if you are turned down for a job, you believe you will never get work.

Filtering: You pick out one single negative detail and focus exclusively on it so that the entire situation then becomes unsatisfactory. For example, you have a party and one individual points out your roast is overdone. You assume all of your guests disliked the dinner and that the party was a disaster. Ruminating in this way keeps you from enjoying the rest of the party.

Minimizing the good: Positive experiences and feedback are ignored and dismissed by you, so that you cannot appreciate when good things happen to you. For example, if someone tells you that you have done a good job on a project, you reply, “It was nothing!” or think, “He/she is just saying that to be nice.” You are left with negative experiences in your everyday life because you do not allow the positive experiences to count.

Mind reading: You assume that someone is thinking negatively of you and you do not question this assumption to see if it is so. For example, in hospital you ask to speak to your nurse and she is unable to meet with you at that moment. Unknown to you, she is awaiting a call from the pharmacist. You assume she does not like you and is mad at you for asking for extra time.

Jumping to conclusions: You jump to a negative prediction about your future without facts to back it up. For example, you have been invited to join a book club but think that if you share your ideas in the group, others will laugh at you and not invite you back. As a result, you decline the invitation and stay home feeling lonely and sorry for yourself.

Catastrophizing: The implications of events are exaggerated out of proportion. For example, your child has two poor nights of sleep and you think you will not get a good night of sleep again.

Emotional reasoning: You interpret your negative emotions as evidence for negative facts. For example: “I feel guilty, so I must have done something wrong,” or “I feel scared and overwhelmed thinking about attending my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, so it must be too difficult for me to go through with it.” With this distortion, feelings guide action or, more often, inaction.

Should/shouldn’t statements: These statements are often associated with trying to shame yourself or others into action—for example, “I shouldn’t have waited so long to take my daughter to the doctor for her back pain.” The emotional consequence is often guilt, frustration or anger.

Labeling: This is another form of overgeneralization—you lose sight of the specific error or annoying behaviour

Types of thought distortions – the dirty dozen (continued)



and instead attach a label to yourself or others. For example, your son leaves his clothes on the floor instead of putting them in the hamper and you call him a slob. Labeling is often associated with blame and hostility.

Personalization: You see yourself as responsible for a negative event even though there is no basis for it. For example, your friend's bike is stolen from the parking lot of your apartment building, and you say, "It's my fault for living in a lousy part of town." You can become burdened with an overwhelming sense of responsibility for others' behaviours and unfortunate events.

Blaming: You see others as solely responsible for a negative event, even though part of the responsibility is yours as well. For example, you get a speeding ticket and complain to the police officer that you were just doing the same speed as everyone else. Habitual blaming leads to a chronic sense of victimization and powerlessness.

Adapted from *The depression workbook: A guide for living with depression and manic depression* (2nd ed., pp. 215–229), by Copeland, M. E. (2001). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications. Adapted with permission.



The “feeling detective” worksheet – scenarios provided

Scenario (just the facts): *You make a mistake at work because you are finding it hard to concentrate. Your supervisor asks if anything is wrong.*

Feelings: *Embarrassed, anxious, ashamed*

Thoughts that are fuelling the feelings: *They’re all watching me—I know it. And they’re judging me. I’m so incompetent. I might as well quit.*

Distortion: _____

Occupation choice:

a) Write a more balanced thought. _____

b) Choose a more constructive occupation. _____

.....

Scenario (just the facts): *You are readmitted to hospital after a crisis at home.*

Feelings: *Hopelessness, guilt, shame*

Thoughts that are fuelling the feelings: *Here I am in hospital again; I should have been able to fix this myself. It’s all my fault. I’ll never get better.*

Distortion: _____

Occupation choice:

a) Write a more balanced thought. _____

b) Choose a more constructive occupation. _____



The “feeling detective” worksheet

Scenario (just the facts): _____

Feelings: _____

Thoughts that are fuelling the feelings: _____

Distortion: _____

Occupation choice:

a) Write a more balanced thought. _____

b) Choose a more constructive occupation. _____

.....

Scenario (just the facts): _____

Feelings: _____

Thoughts that are fuelling the feelings: _____

Distortion: _____

Occupation choice:

a) Write a more balanced thought. _____

b) Choose a more constructive occupation. _____



Examples of negative thinking

"The whole weekend was a disaster from beginning to end."

"None of my family members have called me today. They must have been offended by something I said."

"If I'm around those friends who drink I just know I'll give in and have one, and then I'll get back into old habits, and I'll be right back where I started. I just can't get out of this rut."

"I'm a very passive person."

"I'm no good at crafts. I'm no good at anything."

"We've been in this house for six months and I still haven't unpacked all those boxes. There's so much to do; I'll never be able to get it all done."

"If I don't do well in this interview, I'll probably have a panic attack, and then I won't be able to get myself home on the bus, and I'll have to spend the night in the bus depot."

"If I tell him what I really feel, he'll be angry for sure!"

"If I tell her I've been on the psychiatric unit, she'll think I'm crazy, and she won't talk to me again."

"My colleagues surely won't have any faith in my contributions now that they know I've been depressed, so I won't bother trying to participate."

"I don't have anything to say worth listening to, so I won't bother speaking up in groups."

"I'm never going to get better. I'll never be able to function normally again."

"I can't do a good job because I have such lazy co-workers."



Challenging negative thoughts

The ability to challenge negative thoughts is an essential skill for managing the emotional consequences of distorted self-talk. Essentially, by strengthening your rational thoughts and focusing on positive and encouraging statements, you can poke holes in those negative ideas so that they have less power over you. To do this takes practice. Every time you make a conscious effort to challenge those negative thoughts and replace them with positive statements, you are little by little forming constructive habits and relieving your own distress.

Consider using the rational questions listed below to challenge your negative thoughts.

- *Is there a cognitive distortion here?*
- *Am I using words such as “all,” “never,” “everyone,” “no one,” or “perfect,” or labels or assumptions?*
- *What is the chance of this really happening in my future?*
- *Even if the worst thing happened, what could I do?*
- *Is there another way of looking at the situation?*
- *Where is my evidence for this? How could I test this negative thought to find out if it is really valid? Could I do a survey to see what other people think about it?*
- *If someone else was going through this experience, what kind words could I say to offer support?*
- *Is this ALWAYS true?*
- *What would a supportive friend say to me about this event?*
- *Define terms: What does it mean to be “100% useless” or “0% smart”? Be specific. Instead of saying “I’m totally defective,” I will focus on my specific strengths and weaknesses.*
- *What is in it for me to think this way? How is it helpful?*
- *Are there any advantages or disadvantages to thinking this way?*
- *Are there any positives in this situation? Could I say I have learned something/gained something from the experience?*
- *What is a strength I have that will help me through this tough time?*
- *What has helped me through tough times in the past?*
- *Instead of defending myself against my own criticisms, can I find truth in them and accept my shortcomings with tranquility?*

(Inspired by Bourne, 1995)

REFERENCE

Bourne, E. (1995). Self-talk. *The anxiety and phobia workbook* (pp. 179-180). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Rational questioning to counter negative thinking

Situation: You have a friend with two young children and you have not seen her for a month.

Example of a negative thought:

"If I call to ask my friend to do something with me on the weekend I'll just be bothering her. She's busy enough with her family, so I shouldn't ask her."

Identify possible feelings resulting from above negative thought.

Identify the distortion present in the above negative thought.

Choose a rational question to challenge the negative thought.

What might be a more balanced/compassionate statement?

Remember, when you notice the intense feelings, become a detective to discover the thoughts fuelling the feelings and look for clues indicating distortions. Once you have found these, you are on your way to choosing rational questions and finding a more balanced and compassionate interpretation of the situation.



Recognizing and replacing negative thinking

Give an example of one negative thought you have caught yourself saying lately:

Which distortions do you think are happening here?

What are the emotional consequences of this thought?

What would be a more objective, balanced, and humane way of looking at the situation?
What could you say to yourself instead?

How could this affect your actions?



Feeling words list

A	Comfortable	Edgy	H	Lost	R	Trapped
Absorbed	Competent	Effective	Happy	Loss	Refreshed	Troubled
Abandoned	Composed	Effervescent	Hate		Rejected	Trusting
Adventurous	Concerned	Elated	Helpful	M	Relaxed	
Affectionate	Confident	Embarrassed	Helpless	Mad	Relieved	U
Afraid	Confused	Embittered	Hesitant	Mellow	Reluctant	Uncomfortable
Agitated	Contented	Empathetic	Hopeful	Miserable	Resentful	Uneasy
Alarmed	Courageous	Empty	Horrorified	Mistrustful	Resigned	Unfulfilled
Alert	Cross	Encouraged	Hostile	Mixed up	Restless	Unhappy
Alone	Crushed	Energetic	Humiliated	Moody		Unsteady
Amazed	Compassionate	Engrossed	Hurt	Mournful	S	Useful
Ambivalent		Enraged		Moved	Sad	Unsure
Amused	D	Enthusiastic	I		Satisfied	Unwanted
Angry	Defeated	Envious	Impatient	N	Scared	Upset
Anguished	Dejected	Exasperated	Indifferent	Nervous	Secure	Used
Annoyed	Delighted	Exhausted	Indignant	Numb	Self-conscious	
Anxious	Depressed	Excited	Inhibited		Serene	V
Apathetic	Despairing		Inquisitive	O	Shaky	Valued
Appalled	Desperate	F	Insecure	Offended	Shocked	Vibrant
Appreciative	Despondent	Fascinated	Inspired	Overwhelmed	Shy	Vulnerable
Apprehensive	Detached	Fearful	Intense		Sluggish	
Aroused	Devastated	Frantic	Interested	P	Sorry	W
Ashamed	Disaffected	Free	Involved	Pain	Startled	Warm
Assured	Disappointed	Friendly	Irate	Panicky	Strong	Weak
Astonished	Discouraged	Frightened	Intrigued	Passive	Surprised	Weary
	Disenchanted	Frustrated	Invigorated	Peaceful	Suspicious	Withdrawn
B	Disgruntled	Fulfilled	Irritated	Perplexed	Sympathetic	Worn-out
Bewildered	Disgusted	Furious		Pessimistic		Worried
Bitter	Disheartened	Flat	J	Petrified	T	Worthless
Blissful	Dismayed		Jealous	Puzzled	Tender	Worthy
Blue	Disquieted	G	Jittery	Pity	Tense	Wounded
Bored	Distressed	Glad	Joyous	Pleased	Terrified	Wretched
Bothered	Disturbed	Gloomy	Jubilant	Powerful	Thankful	
Broken-hearted	Downcast	Grateful	Jumpy	Productive	Threatened	Y
	Dull	Gratified		Proud	Thrilled	Yearning
C		Grief	L		Timid	
Calm	E	Grouchy	Lethargic	Q	Tired	Z
Carefree	Eager	Grumpy	Listless	Quiet	Touched	Zealous
Cheerful	Ecstatic	Guilty	Lonely		Tranquil	Zestful

(Inspired by Spradlin, 2003)

REFERENCE

Spradlin, S. E. (2003). The emotion thesaurus. *Don't let your emotions run your life*. (pp. 195–201). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



How would you feel?

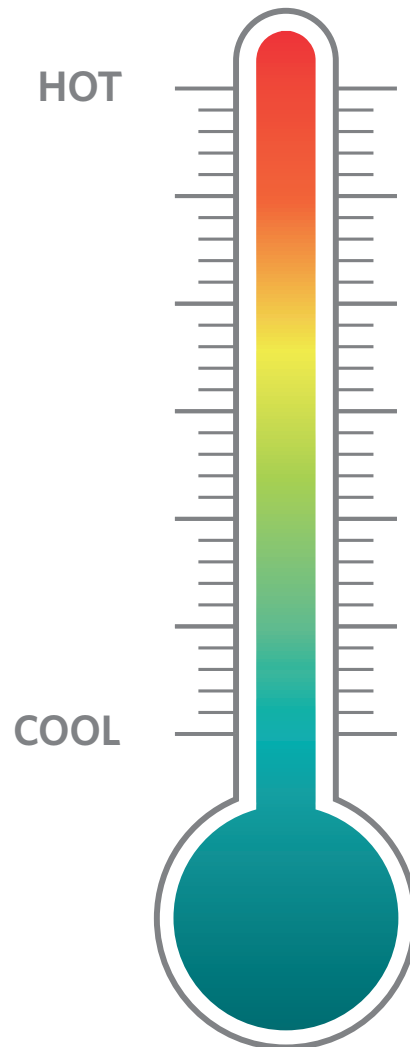
Read the following scenarios and think about what feelings you would experience if these things happened to you. Choose two to three “feeling words” that would describe your emotional experience.

- A friend who was once close to you has contacted you and wants to meet for a tea and catch up visit. You have not heard from or spoken to this person for five years. How would you feel?
- You have been looking everywhere in your home for your lost wallet. The doorbell rings, and when you open the door your neighbour says she found your wallet outside on the walkway and gives it to you. How would you feel?
- It's the first day of your new job. On your way to work, the bus you are on breaks down and you find out you will be stranded for 30 minutes or more, which will make you late for the group orientation. How would you feel?
- You have agreed to go to a new community group with a friend. The plan was to meet there. When you arrive, you walk into a room full of people you don't know and your friend is nowhere in sight. How would you feel?
- For the third time in a week, your neighbour is waiting to talk to you as soon as you come home from work to complain about other neighbours. This day, you are in a rush to make it to a family dinner event. How would you feel?
- You have been calling into a radio contest for three weeks. Today you get through and hear you are the winner of \$10,000! How would you feel?
- You told a friend information about yourself and asked her to keep it private. A week later, a second friend asks you about this information, having heard it from your first friend. How would you feel?
- A close friend you are visiting has just told you he has been diagnosed with lung cancer. As you sit together, how would you feel?
- You are returning an expensive item to the store and the staff person tells you that you are three days past the return date and the item cannot be returned or exchanged. How would you feel?



Feeling thermometer

Choose a category of emotions (happy, sad, mad, or scared) that best represents how you are feeling today. Rank different emotions from this category from cool to hot in terms of emotional intensity.



(Inspired by Potter-Effron & Potter-Effron, 2006)

REFERENCE

Potter-Effron, R., & Potter-Effron, P. (2006). *Letting go of anger: The 11 most common anger styles and what to do about them*. (2nd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Emotion cards

Angry

Frustrated

Anxious

Grateful

Confused

Impatient

Disgusted

Productive

Embarrassed

Disappointed

Exhausted

Relaxed



True feeling statements vs. implied feeling statements

Put a **T** before each sentence below that conveys true feeling by describing the speaker's emotional state.
Put an **I** before each sentence that only implies feeling but does not describe or identify the speaker's emotional state.

1. () a. Oh be quiet! I'm sick of listening to you!
 () b. I'm really disgusted by what you just said.
2. () a. No, I don't mind—you're only the ninth interruption I've had this morning.
 () b. I'm beginning to feel irritated by your constant interruptions.
 () c. You never show any consideration for anybody else's feelings!
3. () a. I feel devastated by the news I heard today.
 () b. This has been a very upsetting day.
 () c. Everyone feels bad about the news.
4. () a. You're a great person.
 () b. I really like you.
 () c. I think you're great.
5. () a. I'm just about ready to quit this stupid job!
 () b. This has got to be the worst job ever!
 () c. I'm very frustrated with the lack of support in this job.
6. () a. This is a pointless exercise.
 () b. I feel this is a pointless exercise.
 () c. I'm confused, frustrated, and annoyed by this exercise.
7. () a. I feel incompetent when it comes to fixing my bike.
 () b. I am incompetent when it comes to fixing my bike.
8. () a. I'm a total failure—I'll never amount to anything.
 () b. Sometimes I feel discouraged and doubt whether I will ever pass that test.
9. () a. I feel nobody at work cares whether I am there or not.
 () b. I feel lonely and isolated at work.
 () c. Nobody even cares if I'm alive or dead!
10. () a. I feel relaxed when I'm around you.
 () b. We all feel you're a wonderful person.
 () c. Everybody likes you.

(Inspired by Zapf, 1983)

REFERENCE

Zapf, M. (Ed.). (1983). Communication skills. *Discovering life skills: Volume 3*. (p. 57). Toronto, ON: YWCA.



True feeling statements

Here are some guidelines for creating a true feeling statement.

- Use the pronoun “I.”
- Start with “I feel...” and follow this with a feeling word.
- Be clear and direct, connecting your feeling to the other person’s specific action.
- Make your verbal and non-verbal messages consistent.
- Speak only for yourself.
- Remember, a statement which begins with “I feel that...” expresses a thought, not a feeling.

Example of a true feeling statement: I felt sad when you forgot our anniversary.

Below are some scenarios in which our main character is having trouble expressing his/her true feelings. Can you offer some suggestions, following the guidelines for true feeling statements?

Sarah’s athletic friend has asked her to go on a bike ride with him, and she is finding the route both challenging and exhausting. **Sarah says: “Wow, you sure are a good cyclist. You must have been training for the Tour de France!”**

Instead, she could try saying: _____

Bob’s wife comes home from walking the dog in the rain, and they proceed to track mud across the kitchen floor, which Bob has just washed. Bob is hurt by this apparent lack of appreciation, but it comes out angrily. **Bob says: “I just washed the #*!%@ floor!”**

Instead, he could try saying: _____

Jen has two sons, four-year old twins, and her visiting mother is criticizing the way Jen allows them to play in the living room. Jen finds this kind of comment both infuriating and unsupportive. **Jen says: Aw, Mom!**

Instead, she could try saying: _____

Mike loves his daughter dearly and has indulged her every shopping request. Now, at 22 years old, she is asking him to help her pay her rent again, as she has maxed out her credit card. Mike feels taken for granted and disappointed in his daughter’s irresponsibility, however **he says: “OK, but just this one last time.”**

Instead, he could try saying: _____



What would you do?

What would you do if you knew you had only six months to live?

What would you do if you won the lottery?

What would you like to achieve in your lifetime?

What would you like people to remember about you?



Choosing my values

Of the choices given to me, the values that mean most to me are:

RELATIONSHIP WITH PARTNER	FINANCIAL SECURITY
PERSONAL HEALTH AND FITNESS	CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SPIRITUALITY	SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
INTEGRITY AND HONESTY	OCCUPATIONAL SATISFACTION
LOVE FOR/SERVICE TO OTHERS	EDUCATION AND LEARNING
SELF-RESPECT	TAKING RESPONSIBILITY
EXERCISING LEADERSHIP	INNER HARMONY
INDEPENDENCE	INTELLIGENCE AND WISDOM
UNDERSTANDING	QUALITY OF LIFE
HAPPINESS/POSITIVE ATTITUDE	PLEASURE
SELF-CONTROL	AMBITION
BEING CAPABLE	IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY
FORGIVENESS	GENEROSITY
EQUALITY	FRIENDSHIP
BEAUTY	COURAGE

Adapted from Smith, H. W. (1994). Your governing values are the foundation of personal fulfillment. *The 10 natural laws of successful time and life management* (pp. 63–64). New York, NY: Warner Books.



Living my values

In the previous exercise, you named the values that mean most to you. But sometimes, despite our best intentions, we may actually sabotage our stated values by allowing ourselves to slip into old habits. In the first column below, write down your top five values; in the second column, the ways in which you support or demonstrate these values; and in the third column, the ways in which you may sometimes act against your values. This will make you more conscious of your actions, and allow you to choose more consciously.

My top five values	I demonstrate this value by...	I sabotage this value by...
Example: Improving my health and fitness	Going to the gym three times a week with my friends	Sometimes calling and cancelling and then watching television instead
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Now, identify one action you can take today to support or manifest the value you listed as your top priority. Finally, as proof of your commitment, share your intention with your neighbour.

(Inspired by Korb, Azok, & Leutenberg, 1989)

REFERENCE

Korb, K., Azok, S., & Leutenberg, E. (1989). What do I value? *Life management skills I: Reproducible activity handouts created for facilitators* (p. 50). Beachwood, OH: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.



SMART goals

Setting goals and achieving them is one way to improve your self-esteem and participate in your own healing process. The SMART acronym developed by Doran (1981) describes the qualities your goal statement should have to make you more likely to succeed.

S: **Specific – Use action verbs to describe exactly what you will do; break the goal into small steps. *What is the action?*** Example: “I will walk outside.”

My action: _____

M: **Measurable – Use numbers to define how you will know when you are finished. How many pages will you read? How often will you do relaxation? *What is the measurement?*** Example: “15 minutes or once around the block.”

My measurement: _____

A: **Acceptable – Is this goal acceptable to you? Do you really want to achieve this goal? *Why is it important to me?*** Example: “I will have more energy.”

My reason: _____

R: **Realistic – Can it really be done, given limitations of time, money, space, resources, and your energy? Is this truly within your control? *What resources do I have to succeed?*** Example: “I have a break at lunch and running shoes.”

My resources: _____

T: **Time frame – When will you start? When will it be finished? How long will you spend working on it at a time? *When will I start and complete this goal?*** Example: “I will start today after eating lunch and do this every day for five days.”

My start and end date: _____

This week I will: _____

Adapted from “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management’s goals and objectives” by G. T. Doran, 1981, *Management Review*, 70(11), 35–36. Copyright 1981 by American Management Association International. Adapted with permission.



Examples of SMART goals

"I will get ready for my trip," may be acceptable and realistic, but it is not specific enough and has no endpoint and no time frame. How about:

"I will get ready for my trip by shopping for toiletries and clothes (name them) on Thursday afternoon, by calling John to ask him to watch my place when I am away, and by buying my bus ticket on Friday."

"I will look after my spiritual needs," is neither specific nor measurable, nor does it have a time frame. How about:

"I will take 15 minutes each morning before the family gets up to read my book of scripture/work on my meditation practice, and I plan to go on a nature walk on Sunday. I will be tired after the walk so I will make an easy spaghetti dinner that evening."

"I will get my wife and mother to be nice to each other over family dinner," is definitely not realistic because it is not within your control! What you could try is:

"I will tell my wife how much it upsets me when she and my mother argue, and I will ask her to refrain from discussing topics she knows are likely to get her upset. I will bring up the subject after supper tonight."

"I will get myself motivated to do my goals." Is this realistic? Can you set a goal that guarantees you will feel a certain way? Probably not, but being more specific about what actions you would take to promote that feeling may help. How about:

"I will start my day by choosing one task, like cleaning the bathroom sink (as specific as possible), to tackle each morning, which is my best time for energy and mood (pick your best time). I will ask my neighbour to come with me to swim (doing something with someone else for company) and will plan to be home by lunch so that we are not out too long (estimating the time needed and setting a time by when you will be finished). Also, we could stop in at the quilt shop for a treat, just to look at the beautiful fabrics (building in a reward for yourself afterward)."

Adapted from "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives" by G. T. Doran, 1981, *Management Review*, 70(11), 35–36. Copyright 1981 by American Management Association International. Adapted with permission.



What's wrong with these goal statements?

Remember that SMART goals must be *specific, measurable, acceptable to you, realistic*, and bounded by a *time frame* (Doran, 1981). None of the below statements follows the SMART format. They may be realistic but not specific, or measurable but not time limited. Look at each sentence below and decide what SMART quality that statement is lacking. Then cross out the appropriate letter—the S, M, A, R, or T—to indicate one quality which is not fulfilled by this statement.

I will learn to express my feelings better.	SMART
I will try to be less anxious this week.	SMART
I will get my family to understand what I'm going through.	SMART
I will get more physically active.	SMART
I will get over my depression.	SMART
I will learn to trust people.	SMART
I will be able to sleep at night.	SMART
I will lose weight.	SMART
I will exercise more.	SMART
I will be the kind of wife/son/sibling my family wants me to be.	SMART
I will get my family to understand my depression.	SMART
I will clean my house from top to bottom.	SMART
I will sew up the hem of my pants.	SMART
I will finish my tax return.	SMART

Now, pick one of the above goals and decide what would need to be changed or added to turn it into a SMART goal. Rewrite it as a SMART goal.

Adapted from “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management’s goals and objectives” by G. T. Doran, 1981, *Management Review*, 70(11), 35–36. Copyright 1981 by American Management Association International. Adapted with permission.



Strategies for getting started and staying on track with your goal

Choose a realistic goal—one you believe you can succeed at.

Prepare your materials/tools/workspace.

Break the goal down into several smaller steps or sub-goals. Tackle one small step.

Make your goal conspicuous: post reminders or cues around the house.

Remind yourself of your short- and long-term goals—“Keep the goalpost in sight.”

Tell someone about your goal.

Visualize your finished goal.

Remind yourself how great you’ll feel after you’re finished!

Estimate how long the task will take.

Give yourself a time limit as to how long you will work on the goal at a time. Try working on it for five minutes and you may find this is enough to get you to stay on task.

Commit to working on the goal for 5 or 10 minutes. This will often help with initiation.

Encourage yourself with positive self-talk; prepare for setbacks, but don’t let them derail your purpose.

Build in a reward for yourself for after you’ve finished the task or step.



Sentence stems

One activity I would like to do better is...

One coping skill I would like to improve is...

Sentence stems

One activity I would like to do better is...

One coping skill I would like to improve is...



Prioritizing my occupational challenges

What activities are difficult for you right now? By accurately identifying what the problems are, you will be better able to choose a meaningful goal. Check boxes in each area that represent activities you are having difficulty doing, for any reason, right now.

Looking after myself (self-care activities)

- ☐ Eating on a regular basis
- ☐ Keeping a sleep routine
- ☐ Taking care of my hygiene (showering, brushing teeth/hair)
- ☐ Getting dressed in clean clothes
- ☐ Standing up for myself when necessary
- ☐ Maintaining supportive relationships
- ☐ Managing my medications
- ☐ Getting around in my community
- ☐ Using relaxation techniques
- ☐ Coping with stress
- ☐ Getting regular physical exercise
- ☐ Using techniques for avoiding drugs/alcohol

Doing things I need to do (productive activities)

- ☐ Finding a job or volunteer position
- ☐ Keeping a job or volunteer position
- ☐ Keeping up with my studies
- ☐ Managing my money
- ☐ Doing my laundry
- ☐ Keeping my living space clean and organized
- ☐ Shopping wisely
- ☐ Planning and preparing nutritious meals
- ☐ Caring for others or animals for whom I am responsible
- ☐ Concentrating on my tasks
- ☐ Setting goals and making decisions

Enjoying life (leisure activities)

- ☐ Doing things for creative expression
- ☐ Participating in active interests
- ☐ Engaging in quiet or solitary hobbies
- ☐ Taking part in social activities



Defining the problem

Of the problems you chose, pick one that is causing you distress or the one that is most impacting your health today AND for which you would like to set a goal for change.

Problem activity:

Now define it as specifically as you can. It may help to consider the five Ws: who, what, when, where, and why. For example, if you identified “Taking care of my hygiene,” as a problem, you might define it as follows:

“It’s hard to get organized to have my shower before lunch.”

“I don’t have the energy to have my shower in the morning.”

“I feel so depressed that having a shower just doesn’t seem to matter sometimes.”

Now define your problem as specifically as you can.

What would it be worth to be able to solve/manage this problem? (check one)

- ☐ Not much ☐ A little ☐ Quite a lot ☐ A great deal ☐ More than I can express

How hard are you willing to work on the above challenge? (check one)

- ☐ I will only do it if it’s easy. ☐ I’ll try until I meet a barrier. ☐ I can tolerate some discomfort.
☐ I can tolerate some anxiety. ☐ I’ll work on it every day, no matter what.

What will your behaviour look like when you have solved this problem? (e.g., “I will take my shower every morning after breakfast.”)

This week, I will:



Write your own progress note

(SOAP definition and template)

Subjective: *Emphasis here is on feelings/opinions.* How do I feel compared to last week? How hard have I been working on my goals? How do I feel about my progress? What am I hoping to achieve? How do I feel about discharge readiness?

Objective: *Just the facts now!* What have I done this week? What changes/improvements have I made in the areas of self-care (e.g., taking my shower daily, going to meals, getting exercise), productivity (e.g., staying out of bed, working on my goals, making important phone calls) or leisure (taking time to do something I really enjoy, gathering information about community leisure resources)? What do others say about my progress? How have I coped with difficulties?

Assessment: In summary, how would I evaluate my progress this week?

Plan: What steps do I need to take next? What will I continue to do next week? Is there anything I need to change? How will I reward myself for my accomplishments?

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(Inspired by Kettenbach, 2016)

REFERENCE

Kettenbach, G. (2016). *Writing patient/client notes* (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: F. A. Davis Company.



The parts of a SOAP note

Read the following statements and determine to which part of a SOAP note they belong.

Statements	Subjective	Objective	Assessment	Plan
I have been using deep breathing and meditation before bed.				
I will continue following my routine.				
Improved anxiety management.				
I am feeling very anxious.				
I am making progress on my goal for the week.				
Improved concentration.				
I am out of my room most of the day.				
I will continue attending therapy groups.				
Improved activity tolerance.				
I am feeling sad and depressed.				
I will continue practicing my coping strategies.				
I have been following my morning hygiene routine.				
I am feeling nervous and anxious about discharge.				
I will make two new goals for myself and work toward these by the end of the week.				

(Inspired by Kettenbach, 2016)

REFERENCE

Kettenbach, G. (2016). Writing patient/client notes (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: F. A. Davis Company.



The six stages of change

When we set goals, essentially we are embarking on change, which is always stressful to some degree. Therefore, it is important that our goals are appropriate to our state of readiness for change. According to authors Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente in the book *Changing for Good* (1994), people change in predictable ways, and the change process can be summarized in six recognizable stages.

The first of the six stages is **pre-contemplation**. Change in this stage seems to be too difficult and is avoided. We hope for a magical solution. We deny that there is a problem. We rationalize the problem. We blame it on someone else, and so avoid taking responsibility for solving it. We raise a wall of resistance against taking action. It's usually only by some outside force (relationship crisis, anniversary, job loss, etc.) that denial ends and change can begin.

In the **contemplation** stage, we develop the desire to change but have little understanding of how to do it. This is a time of gaining insight and making decisions. Gaining insight into a problem is important for a self-change effort, but we should guard against prolonged contemplation, which can lead to "paralysis by analysis." Movement from the contemplation stage occurs when our focus shifts from the problem to the solution.

In the **preparation** stage, activity toward the change begins and expectations are raised. It is a time of making commitments. Energy is invested in defining the steps and acquiring resources.

The **action** stage is characterized by a great deal of activity toward the change. New behaviour usually gets the attention of those around us and brings comments about the change. Stress about change peaks in this stage, so we need also to plan how we will combat stress and interfering thoughts.

In the **maintenance** stage, no new techniques need to be applied in order to preserve success; we need only to remain vigilant for the conditions most often resulting in relapse, namely social pressure, internal conditions (such as feeling overconfident or having self-defeating thoughts) and to be prepared with strategies to stay the course.

The **termination** stage is marked by integration of the goal behaviour. Most people do not get to this stage the first or even the second time. When relapse occurs, we will not begin at the pre-contemplation stage again. We may return to the contemplation stage to assess our motivation or we may return to the preparation stage to formulate a new plan.

From *When you change. Changing for good: A revolutionary six-stage program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward* (pp. 36-50), by J. O. Prochaska, J. C. Norcross, & C. DiClemente, 1994, New York, NY: William Morrow & Co. Copyright 1994 William Morrow & Co. Reprinted with permission.



Identifying the stages of change

The following statements or questions are typical of different stages of the change process. Beside each statement, write the name of the stage you think it belongs to.

"It's not my problem."

"How do I really feel about this?"

"Nothing can help me."

"What steps do I need to go through?"

"It's his fault. He should fix it."

"I need to gather some more information before I start."

"What part of the problem can I control?"

"Now what is my next step?"

"How did I get myself into this mess?"

"First, I need to make a plan."

"Now I need to be assertive and stand my ground."

"What goal can I realistically expect of myself today?"

(Inspired by Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994)

REFERENCE

Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClemente, C. C. (1994). When you change. *Changing for good: A revolutionary six-stage program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward.* (pp. 36-50) New York, NY: William Morrow & Co.



Questions for each stage of change

PRECONTEMPLATION:

Do I have a problem?
Am I content with the status quo?
Am I willing to make courageous changes in my life for the sake of better life satisfaction?
Am I willing to try new ways of coping with my problems?

CONTEMPLATION:

What in my life needs changing?
What is the nature of my problem?
How did I get into this predicament?
To what extent am I responsible for what's going on in my life now?
How do I really feel about this problem?
What part of this problem can I control?
What are the strategies that I am missing?
What are my options?
What are the pros and cons of each option?
What goals can I realistically expect to achieve at this time?

PREPARATION:

Do I have all the information I need? Where can I find information?
What are the steps involved in making this change?
What are the steps involved in learning the skill that I want to gain?
Do I have all the resources and supports that I need?
What goal can I set at this point?
What coping strategies will I use to motivate myself when the going gets tough?
What coping strategies will I use to manage my anxiety when I start to make these changes?
Are there any strategies I can practice in advance? (e.g., relaxation strategies)

ACTION:

What is my goal for today?
What is the very first thing I need to do now?
How will I be assertive and stand my ground when I meet resistance to this change?

MAINTENANCE

What self-talk can I use to help myself keep on track?
What coping strategies will I use to motivate myself when the going gets tough?

(Inspired by Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994)

REFERENCE

Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClemente, C. C. (1994). *Changing for good: A revolutionary six-stage program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward*. New York, NY: William Morrow & Co.



Stages of change goal sheet

Name one problem you are facing this week.

Which stage of change are you at with this problem?

What are some questions that you can ask yourself to clarify your thinking at this stage of change?

Write down one goal to address this problem this week (using the SMART goal format from Doran, 1981), keeping in mind the stage of change you are at right now.

Specific action I will take: _____

Measurement of my action: _____

Acceptable reason to do this action: _____

Resources that will allow for my success: _____

Time frame of when I will start and complete my action: _____

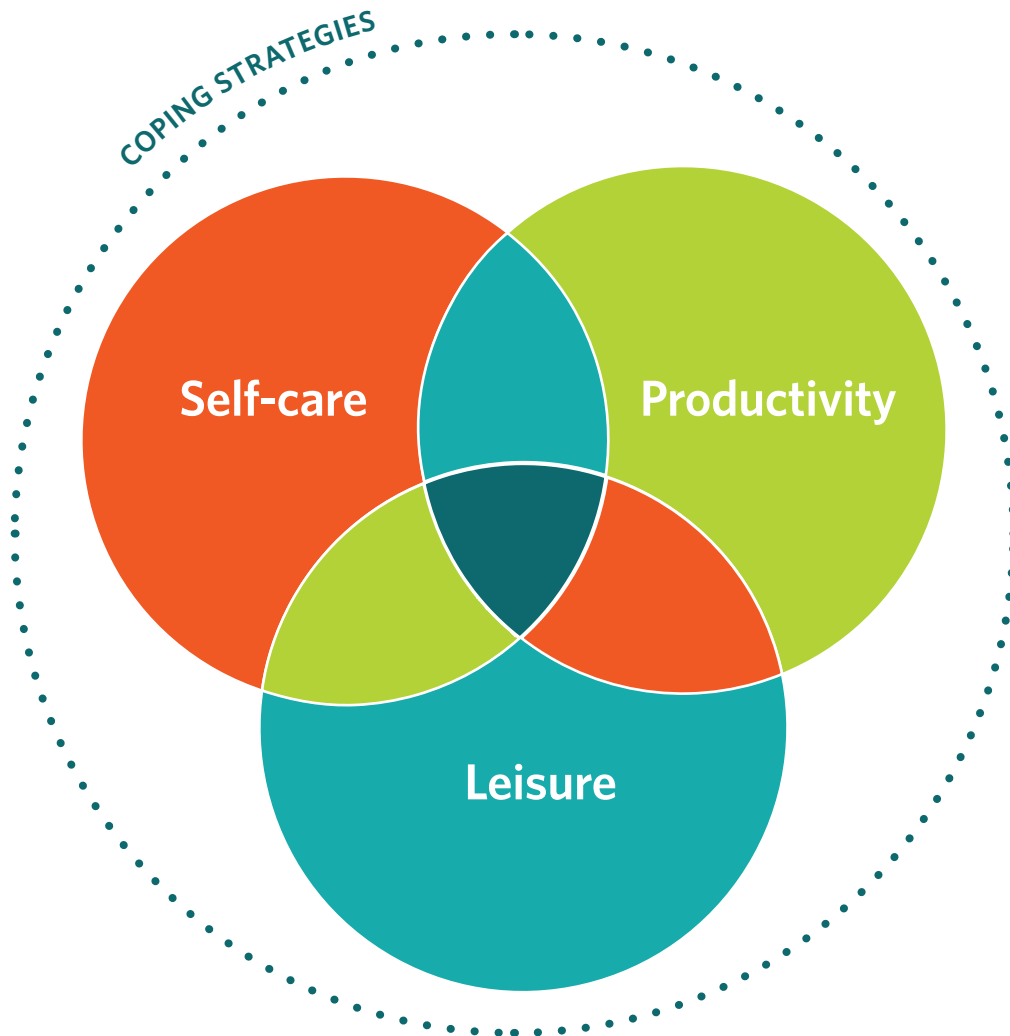
(Inspired by Doran, 1981)

Adapted from “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management’s goals and objectives” by G. T. Doran, 1981, *Management Review*, 70(11), 35–36. Copyright 1981 by American Management Association International. Adapted with permission.



Healthy balance

This diagram shows three intersecting circles within a large outer circle. The three circles represent a balance of self-care, productive, and leisure occupations. The large outer circle represents coping strategies, which help us to engage in our daily occupations.



(Inspired by Law, Baptiste, Carswell, McColl, Polatajko, & Pollock, 2014)

REFERENCE

Law, M., Baptiste, S., Carswell, A., McColl, M. A., Polatajko, H., & Pollock, N. (2014). *Canadian Occupational Performance Measure* (5th ed.). Ottawa, ON: CAOT Publications ACE.



Balance and coping strategies

Self-care	Leisure
Productivity	Coping strategies



Two-day planner

<div>Day 1 _____</div> <div>Morning</div>	<div>Day 2 _____</div> <div>Morning</div>
<div>Afternoon</div>	<div>Afternoon</div>
<div>Evening</div>	<div>Evening</div>

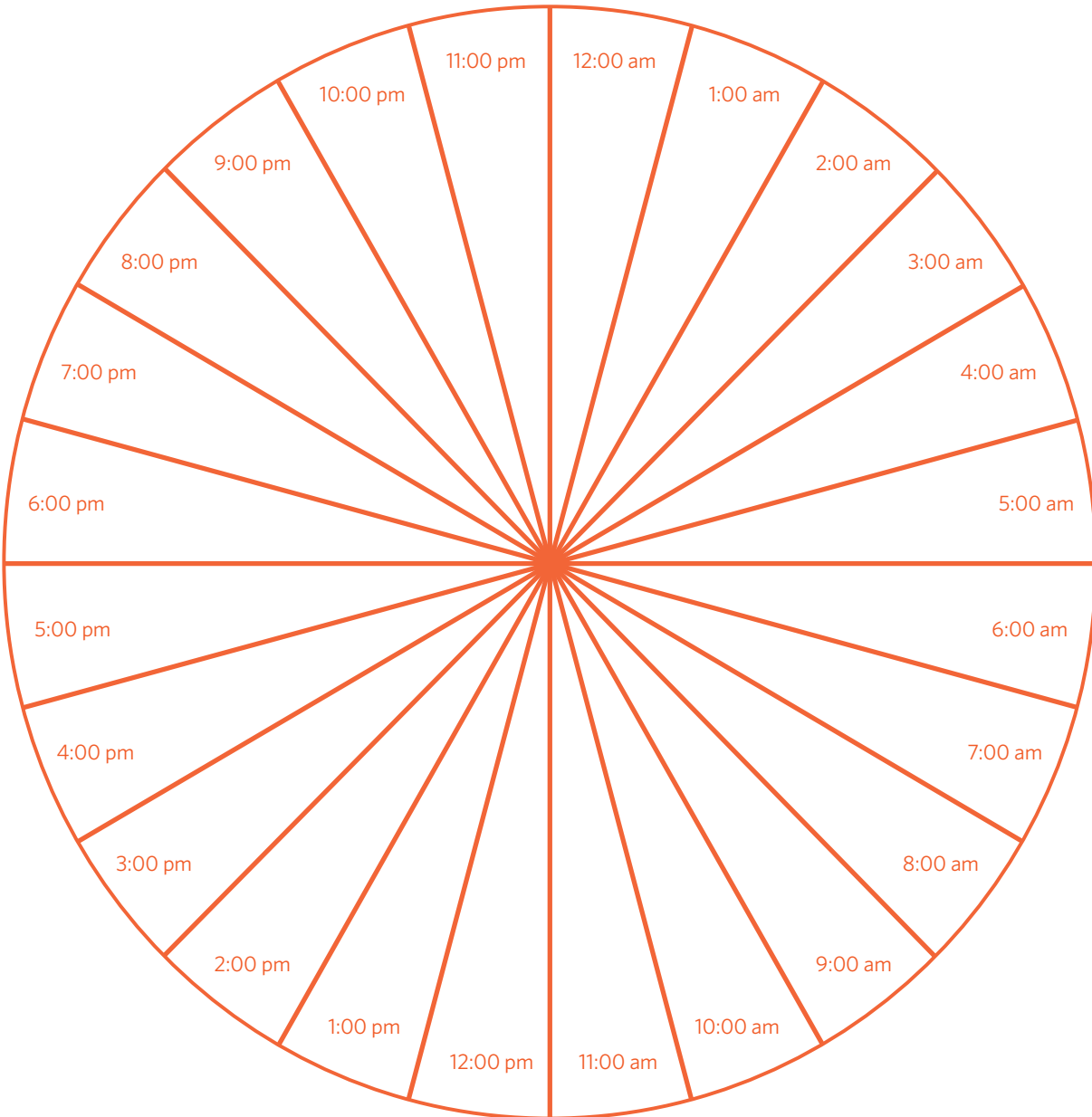


Three-day planner

	Day 1 _____	Day 2 _____	Day3 _____
Morning			
Afternoon			
Evening			



The balance wheel



(Adapted from Korb, Azok & Leutenberg, 1991)

REFERENCE

Korb, K., Azok, S., & Leutenberg, E. (1991). *Life management skills II: Reproducible activity handouts created for facilitators* (p. 27). Beachwood, OH: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.



Leisure needs checklist

The following list includes some of the reasons people take part in leisure occupations. Read through the list and check off the top five reasons you would choose to do a leisure occupation. These are the needs you are fulfilling through leisure.

<p>Solitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To enjoy peace and quiet <input type="checkbox"/> To relax <input type="checkbox"/> To enjoy my privacy 	<p>Social connectedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To contribute to my community <input type="checkbox"/> To help others <input type="checkbox"/> To have companionship <input type="checkbox"/> To meet a variety of people <input type="checkbox"/> To do something with my family
<p>Physical activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To be physically active <input type="checkbox"/> To be busy <input type="checkbox"/> To organize and start activities <input type="checkbox"/> To travel <input type="checkbox"/> To do sports or workouts 	<p>Challenge and mastery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To compete successfully <input type="checkbox"/> To learn something new <input type="checkbox"/> To be creative <input type="checkbox"/> To be challenged <input type="checkbox"/> To feel confident

☐ Other reasons: _____

Now rank these five items from #1 through #5, with #1 being most important to you and #5 being of lesser importance to you. How are you meeting these needs?

My Needs

Leisure options to meet these needs

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

(Inspired by Allen & Levan, 1986)

REFERENCE

Allen, S., & Levan, M. (1986). Leisure. *Discovering life skills: Volume 4—Special needs groups* (pp. 174–183). Toronto, ON: YWCA.



Overcoming obstacles to leisure

There are two kinds of obstacle that we need to address.

External obstacles

These are factors that are beyond our control, such as weather, other peoples' availability, or work commitments. Perhaps we need to devise a "Plan B" in case external events interfere with our "Plan A."

Internal obstacles

These are factors that are largely within our control to change, such as attitudes, time management strategies, or inadequate knowledge of resources. They show up as excuses for why we cannot participate in leisure. Here are some familiar ones:

"I don't have time."

This just means that something else is more important to you than leisure activities. Perhaps it is because your time is so full of work, studying, or caregiving obligations that there are no more hours left in the day for your pleasure and relaxation. The problem is that such a schedule, jam-packed with work, is not sustainable; eventually your health will break down. (Maybe it already has.) You must ask yourself, "What am I willing to set aside in order to make room for **my** needs?"

"When I do something just for my own pleasure, I feel guilty."

This attitude goes back to our core beliefs about our own value. If we think this way, it means that somewhere deep in our consciousness is a belief that we **shouldn't** have pleasure or **don't deserve** to feel pleasure. Challenge that thought: "Who says I shouldn't?" "Why don't I deserve it as much as anyone else?" "What am I getting out of feeling guilty?"

"I don't have enough money."

Of course, some activities are very expensive. However, there are others that are totally free or free at certain times. Rather than saying "If I can't do that, then I won't do anything," consider trying something different that is within your budget—perhaps trying something new will open a whole new area of interest and enjoyment.

"I hate doing stuff by myself, and I have no one to go with."

Ask someone to do it with you! Or if you don't know anyone to ask, consider joining a club, taking a class, or going to public community events. Introduce yourself to one other person when you get there—then, next time you **will** know someone else there.

"I don't know the city very well. How do I find out where to go for recreation?"

Check out libraries—they always post community information and carry publications and newspapers advertising events, classes, and recreation activities. Look online at your area's official website and look for links to parks and recreation resources. Stores that sell materials or equipment related to your interest (such as craft, music, or sports stores) will probably also post information about events in the community. Local schools often host events, courses, and clubs. Browse the telephone book, newspapers, and municipal catalogues.



"My parents (friends/partner/neighbours) will think I'm weird if I do that."

So how badly do you want to do it? How badly will you feel if you miss out because you worried about others' reactions? Be prepared with some comebacks: "Life is too short to miss this!"

"I usually just watch television."

It's easy to get into a rut, leaving no room for better activities. Consider what you are getting out of that familiar activity and whether there might be something that, with a little more effort, would give you a lot more satisfaction.

.....



Each day is a new account

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86,400...

That carried over no balance from day to day...

Allowed you to keep no cash in your accounts...

And every evening cancelled whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day...

What would you do?

Draw out every cent, of course!

Well, you have such a bank. Its name is TIME.

Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds.

Every night, it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose.

It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.

Each day, it opens a new account for you.

Each night, it burns the records of the day.

If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours.

There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow."

It is up to each of us to invest this precious fund of hours, minutes, and seconds to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success!

-Anonymous

REFERENCE

Tubesing, N., & Tubesing, D. (Eds.). (1984). Each day is a new account. *Structured exercises in stress management* (Vol. 2, p. 96). Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.

(Inspired by Tubesing & Tubesing, 1984)

REFERENCE

Tubesing, N., & Tubesing, D. (Eds.). (1984). The ABC's of time. *Structured exercises in stress management* (Vol. 2, pp. 92–96). Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.

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Transforming loneliness to solitude planner

What will I do...	Day 1	Day 2
To take care of myself		
To enjoy life/ to transform loneliness into solitude		
To be productive or constructive		



Daily maintenance checklist (Part I)

You have the opportunity to set down some healthy routines that you could follow on a daily basis. You can choose those routines that you know will support your continued recovery and maintain your good health.

Below are some ideas for a “daily maintenance list,” those **things you must do every day to keep yourself well** and **things you need to consider doing every day for your best health**. Check off those things you will put on your “daily maintenance list.”

- ☐ Making/eating regular nutritious meals
- ☐ Keeping a healthy bedtime routine for adequate sleep
- ☐ Doing some form of exercise
- ☐ Doing something for leisure (social, quiet, creative, active)
- ☐ Doing relaxation exercises
- ☐ Contacting a trusted friend
- ☐ Taking my medications and keeping appointments
- ☐ Limiting caffeine and alcohol intake
- ☐ Doing chores/something productive
- ☐ Taking care of my grooming
- ☐ Taking care of my living space
- ☐ Writing in my journal
- ☐ Spending time with people/groups that support me
- ☐ _____

(Adapted from Copeland, 2001)

REFERENCE

Copeland, M. E. (2001). Developing and using a wellness recovery action plan. *The depression workbook: A guide for living with depression and manic depression* (2nd ed., pp. 124–125). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Daily maintenance checklist (Part II)

Now consider exactly what those activities will look like for you. Write down those activities you chose, being more specific about what you mean. Customize them for yourself. For example:

Eating regular nutritious meals	I will eat three healthy meals each day, starting with breakfast, and try to eat at the same time each day. I will include foods from all food groups.
Keeping a healthy bedtime routine for adequate sleep	
Doing some form of exercise	
Doing something for leisure (social, quiet, creative, active)	
Doing relaxation exercises	
Contacting a trusted friend	



Taking my medications and keeping appointments	
Doing chores/something productive	
Taking care of my grooming	
Taking care of my living space	
Writing in my journal	
Spending time with people/groups that support me	

(Adapted from Copeland, 2001)

REFERENCE

Copeland, M. E. (2001). Developing and using a wellness recovery action plan. *The depression workbook: A guide for living with depression and manic depression* (2nd ed., pp. 124–125). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Daily basics schedule

7:00 am _____

8:00 _____

9:00 _____

10:00 _____

11:00 _____

12:00 pm _____

1:00 _____

2:00 _____

3:00 _____

4:00 _____

5:00 _____

6:00 _____

7:00 _____

8:00 _____

9:00 _____

10:00 _____



The process of resilience

Resilience is formed when a person constructively adapts to stress, hardship, threat, and trauma. Behaviour choices are more likely to facilitate the development of resilience and help people to “bounce back” than being “born that way.” Building resilience is an ongoing process that requires time, effort, and the choice of occupations to promote adaptation. In his book *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Seligman described life choices and their impact on building resilience as follows:

Choice 1 – The pleasant life: This involves seeking fun and pleasure and making efforts to avoid pain and upset. Activities may include indulgence in pleasurable foods and hobbies/sports we enjoy, and alone time may be limited. In some instances, when one is involved in a task, time seems to stand still due to the pleasure of the task. What provides pleasure habituates over time, and there is a constant need for new thrills. This is the lifestyle least likely to help develop resilience.

Choice 2 – The good life: Satisfaction comes from finding and developing our talents in life roles, like those related to work, relationships, and other activities of value. There is a willingness to put in effort and work against resistance to meet new challenges. This effort and the positive emotions experienced as a result are the beginning of developing resilience. Activities might include teaching your child to ride a bike and meeting work expectations.

Choice 3 – The meaningful life: Talents are used to give back to society and to serve the greater good. Engagement in activity may be out of a sense of duty or obligation, rather than for personal pleasure or passion (e.g., volunteering to do something you do not enjoy because no one else has stepped forward and others are now asking you to take it on). It is the ability to give back that then brings one to a higher level of resilience. Care must be taken to ensure that one’s own health is not compromised by taking on too much.

Choice 4 – The full life: This involves using talents for the service of something larger than you while enjoying life. (e.g., using your talent for quilting to volunteer with a group that make quilts for people undergoing cancer treatments—the group is fun and you enjoy much laughter and companionship while you work). This type of lifestyle allows one to adapt and grow over time, because it incorporates key concepts necessary for building resilience: persevering through resistance, contributing to others’ lives, and doing so with passion.

Both physical and mental skills contribute to adaptation to stress and trauma. Physical skills include strength, endurance, flexibility, speed, and relaxation. Some key mental skills include optimism, presence, compassion, challenge, contribution, connectedness, and gratitude.

Adapted from *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment* (pp. 261-263), by M. E. P. Seligman, 2002, New York, NY: The Free Press. Copyright 2002 by The Free Press. Adapted with permission.



Key concepts of building resilience and matching activities

To develop resilience, it is helpful to know where it is best to put time and effort into activity choices. The process involves understanding physical as well as mental skills that promote adaptation.

SKILL: Physical health – building strength, endurance, and flexibility, and finding relaxation and laughter

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Exercise 30 minutes at minimum three times per week, use stairs instead of elevators, have a regular sleep routine, stretch consistently, do yoga, eat three nutritious meals per day, eat a healthy breakfast every day, limit caffeine intake, drink six to eight cups of water daily, practice relaxation techniques 10 to 15 minutes per day, breathe deeply, watch comedy, or see the lighter or humorous side of events.

OTHER: _____

SKILL: Optimism – choosing a positive outlook, believing in oneself, and building on strengths

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Find the goodness in yourself and others, list three strengths in yourself, list three positive qualities of another person, tell another about a talent or interest you have, recognize catastrophizing and replace it with a rational attitude, or use positive statements to keep motivated (e.g., “I can do this,” “I can learn this new activity, it just takes practice.”).

OTHER: _____

SKILL: Presence – self-regulation, connection to self, solitude, sensory awareness, and mindfulness

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Acknowledge/experience emotions and release them (as opposed to simmering in emotions), practice sensory and rhythmic activity (colouring, knitting, sanding, kneading bread), meditate, pray, focus on the present, contemplate the beauty of an object around you, play the five senses game (identify five things you see, five things you hear, then continue for taste, touch, and smell), or create beauty.

OTHER: _____

SKILL: Compassion – kindness, acceptance, and forgiveness of self and others

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Tell someone what you love about them, remind yourself no one is perfect, find the fun in making mistakes, try to see the other side of someone who has wronged you, think of a compassionate statement you would say to a friend if that person was in the same situation as you, or practice radical acceptance (acknowledging “it is what it is”).

OTHER: _____

SKILL: Challenging yourself

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Learn something new, try something you have not done before, change your walking route, brainstorm possible solutions to a problem, or set a goal.

OTHER: _____



SKILL: Contribution – service to others and using your talents for the greater good

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES: Research an organization that fits with your values and interests, consider a volunteer activity, get involved with your local community centre, or be alert for opportunities to offer random acts of kindness.

OTHER: _____

SKILL: Connectedness – connecting with life around you (people, plants, and animals)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Smile and/or greet others you pass, say good morning to someone, share a joke or funny story, talk about the weather or a recent positive news story, compliment someone, garden, care for a plant, spend time with your pet, ask about another's pet, or spend time with friends and loved ones.

OTHER: _____

SKILL: Gratitude

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES: Identify your strengths, count blessings, savour life's joys, thank a person who has made a positive difference in your life, keep a daily gratitude journal, or seek pleasure in daily tasks.

OTHER: _____

Watch out for these pitfalls that can damage our resilience:

A: Addiction to drama – This could involve habits such as watching reality shows, gossiping, focusing on negatives, or putting down others, and can normalize unhealthy activity.

B: Viewing self as a victim – Seeing yourself as a victim and as helpless can lead to very passive activity. Try changing the word “victim” to “survivor” and look for methods of empowerment such as finding actions that are within your control to accomplish.

C: Avoiding responsibility – When things don't go as planned, it may be a knee-jerk reaction to blame others or external circumstances. Take time to reflect and look for alternate solutions and for where you have control to take action.

D: Lack of balance in life – Having limited balance leads to exhaustion and poor life satisfaction. For a greater sense of well-being, we need to look after our health and relationships and have meaningful productive roles.

(Inspired by Seligman, 2002; Thibeault, 2011a; Thibeault, 2011b)

REFERENCES

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002) *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Thibeault, R. (2011a). Occupational gifts. In M. A. McColl (Ed.), *Spirituality and occupational therapy* (pp. 111–119). Ottawa, ON: CAOT Publications ACE.
- Thibeault, R. (2011b). Resilience and maturity. In M. A. McColl (Ed.), *Spirituality and occupational therapy* (pp. 121–130). Ottawa, ON: CAOT Publications ACE.



My occupation choices to build resilience

Choose three skill categories below. Write down one activity that you could do in the next 24 hours under each.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

OPTIMISM

PRESENCE

COMPASSION

CHALLENGE

CONTRIBUTION

CONNECTEDNESS

GRATITUDE

(Inspired by Seligman, 2002; Thibeault, 2011).

REFERENCES

- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002) *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Thibeault, R. (2011). Occupational gifts. In M. A. McColl (Ed.), *Spirituality and occupational therapy* (pp. 111–119). Ottawa, ON: CAOT Publications ACE.



Card sort task

The following examples can be separated and given to learners to sort under the different categories of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

Adequate sleep

Using positive copers

Eating well

Using relaxation methods

Grooming

Prayer/meditation

Exercise

Nurturing relationships

Taking medications

Volunteering

Financial security

Joining clubs

Physical safety

Positive self talk

Healthy routines and habits

Working

Being assertive

Having a pet

Setting good boundaries

Family ties

Being around trusted friends

Helping others



Accepting our limitations

Keeping up a support network

Acknowledging our strengths

Using affirmations

Attitude of self-forgiveness

Setting goals

Reaching our potential

Realizing our dreams

**Conscious living - making
deliberate choices**

**Balanced lifestyle - knowing what
mix of activities keeps us healthy**

**Asking and expecting to be
treated with respect**

**Choosing to cope with stress in
constructive ways**

**Not tolerating relationships that
undermine our self-worth**

**Belonging to a spiritual/religious
community**

**Contributing to our community in
some way**





Maslow’s hierarchy of needs



(Adapted from Maslow, 1954; Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987)

REFERENCES

- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Brothers
- Simons, J. A., Irwin, D. B., & Drinnien, B. A. (1987). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. *Psychology: The search for understanding*. New York, NY: West Publishing Company.



My personal hierarchy of needs

Consider now your own hierarchy of needs. Are there any gaps? Have you sacrificed some needs in favour of others? What activities do you need to do to support your self-esteem?



(Adapted from Maslow, 1954; Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987)

REFERENCES

- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Brothers
- Simons, J. A., Irwin, D. B., & Drinnien, B. A. (1987). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. *Psychology: The search for understanding*. New York, NY: West Publishing Company.



Self-esteem builders

Here is a list of some things to do to increase self-esteem:

Self-care activities

- take good care of myself (nutrition, sleep, grooming, dressing well, exercise)
- do meditation and relaxation exercises
- when going to sleep at night, remind myself of what I have accomplished that day
- monitor and respond appropriately to my early warning signs of stress
- practice consistently affirmative self-talk
- look at why I am feeling low or high and do something about it
- develop a strong support system
- listen to others who affirm my worth
- avoid people who bring me down
- seek counselling
- be willing to take more risks and give myself credit for trying even if I do not succeed

Productive activities

- be goal oriented
- take care of my family and pets
- do work that I feel good about doing
- keep my house in order
- work as a volunteer
- learn new strategies
- take classes/continue my education
- take part in community activities
- have a special place to keep mementos and reminders of my achievements

Leisure activities

- be a good friend
- listen to good music
- garden
- pursue hobbies and crafts
- write in a journal
- join special interest clubs
- join spiritual/religious activities
- keep cards, pictures of family or trips, and positive notes in places where I can see them often



Self-esteem bruisers

Here is a list of some things that can damage self-esteem:

- Procrastinating
- Being passive
- Being around people who have a negative attitude
- Being around people who are critical or unsupportive or who abuse me
- Negative thinking
- Using “should” statements
- Isolating myself
- Not getting enough sleep
- Having poor eating habits
- Telling myself I’m worthless or a failure
- Neglecting good grooming
- Not getting enough exercise
- Minimizing my own attributes and achievements
- Always trying to avoid stress
- Worrying about things beyond my control
- Having hangovers
- Allowing myself to be manipulated
- Giving in to self-destructive urges
- Worrying about what people will think

(Inspired by Copeland, 2001)

REFERENCE

Copeland, M. E. (2001). Building self-esteem and self-confidence. *The depression workbook: A guide for living with depression and manic depression* (2nd ed., pp. 207–212). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Self-esteem worksheet

Builders	Bruisers
Here are some of the activities I can do to improve the way I feel about myself.	I will avoid these activities or habits that I know will have a negative effect on how I feel about myself.

Here are the strategies I will use to help me keep my resolve:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

(Inspired by Korb, Azok, & Leutenberg, 1989)

REFERENCE

Korb, K., Azok, S., & Leutenberg, E. (1989). Self-esteem. *Life management skills I: Reproducible activity handouts created for facilitators* (p. 37). Beachwood, OH: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.



Affirmation bingo

B	I	N	G	O
One talent I have is	I am a good friend when I	People find me interesting because	I very well	I am strong at
The colour _____ looks good on me.	Others respect me because I am	I am an accomplished	A subject I know a lot about is	I like to compliment others on
I cheer up others by	I am happy when I think of this event	FREE SPACE I deserve time to heal.	I am grateful for my ability to	A motto I live by is
My friends like me because I	One thing I really enjoy doing is	One person who makes me feel good about myself is	A compliment I often receive is:	I have a great sense of
I am often praised for my	One constructive coping skill I use is	A positive quality about myself that starts with R is	One thing I am great at is	I like the way I feel about myself when I

(Inspired by Korb-Khalsa & Leutenberg, 1996)

REFERENCE

Korb-Khalsa, K., & Leutenberg, E. (1996). Positive affirmations are self-esteem boosters. *Life management skills IV: Reproducible activity handouts created for facilitators* (p. 36). Beachwood, OH: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.



Constructing affirmations

When constructing affirmations, remember the following guidelines:

- Use the present tense (EXAMPLE: I *am* strong, I *have* caring friends)
- Use positive words (EXAMPLE: Happy, kind, loving, musical)
- Use the first person (EXAMPLE: I, me, [my name])
- Use a short and simple statement.
- Use a strong and successful image of yourself.

My affirmations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Practice strategies

I will use the following strategy/strategies to strengthen my affirmation practice.

- Record it in a daily journal and rewrite it repeatedly.
- Say it out loud several times per day.
- Use it as a mantra when I am meditating.
- Share it with someone I trust.
- Use it as my gratitude prayer daily.
- Make it more visible by using sticky notes or wallet cards.
- Other _____

(Inspired by Copeland, 2001)

REFERENCE

Copeland, M. E. (2001). New ways of thinking. *The depression workbook, second edition: A guide for living with depression and manic depression* (2nd ed., pp. 245–246). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.



Stress symptoms

The following is a symptom inventory adapted from work by Tubesing and Tubesing (1983). These are symptoms commonly reported by people during a stress experience. The physical reactions are governed by the autonomic nervous system as part of the fight-or-flight alarm reaction. But, if we do not respond to the stressor or if the stressor is chronic, then symptoms in other realms may also surface. Check off the ones you have noticed in yourself and add your own if they are not mentioned.

<p>PHYSICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia <input type="checkbox"/> Weight change <input type="checkbox"/> Catching colds more often <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle aches <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive upsets/nausea <input type="checkbox"/> Pounding heart <input type="checkbox"/> Teeth grinding at night <input type="checkbox"/> Rashes <input type="checkbox"/> Restlessness <input type="checkbox"/> Foot tapping <input type="checkbox"/> Increased chronic pain <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>BEHAVIOURAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> More time on the computer <input type="checkbox"/> Watching more television <input type="checkbox"/> Eating more/less <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive shopping <input type="checkbox"/> Driving recklessly/taking more chances <input type="checkbox"/> Biting nails <input type="checkbox"/> Being accident prone <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous laughter <input type="checkbox"/> Increased alcohol and/or drug use <input type="checkbox"/> Repetitive behaviours (e.g., checking) <input type="checkbox"/> Self-harm behaviours <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 	<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety <input type="checkbox"/> Being easily frustrated <input type="checkbox"/> The “blues” <input type="checkbox"/> Nightmares <input type="checkbox"/> Crying spells <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling that “no one cares” <input type="checkbox"/> Depression <input type="checkbox"/> Worrying <input type="checkbox"/> Being easily discouraged <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of joy <input type="checkbox"/> Lethargy <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>COGNITIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetfulness <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty making decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Low productivity <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion <input type="checkbox"/> Whirling mind <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of creativity <input type="checkbox"/> Boredom <input type="checkbox"/> “Spacing out”/“losing time” <input type="checkbox"/> Negative self-talk <input type="checkbox"/> Increased cognitive distortions <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Increased psychotic symptoms <input type="checkbox"/> Poor concentration <input type="checkbox"/> Ruminating about a problem or event <input type="checkbox"/> _____ 	<p>SPIRITUAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Emptiness <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of meaning <input type="checkbox"/> Doubt <input type="checkbox"/> Being unforgiving of self or others <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of martyrdom <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for magic solutions <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of direction <input type="checkbox"/> Cynicism <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy <input type="checkbox"/> Needing to “prove” self <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <p>RELATIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Isolation <input type="checkbox"/> Intolerance <input type="checkbox"/> Resentment <input type="checkbox"/> Loneliness <input type="checkbox"/> Lashing out <input type="checkbox"/> Hiding <input type="checkbox"/> Clamming up <input type="checkbox"/> Increased/decreased sex drive <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of intimacy <input type="checkbox"/> Distrust/paranoia <input type="checkbox"/> Nagging <input type="checkbox"/> Using people <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer contacts with friends <input type="checkbox"/> _____
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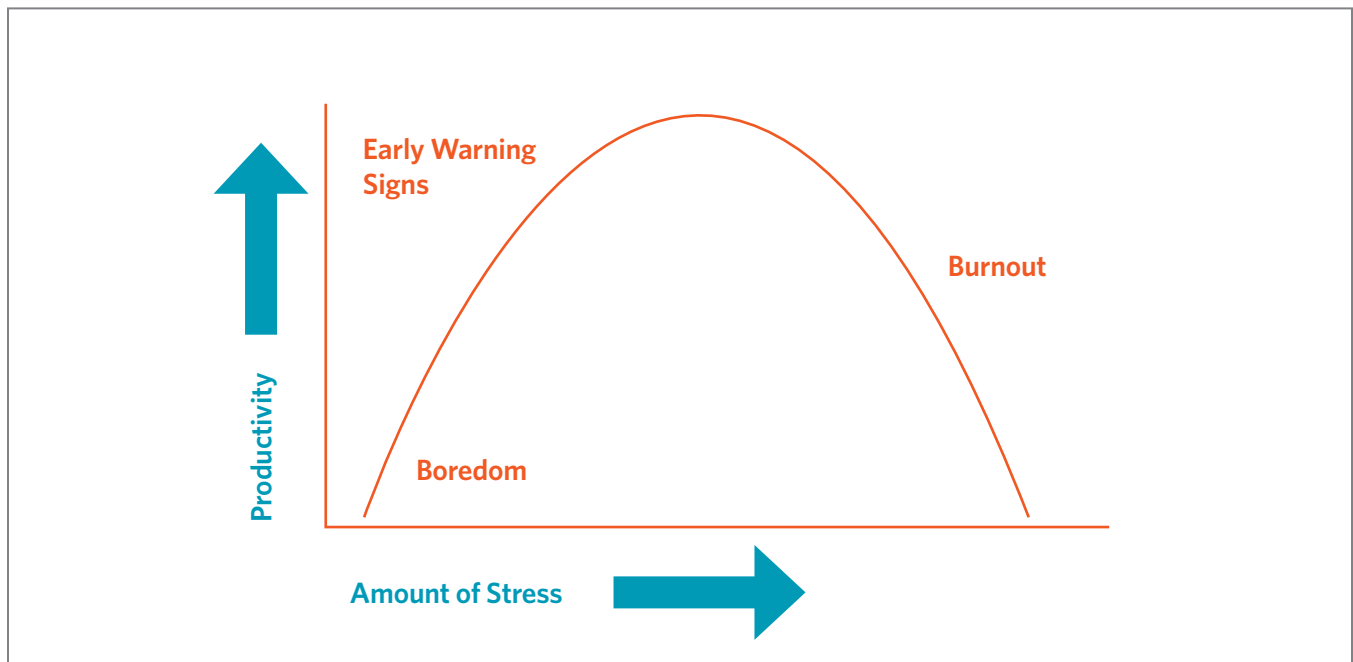
(Adapted from Tubesing & Tubesing, 1983)

REFERENCE

Tubesing, N., & Tubesing, D. (Eds.). (1983). Stress exhaustion symptoms. *Structured exercises in stress management* (Vol. 1, p. 20). Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.



Stress burnout curve



(Adapted from the Yerkes–Dodson human performance and stress curve. In the public domain.)

Now here's the important part: go back over the symptoms you just identified and ask yourself which two or three would be your **early warning signs** of stress. Now put a star beside two that are your **stress burnout signs**. These indicate when you need to either change what you are doing or seek professional help.

Three early warning signs	Three stress burnout signs

REFERENCE

Nixon, P. (1976). The human function curve with special reference to cardiovascular disorders: Part I. The Practitioner, 217, 765–770.



Coping strategies list for reflection activity

Copy, cut, and shuffle the following list and distribute one set to each small group.

Eat regular nutritious meals

Manage my time well

Maintain a healthy sleep routine

Go for a walk

Exercise regularly

Take a time out when I need to

Take medications as prescribed

Use a visualization technique to relax

Limit my alcohol intake

Do deep breathing to relax

Be aware of those things I value most

Use Benson's technique to relax

Set my priorities in life

Do a body scan to relax

Attend to my spiritual needs

Distract myself with a physical activity

Set goals for change

Nurture my five senses to ride out anxiety

Use assertive communication

Talk to a friend about how I feel

Know my limits and be able to say "no"

Meditate/pray



Count my blessings

Reassess the threat—is it really that bad?

Choose my battles—let others go

Encourage myself with positive self-talk

Use affirmations

Keep in touch with the people who support me

**Keep appointments with my doctors and
counsellors**

**Maintain a balance between self-care,
productivity, and leisure**

**Be aware of the things I can control and make
changes in those areas**

Be aware of my early warning signs of stress

Give myself credit for the good things I've done



Stress coping strategies I use

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly/as needed
1. Take care of my health and well-being				
Eat regular nutritious meals	1	2	3	4
Maintain a healthy sleep routine	1	2	3	4
Exercise regularly	1	2	3	4
Take medications as prescribed	1	2	3	4
Limit my alcohol intake	1	2	3	4
Keep in touch with the people who support me	1	2	3	4
Keep appointments with my doctors and counsellors	1	2	3	4
Balance self-care, productivity, and leisure	1	2	3	4
Be aware of those things I value most	1	2	3	4
Set my priorities in life	1	2	3	4
Attend to my spiritual needs	1	2	3	4
2. Change the situation				
Be aware of the things I can control and make changes in those areas	1	2	3	4
Set goals for change	1	2	3	4
Use assertive communication	1	2	3	4
Know my limits and be able to say “no”	1	2	3	4
Manage my time well	1	2	3	4
3. Change my body's response to stress				
Be aware of my early warning signs of stress	1	2	3	4
Do deep breathing	1	2	3	4
Use visualization	1	2	3	4
Do a body scan	1	2	3	4
Use Benson's technique	1	2	3	4
Distract myself with a physical activity	1	2	3	4
Nurture my five senses	1	2	3	4
Talk to a friend about how I feel	1	2	3	4
Meditate/pray	1	2	3	4
Go for a walk	1	2	3	4
Take a time out when I need it	1	2	3	4



	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly/as needed
4. Change my attitude				
Count my blessings	1	2	3	4
Reassess the threat—is it really that bad?	1	2	3	4
Choose my battles—let others go	1	2	3	4
Give myself credit for the good things I've done	1	2	3	4
Encourage myself with positive self-talk	1	2	3	4
Use affirmations	1	2	3	4
Consider the other person's point of view	1	2	3	4



Notice your current coping pattern. Look down the column of 1s. These are your underused strategies. Underline the ones that you would like to use more often. Look over the column of 4s. Apart from health and well-being strategies, which we strive to do regularly, most of your 4s may be strategies of habit. Mark those you tend to overuse.

(Inspired by Tubesing & Tubesing, 1983)

REFERENCE

Tubesing, N., & Tubesing, D. (Eds.). (1983). Coping skills assessment. *Structured exercises in stress management* (Vol. 1, pp. 63–67). Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.



My stress coping prescription

1. To take care of my health and well-being

2. To change the situation

3. To change my body's response to stress

4. To change my attitude

(Inspired by Tubesing & Tubesing, 1983)

REFERENCE

Tubesing, N., & Tubesing, D. (Eds.). (1983). Coping skills assessment. *Structured exercises in stress management* (Vol. 1, pp. 63–67). Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.



To what extent do we have control over stress?

Categories of stress	Choosing helpful copers
<p>1. Anticipated stressors – related to expected life changes (e.g., getting married, starting a new job or school, moving)</p> <p>Personal example: _____</p>	<p>Balanced lifestyle</p> <p>Exercise</p> <p>Adequate sleep</p> <p>Good nutrition</p> <p>Setting goals</p>
<p>2. Traumatic stressors – sudden, unexpected loss (e.g., death of loved one, car accident, job loss)</p> <p>Personal example: _____</p>	<p>Exercise</p> <p>Adequate sleep</p> <p>Good nutrition</p> <p>Relaxation strategies</p> <p>Mindfulness strategies</p> <p>Positive thinking strategies</p> <p>Accessing social supports</p>
<p>3. Chronic stressors – ongoing challenges in daily life (e.g., conflict in relationships, caregiving responsibilities, debt, poor housing)</p> <p>Personal example: _____</p>	<p>Balanced lifestyle, prioritizing self-care</p> <p>Exercise</p> <p>Adequate sleep</p> <p>Good nutrition</p> <p>Setting goals</p> <p>Assertiveness strategies</p> <p>Accessing social supports</p>
<p>4. Stress habits – destructive patterns of response to stress (e.g., perfectionism, blaming, putting self down)</p> <p>Personal example: _____</p>	<p>Cognitive behavioural strategies</p> <p>Assertive communication strategies</p> <p>Self-esteem builders</p> <p>Countering negative thinking</p> <p>Affirmations</p> <p>Mindfulness strategies</p> <p>Balanced lifestyle</p>

(Inspired by Tubesing & Tubesing, 1984)

REFERENCE

Tubesing, N., & Tubesing, D. (Eds.). (1984). *Structured exercises in stress management* (Vol. 2, p. 18). Duluth, MN: Whole Person Associates.



“Words of wisdom” for a picture game

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Count your blessings.

Every journey begins with a single step.

If life hands you lemons, make lemonade.

You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.

Think outside the box.

You have to walk before you can run.

Put your pants on one leg at a time.

When one door closes, another opens.

Look before you leap.

Don’t cry over spilled milk.

Take time to smell the roses.

Nobody’s perfect.

Just say “no.”

If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.

Just do it!

Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.



Keep it simple.

Don't sweat the small stuff.

Take it one day at a time.

Let go and let God.

Live and learn.

Keep your eye on the goal line.

Better late than never.

The early bird gets the worm.

Keep your stick on the ice.

Live and let live.



Words of wisdom

There has probably been a time when you wanted to cheer up a friend or encourage someone who was feeling down, and you might have said to them, “Never mind, nobody’s perfect,” or “Take it one day at a time.” The familiar little sayings below have often been used to remind people of age-tested truisms that may alter the way we look at the situation. Though simple, they can remind us to focus on what’s important, on our priorities, on the broader picture, on hope, or on the positive side of our life. Which ones of these have you heard before?

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Every journey begins with a single step.

You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.

You have to walk before you can run.

Take it one day at a time.

When one door closes, another opens.

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Don’t make a mountain out of a molehill.

Live and let live.

Let go and let God.

Keep it simple.

If life hands you lemons, make lemonade.

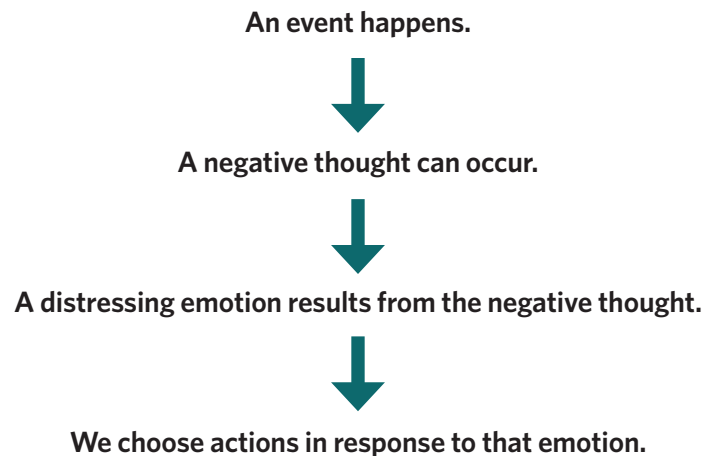
Think outside the box.

Put your pants on one leg at a time.



Using “words of wisdom” to reframe our thinking

“Words of wisdom” are constructive statements we can use to encourage ourselves, as well as to refute and replace negative automatic or worry thoughts. How does that work? As discussed in work by Beck (1979) from when cognitive behavioural therapy was in its early days, as well as in more recent work by Greenberger and Padesky (2016), there is a connection between thoughts and emotions. See the diagram below.



It may seem as though the emotion came first. But, if we reflect on what we were thinking about the event, we discover that a negative assumption, thought, or image came to mind as soon as the event occurred.

These negative thoughts tend to trigger emotional tidal waves of negative feelings. It’s like a hotwire from the event to the emotion. If we can recognize these thoughts, we can begin to change them to be more rational, thus reducing the related painful emotions.

Try the following steps:

- Identify the triggering event
- Identify the negative thought
- Replace it with “words of wisdom” or constructive sayings

This is how words of wisdom work. If we want to be rid of the negative thoughts, we need to replace them. Words of wisdom can be a shorthand version of a rational response, one the deeper meaning of which we understand well and believe in strongly. The phrase can then have the same powerful effect of shifting our emotions by reminding us of a more objective, humane way of looking at the situation.

REFERENCES

- Beck, A. (1979). *Cognitive therapy and the emotional disorders*. Madison, CT: Penguin.
- Greenberger, D., & Padesky, C. A. (2016). It’s the thought that counts. *Mind over mood: Change how you feel by changing the way you think* (pp. 16-24). New York, NY: Guilford Press.



Using “words of wisdom” in sample scenarios

Event: **You have been making a project when the wood you are working on splits as you start hammering it.**

Negative thoughts: *I’ve ruined it. What a waste of time. I can’t do anything right.*

Words of wisdom: _____

Event: **Your son has borrowed the car, and when he comes home there is a dent in the door.**

Negative thoughts: *This is all my fault. I should have never let him go off on his own. How could I have been such a bad parent?*

Words of wisdom: _____

Event: **You had an argument with your friend a week ago and have not yet reconciled.**

Negative thought: *I know if I call her she won’t want to speak with me. She’ll still be mad and probably be mean to me. There is no point in calling her anytime soon.*

Words of wisdom: _____

Event: **You have been sober from alcohol for one month’s time. You are invited to attend a family gathering next week.**

Negative thoughts: *If I go to this event, it will be really stressful to not drink. Who am I kidding about staying off booze? I knew it would be just a matter of time until I start again.*

Words of wisdom: _____

Event: **You want to volunteer for a small community event, but you can’t find a friend who is willing to volunteer with you.**

Negative thought: *I won’t know anyone there and I am really shy around people I don’t know. I can’t do things like this by myself.*

Words of wisdom: _____

Event: **You have found out a relative is no longer able to live alone in his home. He is very upset about this.**

Negative Thought: *This is horrible for him! He will never cope. I can’t do anything to make this better.*

Words of wisdom: _____



“Words of wisdom” worksheet

Consider a situation facing you today that you find uncomfortable or distressing.

What are your negative thoughts about that situation?

How do those thoughts make you feel?

As though you were comforting a good friend in the same situation, choose a “words of wisdom” saying.
What does that saying mean to you?

How do the words of wisdom make you feel?

(Inspired by Greenberger & Padesky, 2016))

REFERENCE

Greenberger, D., & Padesky, C. A. (2016). It's the thought that counts. *Mind over mood: Change how you feel by changing the way you think* (pp. 16-24).f New York, NY: Guilford Press.



Distress tolerance

As we all know, there are terrible times in our lives when there is nothing we can do but wait it out, and it's in these times we need to call on our distress tolerance strategies to help us endure the pain without doing something drastic we may regret later.

Imagine waiting by the phone to hear news about a loved one in trouble, waiting for pain medication to take effect, waiting for the hurt to wash over you when you have been disappointed or rejected. There is nothing to be done but endure the hurt until it subsides, until we can think more clearly, until events that are out of our control happen.

In her book *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*, Linehan (1993b) described four main categories of distress tolerance skills as outlined below.

1. Distracting activities that absorb our thoughts in constructive ways—for example, playing sports, housecleaning, gardening, exercising, walking, cooking, engaging in a hobby, making a craft, doing jigsaw puzzles or games such as Sudoku and crosswords, contributing to the welfare of others through volunteering, or calling a friend in need or helping a neighbour (because thinking of others takes our minds off ourselves); generally, the more physical the activity, the more potent the distraction.
2. Self-soothing activities with which we pamper ourselves through our five senses—for example, looking at favourite photos, magazines, paintings, a candle flame, or a nature scene; enjoying the smell of flowers, fresh baking, body lotion, or scented candles; taking comfort from the sense of touch by cuddling in a cozy blanket, stroking a pet, getting a massage, or putting on hand cream; savouring the taste of a comfort food, a cup of tea or coffee, a spicy mint, or gum; listening to favourite music, audio books, or the subtle sounds of nature.
3. Improving-the-moment activities that shift our perception of the stressor—for example, using affirmations, listing our reasons for gratitude, praying or meditating, doing a relaxation exercise, finding something meaningful in our suffering (what could we learn from this?), or taking a mental vacation by visualizing something beautiful.
4. Thinking of pros and cons, which reminds us that tolerating distress is difficult, but that strategies in this area help with constructive coping—for example, considering what would be the advantages of doing something impulsive versus the advantages of using a distress tolerance strategy. Usually tolerating the distress means “short-term pain for long-term gain,” while resorting to an impulsive action (e.g., slamming doors and stomping out) means “short-term gain for long-term pain.”

Impulsive action might give us quick relief but will leave us with guilt and a literal or figurative hangover, whereas using one of the above strategies to ride out the discomfort may take a little longer but will result in improved stress resilience. While we consider the pros and cons, we shift into the rational mind and thus shift out of the vulnerable and volatile emotional mind.

As you can see, we have lots of options for tolerating distress skillfully. Which ones appeal to you? Take a moment to highlight examples from the above categories that you might use.

Adapted from *Skills training manual for treating borderline personality disorder* (pp. 96-104, 165-169), by M. Linehan, 1993, New York, NY: Guilford Press. Adapted with permission.



My emergency response plan

What I can do to survive terrible situations or painful emotions when I can't make things better right away, without resorting to behaviours that will make matters worse.

Activities I can do to distract myself:

Activities I can do to soothe my senses:

Relaxation methods and affirmations I can use (to improve the moment):

Pros and cons of coping:

If I need to talk to someone, I can call:

(Adapted from Linehan, 1993b, with permission of Guilford Press)

REFERENCES

- Linehan, M. (1993b). Distress tolerance skills. *Skills training manual for treating borderline personality disorder* (pp. 96–104). New York, NY: Guilford Press. Adapted with permission of Guilford Press.
- Linehan, M. (1993b). Crisis survival strategies. *Skills training manual for treating borderline personality disorder* (pp. 165–169). New York, NY: Guilford Press. Adapted with permission of Guilford Press.



Crisis action plan – sample

Identify a behaviour you do that interferes with constructive management of your health and dealing with change, such as suicidal rumination, aggressive behaviour, stopping or abusing medication, or self-harm.

Example: Concealing my emotions or not being open about how I am doing with friends and family

Describe what happens to you.

List thoughts, emotions, and physical symptoms/actions that are warning signs related to the above behaviour.

Example:

Thoughts – “They would be better off without me.”

Emotions – guilt, anxiety, hopelessness

Physical symptoms – not sleeping, low energy

Actions – isolating, staying in bed

List the steps you will take to constructively manage the thoughts, emotions, physical symptoms, and destructive actions listed above. Include things that may help you feel better.

Example: I will make contact with one of two friends or a family member weekly to let them know how my week went and when I had difficulty. I will remind myself this is a step toward becoming more comfortable talking about my emotions with others and recognize that this is not being a burden to others. I will make my calls every Friday.

Name your responsibilities in using this treatment plan.

Example: To follow the plan above and continue basic self-care, including a healthy sleep routine and good nutrition.

Name two people with whom you will share your plan and state how others can support you with this treatment plan.

Example: I will talk with my friends and my parents and ask if they are agreeable to be on my list of supports.

(Inspired by Korb-Khalsa, Leutenberg, & Azok, 1994)

REFERENCE

Korb-Khalsa, K., Leutenberg, E., & Azok, S. (1994). Preventing relapse. Life management skills III: Reproducible activity handouts created for facilitators (p. 27). Beachwood, OH: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.



Crisis action plan

Identify a behaviour you do that interferes with constructive management of your health and dealing with change, such as suicidal rumination, aggressive behaviour, stopping or abusing medication, or self-harm.

Describe what happens to you. List thoughts, emotions, physical symptoms, and destructive actions that are warning signs related to the above behaviour. Identify those behaviours that may lead to further crisis.

List the steps you will take to constructively manage the above thoughts, emotions, physical symptoms, and destructive actions listed above. Include things that may help you feel better.

Name your responsibilities in making this treatment plan work.

Name two people with whom you will share your plan and state how others can support you with this treatment plan.

Signature _____ Support person's signature _____

Date _____ Support person's signature _____

(Inspired by Korb-Khalsa, Leutenberg, & Azok, 1994)

REFERENCE

Korb-Khalsa, K., Leutenberg, E., & Azok, S. (1994). Preventing relapse. *Life management skills III: Reproducible activity handouts created for facilitators* (p. 27). Beachwood, OH: Wellness Reproductions and Publishing Inc.



What is mindfulness?

“Mindfulness is about being fully aware of whatever is happening in the present moment, without filters or the lens of judgment. It can be brought to any situation. Put simply, mindfulness consists of cultivating an awareness of the mind and body and living in the here and now.” (Stahl & Goldstein, 2010, p. 15)

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. This kind of attention nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality. It wakes us up to the fact that our lives unfold only in moments. If we are not fully present for many of those moments, we may not only miss what is most valuable in our lives but also fail to realize the richness and the depth of our possibilities for growth and transformation.” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4)

“Being mindful, having mindful awareness, is often defined as a way of intentionally paying attention to the present moment without being swept up by judgments.” (Siegel, 2011, p. 83)

REFERENCES

- Siegel, D. (2011). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Stahl, R., & Goldstein, E. (2010). *A mindfulness-based stress reduction workbook*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York, NY: Hyperion.



Mindfulness activities

Adding mindfulness to your morning routine

Rather than letting your mind jump ahead to your to-do list, begin your day by being fully present to every new task you undertake. As you rise, take a full breath and be aware of your breathing. As you walk to the bathroom, be aware of your body sensations—cold feet on the floor? cozy dressing gown? As you run the water to shower or wash your face, be fully aware of the sound, the temperature of the water, the feeling of the warm cloth on your face, the water on your body, and the smell of your soap. As you brush your teeth, be aware of the tang of the toothpaste, the roughness of the brush bristles, the sudsy feeling of the toothpaste bubbles, and the fresh feeling in your mouth when you are finished. Dress with full attention to each garment, taking time to notice its appearance in the closet and its feeling on your body.

Mindfully eating a mandarin orange

Of course you can practice mindful eating with any food of your choice, but mandarin oranges make for a good example of how to be truly mindful while eating. Begin by making this experience a priority—turn off the television and put away your phone—and make an intention to be fully present to this experience. First, hold the orange in your hand and notice its uniqueness. No orange is exactly the same shape as another. Smell the citric fragrance of the peel and notice the intensity of its colour. As you break into the peel with your thumb, feel the delicate mist of orange oil that tickles your nose. Notice how your mouth waters in anticipation of the orange's sweet juiciness. Notice how strands of pith cling to the skin of each segment. Break the flesh apart into yielding segments, and drop them one at a time onto your tongue; chew each one slowly, enjoying its texture and flavour. Take your time. For these moments, all else is on hold while you give your full attention to appreciating this wonderful orange.

Mindfulness in washing dishes

It is such a common task, but mindfulness can bring appreciation to all the little sensations that accompany it, and to the calmness and satisfaction that it brings. Fill your sink with water at a comfortable temperature. Take a centring breath. Notice the items around you, such as the soap container, washcloth, or brush. Describe what you see in a nonjudgmental manner. For example, rather than saying "What a mess!" try "I notice that the dishes are dirty and stacked on the counter." Gently place your hands in the water, noticing the temperature of the water and the feeling of the soap bubbles. Notice the smells around you, such as the scented soap and the food smells in the air. Take one item at a time to place in your sink. Notice the texture of the dish; is it smooth or grooved? What colours do you notice on the dish? Pause for a moment before rinsing the dish, noticing what has changed. Repeat the task without urgency with your next dish. If you find your mind is wandering, or you are becoming frustrated with the task, acknowledge this, saying "I notice the thought that I could be doing other things entered in my mind." Take a moment to breathe in slowly and return your attention to the task in the present.

Mindfully waiting

How many times in your day do you need to wait for something or someone—waiting for the bus, waiting in the checkout line, waiting for the elevator, or waiting for that person who is always late? Maybe you feel annoyed or frustrated because you shouldn't have to wait, your time is valuable, and you have better things to do, right? Next time, try thinking of this waiting as a gift to you to be able to spend this time mindfully.



Notice everything that is around you—everything you can see, everything you can hear, and everything you can smell. Just take it all in; it is what it is. Give your judgmental voice a holiday. You cannot control everything, but you can control how you think about waiting, and you can make the best use of this gift of time to practice something wonderful: mindfulness. You might even begin to look forward to these opportunities!

Bells of mindfulness

Buddhist monks hear bells sounded at regular intervals to remind them to stop what they are doing, breathe, and be fully mindful. Because our lifestyle is often so busy, it is easy to forget to do our meditations and to become caught up in the little urgencies of the day. In reality, if we look for them, there are many regular occurrences or routine happenings that could become for us “bells of mindfulness,” reminding us to take a breath, be fully present in the moment, and return to our bodies. Here are some examples:

- When you must wait at a red light, take a breath, check your posture, and notice your surroundings.
- When you wash your hands, do so with careful attention to the temperature of the water, the fragrance of the soap, the sensation of rubbing your hands together, and the roughness of the towel. Breathe.
- When your email notification chime sounds, before you check your mail, fully stop whatever you are doing and breathe.
- When you make a cup of coffee or tea, before you drink the beverage, stop and breathe. Fully attend to what you are doing. Take a moment to enjoy the fragrance, the warmth of the cup in your hands, and the satisfaction of the first sip.

(Inspired by Hahn, 1992)

REFERENCE

Hahn, T. N. (1992). *Peace is every step*. New York, NY: Random House.



Mindfulness worksheet

To me, mindfulness means:

Three activities I could do mindfully today are:

1.

2.

3.
