

Reproducible forms for
*Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy:
Treating Anxiety and Related Challenges*
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THEAPIST FORM 3.1. Case Formulation Worksheet

CLIENT'S PRIMARY PRESENTING CONCERNS: _____

ITEM 1A: CHALLENGING OR PAINFUL INNER EXPERIENCES AND CONTEXTUAL TRIGGERS

Emotion	Thoughts/Images	Physiological Responses

ITEM 1B: POTENTIAL TRIGGERS

Current Context	Past Experiences	Concerns about the Future

(continued)

Case Formulation Worksheet (page 2 of 4)

ITEM 2A: CLIENT'S REACTIONS TO PAINFUL INTERNAL EXPERIENCES AND ENTANGLED AND FUSED AWARENESS

Problematic Relationship with Internal Experiences	Examples
Fear/distress	
Critical reactivity/judgment	
Fusion (<i>i.e., responses experienced as truth; self-defining</i>)	

ITEM 2B: PATTERNS OF ATTENTION

Patterns of Attention	Examples
Attention is narrow and selective; focused toward threat or negativity	
Difficulty noticing internal experiences	
Confusion or misunderstanding of internal experiences	

(continued)

Case Formulation Worksheet (page 3 of 4)

ITEM 3: ATTEMPTS TO AVOID INTERNAL EXPERIENCES

Strategies Aimed at Experiential Avoidance	Examples	Consequences
Avoidance of situations and activities that elicit challenging internal responses (<i>this may also take the form of procrastination</i>)		
Clinically problematic behaviors (<i>e.g., substance use, self-injurious behaviors, overeating</i>)		
Other behaviors where the consequences are subtler (<i>e.g., spending an excessive amount of time on the Internet</i>) or problematic only in some circumstances/when rigidly adhered to (<i>e.g., need to exercise to “burn off” anxiety</i>)		

ITEM 4A: LIMITED ENGAGEMENT IN PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL ACTIONS

Domains	Clear Sense of Values	Satisfaction	Engagement
Relationships			
Work/school/household management			
Self-nourishment and community activities			

(continued)

Case Formulation Worksheet *(page 4 of 4)*

ITEM 4B: LIMITED ENGAGEMENT IN PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL ACTIONS

Domains	Struggle with Internal Experiences	Desire for Things to Be Other Than They Are	Attempts to Control People and Events Outside of Control
Relationships			
Work/school/household management			
Self-nourishment and community activities			

ITEM 5: CONTRIBUTING INFLUENCES FROM HISTORICAL OR CURRENT EXPERIENCES/CONTEXTS

Lesson Learned: <i>Way of responding to internal experiences and/or control strategies</i>	Examples	Contributing Influence: <i>Historical or current experiences/contexts</i>
Punished for expressing emotions		
Witnessed someone close model avoidant coping		
Was instructed by someone close to change or suppress internal experience		
Was labeled for experiencing or expressing certain emotions		
Was taught ruminating or worrying are effective problem-solving strategies		
Other lessons learned		
Other lessons learned		

THERAPIST FORM 3.2. Case Formulation Narrative Template

(This form refers to numbered “items,” which are components of Therapy Form 3.1.)

Given what is known about the client’s current context _____ (*potential current context triggers from Item 1B*) and the client’s limited engagement in _____ (*include here any personally meaningful activities that are currently characterized by low engagement from Item 4A*), despite the importance of these activities to the client’s sense of meaning and purpose, it is natural for them to experience (*emotions and associated thoughts and physiological responses associated with current context triggers from Item 1A; it’s best to note clear emotions here*) (defined and described in Chapter 5). _____.

[*Alternatively, describe disruptions in awareness of internal experiences from 2B here, if the client isn’t able to report on internal experiences yet.*]

Although it is understandable that these thoughts/emotions/painful memories/challenging sensations arise, some of the ways the client has learned to react to their responses may in fact be contributing to the client’s distress and lowered quality of life.

In (*describe specific historical or current context in which client learned how to view and respond to emotions from Item 5*) _____ the client learned (*describe lessons learned from Item 5*). _____. Due to that learning, when the client experiences (*internal experience from Item 1A*) _____, they often react by (*include relevant habits from Item 2A and Item 3*) _____. Moreover, these behavioral patterns are reinforced because in the short term they reduce distress.

Unfortunately, these patterns also function to increase the frequency with which the client experiences (*emotions and associated thoughts and physiological responses associated with current context triggers from Item 1A; Muddy emotions described in Chapter 5 may be referenced here*) _____ and their associated distress. *If items are included in 2B, include:* Either due to these ways of reacting, or due to other aspects of the client’s learning (*describe relevant history from Item 5*), the client’s awareness of their internal experiences is further disrupted in that (*include relevant items from 2B*). *If there are clear consequences to experiential avoidance in Item 3, include:* Some of the strategies the client uses to reduce the frequency and intensity of their painful responses such as (*strategies from 3*) _____ have become problematic because (*include consequences from 3*) _____.

If the client avoids engaging in values actions as noted in Item 4A, include: In order to minimize contact with painful internal experiences like (*internal experience from Item 1A*) _____, the client avoids (*describe activities and situations avoided from Item 4A*). Although the client understandably avoids in this way, lack of engagement in this valued domain elicits feelings of (*internal experience from Item 1A*) _____.

If the client is engaging in values actions, but the quality of their experience during valued action is problematic as noted in Item 4B, include any of the relevant responses from 4B: Although the client regularly engages in (*valued activity from Item 4A*),

1. They are often distracted by their entanglement in their internal experiences and their efforts to change or suppress their responses, which erodes their sense of fulfillment and (if noted) interferes with their relationship quality/task performance.
2. The quality of the client’s engagement in valued activities is often reduced by the client’s understandable, but problematic, wish that things be different than they are. For example (*examples from column 2 in 4B*), _____.
3. Although the client highly values (*from 4A*) _____, they understandably feel that their experience in this life area would be improved if (*examples from column 3 in 4B*) _____. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts, they have limited control over (*examples from column 3 in 4B*) _____ and thus they experience (*internal experience from Item 1A; Muddy emotions described in Chapter 5 may be referenced here*) _____ related to that life domain.

CLIENT FORM 5.1. Monitoring Your Fear and Anxiety

The goal of this monitoring practice is for you to try noticing what comes along when you are feeling anxious or stressed. Simply observe and mark in the form below whatever physical sensations, thoughts, or behaviors you notice when anxiety or stress arises. You might notice some discomfort and/or critical thoughts as you observe your responses; there is no need to struggle with them and push them away. As best as you can, simply focus on observing and recording your experience just as it unfolds.

Date/Time	Current Situation	Physical Sensations	Thoughts	Behaviors

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CLIENT FORM 5.2. Monitoring Emotions

When you experience a strong emotion, note the following information on the form:

- When did the emotion arise (*i.e.*, day and time)?
- What emotion(s) did you notice (*e.g.*, sadness, anger, fear)?
- How intense was each emotion you felt (*i.e.*, 100 is the strongest emotional intensity you have ever experienced)?
- Does it seem like the emotion was triggered in some way by a situation that is currently unfolding? (*If so, briefly describe the situation. If not, mark one of the following: P—past situation I am thinking about; F—future situation I am thinking about, DK—don't know.*)
- Please mark the message, if any, you think the emotion may have been communicating to you or others (*e.g.*, “I am taking a risk, my rights have been violated”).

Date/Time	Emotion(s)	Intensity 0–100	Situation That Elicited the Emotion (or P, F, or DK)	Possible Message the Emotion Was Communicating

Clarifying Emotions Reflection *(page 2 of 2)*

D. Next, consider the following questions to see if any of the factors that can muddy emotions might be involved.

D1. Do you think any of the emotions might be linked to something that happened in your recent or distant past? It could be that your mind was on the present moment experience and also returning to some unrelated recent event. Or that this current experience reminds you of another challenging experience from the past. If so, describe how here.

D2. Are any of your emotions linked to anything you might be worried could happen in the future? This sometimes happens when something in the present triggers a fear we have about the future. If that is something you notice, describe that here.

D3. Do you notice your mind making any judgments about the presence of any particular emotions? Any thoughts that it is “bad” to feel a certain way? Any frustrations with yourself for having the emotional responses you have? Do you notice any self-critical thoughts? If so, describe them here.

D4. Does it seem as if you are tangled up in any of your emotions? Like any of these emotions are signaling something about you rather than something about the situation? Do you feel defined by any of your emotions? If so, describe that experience here.

D5. How has your self-care been recently? Are you getting enough rest and sleep, eating nutritious meals and snacks, getting exercise, making time for hobbies or socializing? If you have been neglecting yourself in some of these areas, describe how here.

CLIENT FORM 5.4. Worry or Problem Solving?

When you notice that your focus is pulled toward a possible future event, use the questions below to sort through whether intentionally spending time on this topic is worry or problem solving.

Questions	Future-Focused Topic 1	Future-Focused Topic 2
Describe the future-focused topic.		
Is this experience likely to happen?		
Is there a specific action or actions I can take to prepare for it (or prevent it from happening)?		
Will spending more time with these thoughts likely solve my problem?		
Am I focused on solving a problem or reducing uncomfortable thoughts and feelings of uncertainty?		
Is spending time with these thoughts moving me closer toward something I care about? Or getting in my way?		
If I do think of an action I could take, will it add meaning to my life?		

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CLIENT HANDOUT 5.1. Fear Is Learned

- Fear helps us avoid real physical dangers.
These are natural, human responses and are helpful to us.
- Fear is easy to learn.
Our nervous system has evolved so that we can readily detect and learn danger, to keep us safe.
- Fear and anxiety can easily spread to other things.
We easily learn to fear things that are similar to, or associated with, objects or situations that we perceive as threatening.
- Fear cannot be unlearned.
The only way we come to be less afraid of an object or an activity is to have lots of experience with it that teaches us we are safe.
- Some fears are biologically inherited.
We are more likely to fear things that threatened our ancestors' survival. We are "hard-wired" to very quickly learn to fear and avoid snakes and spiders.

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CLIENT HANDOUT 5.2. What Are Fear and Anxiety Made Up Of?

Physical Sensations

- Rapid heart rate
- Sweating
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Shortness of breath
- Trembling or shaky feelings
- Blushing
- Dry mouth
- Stomach distress
- Tension or soreness in the neck, shoulders, or any other muscles
- Headaches
- Restlessness
- Fatigue

Thoughts/Cognitive Symptoms

- Worries about what might occur in the future
 - “No one will talk to me at the party.”
 - “I will fail this test.”
 - “My parents will become ill.”
 - “My children will not be happy.”
 - “I will end up alone.”
 - “I will have a panic attack at the supermarket.”
 - “I am going to get sick from the germs in this bathroom.”
 - “People won’t take me seriously at school.”
- Ruminations about the past
 - “I can’t believe I said that.”
 - “My boss thought I did a terrible job.”
 - “I wish I hadn’t snapped at my partner that way.”
 - “Having nothing to say in that conversation was so humiliating.”
- Thoughts about being in danger
 - “I can’t do this.”
 - “I am having a heart attack.”
 - “I am losing my mind.”
- Narrowed attention toward threat or danger, inattention to evidence of safety

Other Emotions

- Sadness
- Anger
- Surprise
- Disgust
- Shame
- Hopelessness
- “Overwhelmed”
- “Numb”

(continued)

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Behaviors

- Repetitive behaviors or habits
 - Biting fingernails
 - Picking skin
 - Playing with hair
 - Tapping feet
- Avoidance or escape
 - Turning down a social invitation
 - Passing up a promotion
 - Calling in sick to work
 - Making an excuse to cancel a social engagement
 - Leaving an event early
 - Asking someone else to make a phone call for you
 - Taking an alternative route to avoid a bridge or tunnel
 - Using a ritual, security object, or lucky charm to get through an anxious experience
- Distraction techniques
 - Overeating
 - Smoking
 - Watching television
 - Having a few glasses of wine or a couple of beers
 - Sleeping excessively
 - Shopping
 - Putting excessive energy into work
 - Exercising vigorously to try to “tire out” your body
 - Coming up with a busy schedule to keep your mind off worries
- Doing what you “should” do
 - Taking care of every responsibility you have to avoid being judged negatively or criticized
- Checking and overpreparing
 - Asking others for reassurance
 - Reading every report that your colleague wrote before writing your own
 - Endlessly searching the Internet to find out how to prevent an accident from happening
- Attempts to gain power or protect oneself
 - Acting aggressively toward others
 - Using threatening language
 - Lashing out in anger

CLIENT HANDOUT 5.3. Clear Emotions

Clear Emotion	Message	Examples of Situations That Elicit the Emotion	Actions Suggested by the Emotion
Fear	We are taking a risk or facing a new challenge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking someone on a date • Getting laid off • Becoming a parent 	Escape; Avoidance
Anger	Our rights, or the rights of others we care about, have been violated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being constantly interrupted by others in a meeting • Earning less than others doing the same job • Hearing someone make a racial slur 	Stand up for ourselves or others; fight back
Sadness	We've lost something or someone we care about.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving to a new country and leaving your family and friends behind • The death of a close friend 	Retreat; Self-soothe; seek care from others
Guilt	We've taken an action that could cause harm or that is inconsistent with our moral standards or the moral standards of our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling an offensive joke • Gossiping about another congregant during a church supper • Being unfaithful to one's partner 	Make amends
Disgust	We've encountered something that could sicken us (e.g., spoiled food) or that we find unacceptable (e.g., immoral behavior).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing feces smeared on a toilet seat in a public restroom • Watching a story on the news about someone who was tortured • Finding out that a trusted caregiver sexually abused the children in their care 	Escape; Avoidance

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CLIENT HANDOUT 5.4. Differentiating Clear and Muddy Emotions

Clear Emotions	Muddy Emotions
<p>Seem to have a clear cause.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling nervous about an upcoming test. 	<p>Can sometimes seem like they came “out of the blue.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling nervous but not knowing why.
<p>Seem to have a clear message.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Fear is signaling that you are about to take a risk. 	<p>Don’t provide you with useful information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> You know you have been feeling keyed up and grouchy all day, but it is not clear why.
<p>Seem like a response anyone might have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Most people would feel some fear before an audition for a play. 	<p>Seem like part of your personality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling like you are an anxious person.
<p>Seem to fit the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling nervous about giving a presentation. • <i>Example:</i> Getting a little frustrated when a driver cuts you off. • <i>Example:</i> Feeling anger and sadness when someone insults you. 	<p>Seem out of proportion to the event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling terrified about giving a presentation. • <i>Example:</i> Becoming enraged when a driver cuts you off. • <i>Example:</i> Feeling self-hatred when someone insults you.
<p>Seem to come and go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling embarrassed for the first few minutes of a meeting because you arrived late. 	<p>Seem to linger on and on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example:</i> Feeling embarrassed for the rest of the day because you arrived late to a meeting.

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CLIENT HANDOUT 5.5. Factors That Contribute to Muddy Emotions

1. Current emotional state is complicated by emotions from imagined past or future events.	
a. Worries about future potential threats	<i>Example:</i> Afu is confused by the feelings of fear and dread that arise on a relatively quiet night at home with his wife. Although there are no threats in his current context, his mind is busy with worries about his parents' upcoming visit and fears that the wintry New England weather will worsen their already compromised health.
b. Rumination over events remembered from the past	<i>Example:</i> Afu is also remembering the last time his parents visited and the way they criticized his approach to parenting, the food he served, and his overall lifestyle.
2. Clear emotions are amplified by our reactions to them.	
a. Critical, judgmental responses	<i>Example:</i> Ash feels sad when their mother makes an insensitive comment, then angry and ashamed for feeling sad.
b. Fusion	<i>Example:</i> Jenny has the thought "I have nothing to contribute" during a meeting at work. She fears that having that thought shows she is weak and lacks the confidence needed to succeed in her job.
c. Attempts to control	<i>Example:</i> Marvin attempts to push away his feelings of sadness, embarrassment, and anger as he talks with the principal at his son Matt's school about Matt's behavior problems.
3. Poor self-care (e.g., not getting enough sleep, little engagement in activities aimed at nurturing the self) heightens emotions.	
	<i>Example:</i> Shirley feels distressed and cries easily on her way to work Monday morning after babysitting her grandchildren all weekend and getting little sleep on her daughter's couch.

CLIENT HANDOUT 5.6. Common Reasons We Turn Our Attention to the Future (Worry) and Past (Rumination)

Reasons	Worry	Rumination
Preparation	It seems like imagining what it will be like to face a threat could be a good way to prepare for it.	It seems like focusing on past mistakes will prepare for future successes.
Motivation	It seems like focusing on the potentially negative consequences of a feared future event will motivate us to prepare.	It seems like engaging in self-judgment and criticism of past mistakes will motivate us to improve.
Superstition	It feels like worrying about a potential threat will make it less likely to happen.	It feels like remembering how badly something went will make it less likely to happen again.
Avoidance	It seems like worrying will help us figure out how to avoid feared future outcomes.	It seems like going over past mistakes will help us avoid making them again.
Problem solving	It seems like focusing on a potential future problem is a first step to solving it.	It seems like identifying what went wrong in the past is a first step to avoiding a poor outcome in the future.
Distraction from more emotional topics	Worrying about minor matters often takes our minds off more distressing and serious concerns.	Focusing our attention on figuring out what happened in the past to contribute to our current distress is one way to avoid taking risks in the present.

CLIENT HANDOUT 5.7. Am I Problem Solving, Worrying, or Ruminating?

Problem Solving	Worrying	Ruminating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem I am currently facing • Problem I am very likely to confront in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem I may face in the future • Problem that I could (but probably won't) face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem that I encountered in the past
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are specific actions I can take now or soon to prepare for it, fix it, learn from it, and/or prevent it from happening in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem and solution are largely out of my control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem has passed, but I am struggling to let it go.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear relationship between the time and effort I invest in this problem; the more I focus on it, the greater my changes of solving it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing time into thinking about this problem is not getting me any closer to solving it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My focus seems to be more on criticizing myself for what happened rather than considering actions I can take now and in the future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am investing time and energy so that my solution is well developed and effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am investing time and energy in an attempt to feel more in control of the situation and less worried. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am investing time and energy considering how terrible it was and wishing that it never happened.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devoting time to thinking about how to solve this problem is meaningful to me; it's bringing me closer to the things that matter most to me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devoting time to thinking about how to solve this problem is taking me away from things that are meaningful to me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devoting time to thinking about how to solve this problem is taking me away from things that are meaningful to me.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem I am currently facing • Problem I am very likely to confront in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem I may face in the future • Problem that I could (but probably won't) face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem that I encountered in the past.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are specific actions I can take now or soon to prepare for it, fix it, learn from it, and/or prevent it from happening in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem and solution are largely out of my control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem has passed, but I am struggling to let it go.
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CLIENT HANDOUT 6.1. What Is Mindfulness?

In this treatment, we will talk about the role of *awareness* as a first step to helping us make changes in our lives. In particular, we will focus on a special kind of awareness called *mindfulness*. The term *mindfulness* comes from Eastern spiritual and religious traditions (like Zen Buddhism), but psychology has begun to recognize that, removed from the spiritual and religious context, it may be used to improve physical and emotional well-being. Although many of the ideas we suggest here will be consistent with Eastern philosophies and traditions, we will not be focusing on the religious or spiritual parts of mindfulness, and we believe this approach can be useful no matter what your religious or spiritual preference.

Mindfulness is nonjudgmental (or compassionate), present-moment awareness of what is going on inside of us and around us. We often live our lives focused on something other than what is happening in the moment—worrying about the future, ruminating about the past, focusing on what is coming next rather than what is right in front of us. It is useful that we can do a number of things without paying attention to them. We can walk without thinking about walking, which allows us to talk to the person we're walking with without having to think, "Now I should lift up this foot." However, this ability to do things automatically, without awareness, also allows us to lose touch with what is happening right in front of us. We can develop habits (such as avoiding conflict) that we aren't aware of and that may not be in line with our broader goals.

Sometimes we do pay close attention to what we are thinking and feeling, and we become very critical of our thoughts and feelings and either try to change them or to distract ourselves because judgmental awareness can be very painful. For example, we might notice while we are talking to someone new that our voice is wavering, or we aren't speaking clearly, and think, "I'm such an idiot! What is wrong with me? If I don't calm down, this person will never like me!"

Being mindful falls between these two extremes. We pay attention to what is happening inside and around us, we acknowledge events and experiences as what they are, and we allow things we cannot control to be as they are while we focus our attention on the task at hand. For example, when talking to someone new we might notice those same changes in our voice, take a moment to reflect, "This is how it is now. There go my thoughts again," and gently bring our attention back to the person and our conversation. This second part of mindfulness—letting go of the need to critically judge and change our inner experience—is particularly tricky. In fact, often being mindful involves practicing being nonjudgmental about our tendency to be judgmental!

We think that being mindful is a personal experience that can bring some flexibility to your life, and we will work together to find the best ways to apply this approach.

Here are a few points about mindfulness:

- *Mindfulness is a process.* We do not *achieve* a final and total state of mindfulness. It is a way of being in one moment that comes and goes. Mindfulness is losing our focus 100 times and returning to it 101 times.
- *Mindfulness is a habit.* Just like we have learned to go on automatic pilot by practicing it over and over, we can learn mindfulness through practice. The more we practice, the easier it can be to have moments of mindfulness.

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What Is Mindfulness? *(page 2 of 2)*

- *Mindfulness activities come in many different forms.* People engage in formal mindful practices like meditation, yoga, and tai chi. These practices can take hours or even days. People can also be mindful for a moment—attending to their breath at any point during the course of their day and noticing their experience. All forms of mindful practice can be beneficial. We will focus most on briefer, daily practice within treatment, but you may find that you also want to seek other, more formal modes of mindful practice outside of therapy or once therapy ends.

- *Mindfulness brings us more fully into our lives.* Sometimes, especially early in treatment, we will practice mindfulness in ways that seem very relaxing and removed from the stressors of our daily lives, but the ultimate goal is to use mindfulness to keep us more fully in our lives and to improve our overall life satisfaction. Mindfulness can allow us to pause and ready ourselves for some event (e.g., focusing on our breathing for a moment *before* we answer the phone) and bring us more fully into an event (e.g., being present and focused in the moment when we are interacting with someone rather than thinking about what they may be thinking or worrying about what might be coming next).

CLIENT HANDOUT 6.2. Mindfulness Skills

Awareness

We notice our experiences as they arise, including noticing what we notice. This awareness is:

- Expansive, rather than narrowed, so that we are taking in our full experience.
- In the present moment—this can include noticing when our minds go back to the past or forward to the future.
- An ongoing process—we lose awareness and regain it over and over.

Curiosity

We bring a perspective of curiosity and wonder to our experience so that we can notice it as it is.

- We can think of ourselves as scientists observing a phenomenon as one way to cultivate curiosity.
- Bringing “beginner’s mind” helps us truly observe what is occurring in the moment with curiosity, rather than already assuming we know what is happening.

Acceptance

We gradually learn to put down the struggle to get rid of our experiences and instead to let them be as we notice them.

- Imagining “dropping the rope” can be an image to help with this.
- This isn’t resignation—we are accepting what is already here in our present moment experience. We can still work to change things in the future.

Self-Compassion and Care

We develop an ability to bring kindness and care to our experiences, in place of judgment and self-criticism.

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CLIENT FORM 8.1. Values Writing Exercise I

Struggles with worry and anxiety often interfere with people's relationships, work/education/household management, and self-nurturance and community involvement. Worrying can distract us and make it hard for us to be present with the people and activities that we care about. And sometimes, in an attempt to try to minimize our stress, we may avoid certain situations or activities—even if those situations and activities are important to us.

Sometimes the effects of worry, anxiety, and avoidance on our lives are very obvious; other times the effects are harder to see. Anxiety and worry can lead us to develop habits and responses that are so automatic we don't even think about them as choices. It just seems like "this is just how things have to be."

This assignment offers an opportunity for you to take some time for yourself to really focus on how your life may be affected by worry and anxiety. Set aside 20 minutes on four different days during which you can privately and comfortably do this writing assignment. In your writing, we want you to really let go and explore your deepest emotions and thoughts about the topics listed below. Use a notebook or your computer to record your answers to each of the questions below.

As you write, try to allow yourself to experience your thoughts and feelings as completely as you are able. This work is based on the evidence that pushing these disturbing thoughts away can actually make them worse, so try to really let yourself go. If you can't think of what to write next, repeat the same thing over and over until something new comes to you. Be sure to write for the entire 20 minutes. Don't be concerned with spelling, punctuation, or grammar; just write whatever comes to mind.

Day 1

Write about how you think your anxiety and worry might be interfering with your relationships (family, friends, partner, etc.).

- What are some ways that your struggles with anxiety, worry, or avoidance has affected your current relationships?
- Does your anxiety and worry hold you back in relationships? What do you need from others in your life? What do you want to give to others? What gets in the way of asking for what you need and giving what you want to give?
- Do you make choices in your relationships that are driven by avoidance? Does fear get in the way of developing new relationships?
- Are you present and engaged when you are with others? Do you find yourself frequently distracted by worry?

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Day 2

Write about how you think your anxiety and worry might be interfering with your work, education, or training or your family/household management.

- What are some ways that your struggles with anxiety, worry, or avoidance has affected your job/studies/household management?
- How does your anxiety and worry hold you back in your work/schooling? Have you passed up new opportunities?
- Are there changes that you would like to make in this area of your life?
- Do you make choices in your work/studies/household management that are driven by avoidance?
- Are you present and engaged when working, studying, or managing your household?

Day 3

Write about how you think your anxiety and worry interfere with your ability to take care of yourself, have fun, and/or get involved with your community.

- What are some activities in these areas that you would like to spend more time doing?
- How does your anxiety/worry hold you back?
- Do you make choices about your leisure or community-based activities that are driven by avoidance?
- Are you present and engaged when participating in leisure or community-based activities?

Day 4

This is your last day of writing, so take some time to reflect on what came up for you over the last few days as you allowed yourself to focus on the issues raised in the first three parts of the writing assignment. Have you noticed any important areas that need more attention? Feel free to write about whatever comes up for you about these three areas of living.

CLIENT FORM 8.2. Values Writing Exercise II

Clarifying what matters most to you is an important part of the process of defining your own personal values. First, create a space for yourself to focus intentionally on what matters most to you. One way to do this is to practice mindfulness. You might start by focusing on your breath for a few moments and then expanding your awareness to notice and acknowledge the worries, stressors and demands of your life that may be pulling at your attention and gently bringing your attention toward this exercise.

Next, spend 20 minutes writing about what matters to you in each of the three areas of your life described below. Use a notebook or your computer to record your answers to each of the questions below. It can be tempting to just think about what matters to you without writing about it or to spend less time on the exercise, especially if you are busy with other tasks. Sometimes it's painful to reflect on what matters most to you because it can seem out of reach or it can remind you of how much of your time is spent on "shoulds" rather than "wants." Yet, investing time in this exercise and opening yourself up to pain in the service of making some meaningful life changes can be an important step in the process of change.

Day 1

Choose two or three relationships that are important to you. You can pick either actual relationships (my relationship with my brother) or relationships you would like to have (I'd like to be part of a couple; I'd like to make more friends). Briefly write about **how you'd like to be** in those relationships. Think about how you'd like to communicate with others (e.g., how open vs. private you'd like to be, how direct vs. indirect you'd like to be in asking for what you need and in giving feedback to others). Consider all of the ways people can be in their relationships—caring, supportive, genuine, open, honest, attentive, respectful, accepting, dutiful—and identify what matters most to you.

Day 2

Briefly write about the sort of work, training, education, or household management you would like to be engaged in and why that appeals to you. Next write about the kind of worker and/or student and/or household manager you'd like to be with respect to your work habits and your relationships with your boss/coworkers, or co-students. What's important to you about how you approach your work? Do you value learning, teaching, being reliable, being creative, taking on challenges, figuring out solutions to problems, taking on responsibility, or being industrious? What matters most to you? How would you like to communicate to others about your work? How would you like to respond to feedback? Are there any additional challenges you would like to take on?

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Day 3

Briefly write about the ways in which you'd like to spend any additional time, whether or not you actually have additional time in your life right now. Do you enjoy creative pursuits, participating in physical activities, connecting with nature, developing yourself spiritually, engaging in self-care, taking actions in line with your political and social views, or engaging with or contributing to your community?

CLIENT FORM 8.3. Values versus Goals

Potential value	Could you take an action today that would be consistent with this value?	Can you ever complete or fully achieve this value? Will you ever be done?	Do you have complete control over the execution of this value?	Value?
	<i>For a value, the answer would be "yes."</i>	<i>For a value, the answer would be "no."</i>	<i>For a value, the answer would be "yes."</i>	Yes or no?

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CLIENT FORM 8.4. Monitoring Opportunities for Valued Action

At the end of each day, reflect on your values. Think about *actions you took that were consistent* with one of your values and *opportunities to take values-consistent actions that you missed*. (1) Briefly describe the action. (2) Mark *T* for taken or *M* for missed. (3) On a scale of 0–100, rate how mindful you were during the action or the missed opportunity, and for missed opportunities, note any obstacles you noticed that stopped you from acting.

Practice self-kindness and compassion when completing this activity. It's natural to miss some opportunities to engage in valued activities. And we all have moments during which our desire to avoid discomfort holds us back. This practice is simply aimed at helping you to become more aware of moments in your daily life where you can make some choices to act in values-consistent ways.

Date	Action	Taken (<i>T</i>) or Missed (<i>M</i>)	Mindfulness (0–100)	Obstacles

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CLIENT HANDOUT 8.1. Intentional Responses That Differ from Emotion-Driven Reactions

Situation	Emotional Response	Action Tendency	Behavior We Might Choose
Child misbehaves	Anger	Attack; assert dominance	Model understanding and teach appropriate behavior
Asked to attend a social event by someone you just met	Fear	Avoid; escape	Accept the invitation because doing so is a potential opportunity to build new relationships
Relationship breakup	Sadness	Withdraw; isolate; self-reflect	Open up and reach out to family and friends for support, continue to engage in hobbies and activities that are personally important

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CLIENT FORM 9.1. Values Writing Exercise III

First, create a space for yourself to intentionally focus on willingness and the changes you may be preparing to make in your life. You may want to practice a mindfulness exercise to help you be attentive and aware. Next, spend 20 minutes a day for 3 days writing in response to each of the following prompts. Use a notebook or your computer to record your answers to the questions below. As with all the writing exercises, painful thoughts and emotions may come up. Acknowledging and allowing them is an opportunity for you to practice cultivating willingness.

Day 1

What comes up for you as you think about making some significant changes in the way you live your life?

Day 2

What's the importance of the values you have chosen? What do they mean to you?

Day 3

What do you think is the biggest obstacle that stands between you and the changes that you want to make?

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CLIENT FORM 9.2. Clarifying Emotions in the Moment

Use this form when you are struggling with complicated, intense emotions. Make note of questions that come up or struggles that you have applying the suggested skills, so that you can discuss them in your next therapy session.

Start by bringing your attention to your breathing for a few breaths. Try bringing that same mindful (*i.e., observing, present-moment, compassionate*) stance to your experience as you answer the questions below.

A. Describe the current situation. _____

B. Expanding your awareness and mindfully observing, try noticing all the emotions that are arising.

- Rate their current intensity from 0 to 100.
- Check the “Clear Emotion” box if you think some parts of your emotional response are directly related to the current situation. For each clear emotion, describe the message your emotion may be trying to send you about the current situation.

Emotion: _____ Intensity: ____ Clear Emotion: Message: _____

Emotion: _____ Intensity: ____ Clear Emotion: Message: _____

Emotion: _____ Intensity: ____ Clear Emotion: Message: _____

Emotion: _____ Intensity: ____ Clear Emotion: Message: _____

C. Practice bringing your attention to your clear emotions and any related physical sensations; allowing those responses to be just as they are while you take a few mindful breaths; noticing that part of being human means that certain situations (e.g., facing risks, losing something we care about) bring on certain emotions (e.g., fear, sadness); noticing that feeling emotions can be difficult. . . . ; and bringing compassion to yourself as you notice that.

D. Check any of the boxes below that describe habits in the first column below that could be muddying your emotional response. For each box that is checked, practice the new habits described in the second column.

Habits That Muddy Emotions	New Habits to Try
<input type="checkbox"/> I am thinking about the past	It's natural for our minds to drift to the past or the future, and when this happens our current emotional response is affected. Bring your attention to your breathing for a few breaths and then expand your awareness to take in your current thoughts, emotions, and sensations. Notice each time your attention is pulled to the past or the future, and with kindness and compassion, gently guide your attention back to the present moment.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am imagining the future	

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Clarifying Emotions in the Moment *(page 2 of 2)*

Habits That Muddy Emotions	New Habits to Try
<input type="checkbox"/> I am having critical/ judgmental thoughts about my current emotions	<p>Even though humans are hard-wired to have a full range of emotions, we often learn to judge certain emotions as “good” or “bad,” and we try to hold on to “good” emotions and push away “bad” ones. Practice acknowledging and allowing your emotions to be as they are for just a few moments, without judging or fighting them. Try practicing self-compassion, noticing how natural it is to wish for feelings of calmness and happiness; also noticing how judging and trying to change emotions often brings more distress.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> I am trying to avoid, suppress, or change my current emotional experience	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am tangled up in my emotional experiences/ thoughts.	<p>Strong emotions pull our attention because their job is to communicate a message. Yet, sometimes we get stuck in our emotions, particularly if we don’t want to have them or the experience that triggered them. Try one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the emotion is “suggesting” a behavioral response that is in line with your values, shift your attention toward your actions. • If you are entangled in thoughts, try working through Client Form 5.4, <i>Worry or Problem Solving</i> • If the emotion is alerting you to a painful challenge in your life that you don’t have the ability to change or control, practice noticing and accepting the limits of control; acknowledging the pain and challenge of being human. Bring compassion to yourself for trying to make the situation better, while also observing how control efforts can amplify distress, leave you feeling helpless, and take you away from other important experiences in your life. Practice letting go of that struggle for just a moment. Consider taking a valued action in this present moment—whether or not the action is related to the situation triggering the painful emotions.

E. Finally, consider what options you have for taking actions.

CLIENT FORM 9.3. Values-Consistent Actions Reflection

Are there choices I could make here that would give me a short-term sense of relief? For example (check off those that apply):

Help me calm down

Please other people

Help me avoid conflict

Make me feel less guilty

Distract me from pain

Other: _____

If so, are there any costs to those choices? What are they? _____

Is my focus turning toward something that is meaningful or turning away from pain? _____

• How attached am I to the possibility I may feel less pain if I make this choice? _____

• Are there any costs to that choice? If so, what are they? _____

Are there choices that I could make here that are likely to influence other people who are involved? What are they? _____

• If so, how tied am I to that outcome? Am I accepting the limits of control? _____

• Are there any costs to those choices? What are they? _____

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Values-Consistent Actions Reflection *(page 2 of 2)*

Are there choices I could make here that could possibly make it less likely something bad will happen? What are they? _____

• If so, how tied am I to that outcome? Am I accepting the limits of control? _____

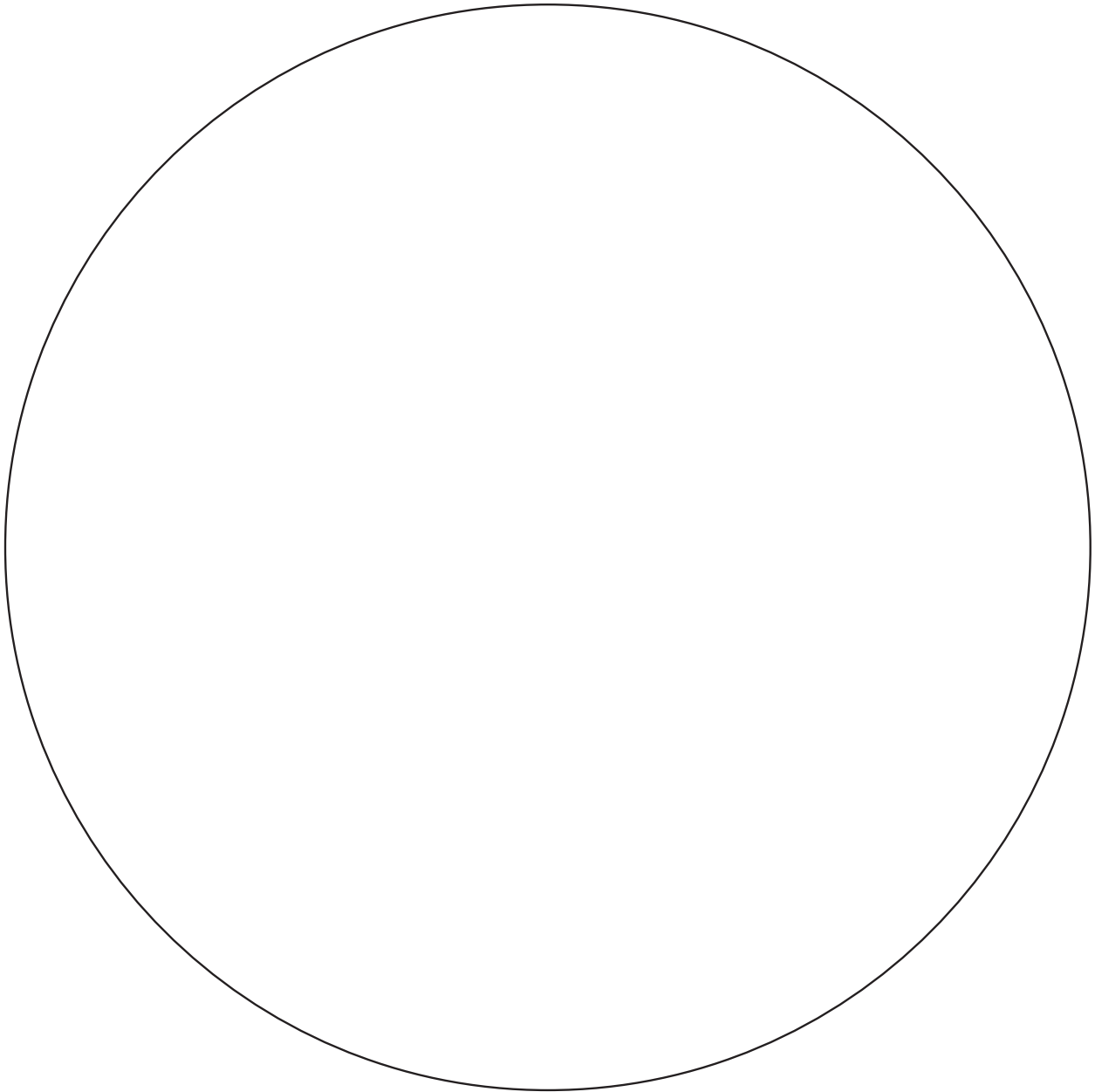
• Are there any costs to those choices? What are they? _____

Are there choices I could make here that are consistent with what matters most to me? What are they? _____

• Is my unwillingness to have certain thoughts or feelings holding me back? In what way? _____

CLIENT FORM 10.1. How Do You Spend Your Time?

This exercise can be helpful when you're trying to consider where to direct your time and energy. Using the first circle below, draw lines to create pie pieces that represent how much of your time you'd like to devote to different parts of your life and write in that activity. There's no one right way to do this. One person may have a tiny slice devoted to spending time with family, while someone else might choose to make that piece half of their pie. One person may have a large chunk of pie devoted to engaging in creative pursuits, while another person doesn't have that represented at all in their pie. Be sure to include the things that matter to you, as well as other activities that take up your time.



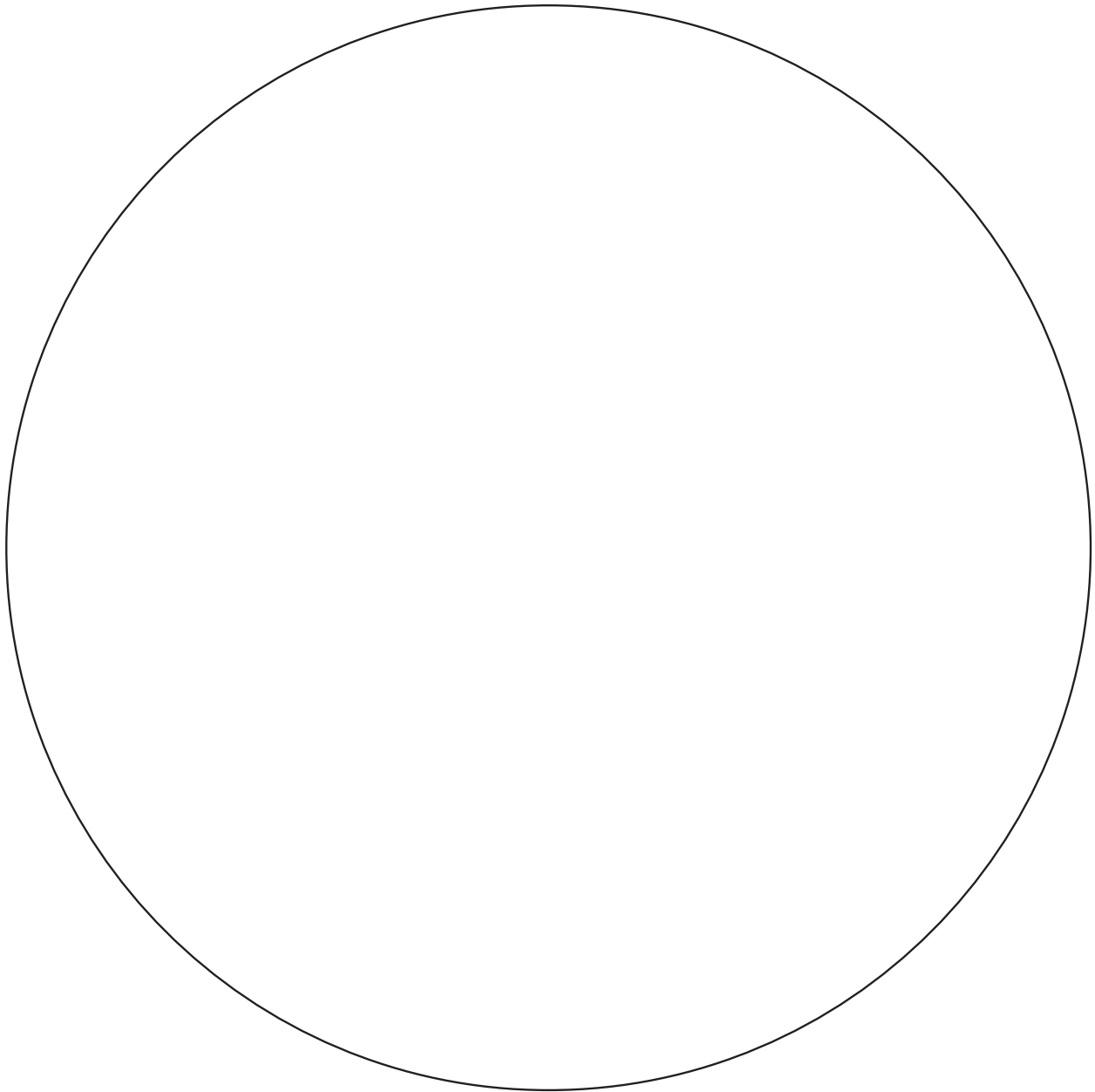
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How Do You Spend Your Time? *(page 2 of 3)*

Next, create another pie that represents how you're currently spending your time. This pie will have some slices devoted to your daily responsibilities—like cutting the grass or cleaning the house—and others will be devoted to activities that are more likely to be consistent with your values, like being outside in nature or caring for your children.



Now compare the two pies and ask yourself the following questions:

Are there changes you want to make in terms of how you're spending your time? If so, what are they?

(continued)

How Do You Spend Your Time? *(page 3 of 3)*

If there are responsibilities that take up a lot of time, are there ways to attend to them in a way that is values consistent (e.g., could you do them with a family member or appreciate the time alone, or do them mindfully, or pair them with something else meaningful)?

Are there slices of things that you “have to do” that actually reflect things you do in an attempt to control the uncontrollable (e.g., “I have to do more than my share of work, so I never let anyone down,” or “I need to have a perfectly manicured lawn so that my neighbors don’t judge me”)? If so, list them here.

Can any changes be made to those slices?

Are there things you do to “relax” that don’t actually replenish your energy (e.g., watching TV, drinking alcohol, gaming) that you could reduce or replace with more nourishing activities?

CLIENT FORM 11.1. Weekly Assessment

The following questions are designed to give us a sense of how your week has been in terms of the kinds of things we are focusing on in therapy. There are no right or wrong answers. We just want to get *your* impression of your week.

What percentage of the time did you find yourself worrying over the past week?



What percentage of the time were you mindful over the past week? By “mindful,” we mean aware of your current experience, focused on where you were at that moment and what you were doing, as opposed to what you did earlier or would do later?



What percentage of the time did you feel accepting of your internal experience (thoughts and feelings) as opposed to trying to push it away?



What percentage of the time did you feel you were spending on the things that are important to you?



What percentage of the time did you feel like your thoughts and feelings were getting in the way of what you wanted/needed to be doing?



CLIENT FORM 11.2. Treatment Progress Exploration

1. Patterns of responding that we learn through our different life events and experiences can be **one of many** factors that contribute to our distress and dissatisfaction. Place a check in front of each of the patterns **your therapist has suggested could** be related to your current distress.
 - Self-criticism in response to painful thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.
 - Feeling “defined by” one’s own painful thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.
 - Attempts to control or push away certain painful thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations when they arise.
 - Avoiding certain life experiences because they could bring up painful thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.
 - Trying to control things that are not entirely in your control (like the future or other people’s behavior) in order to live a satisfying life.
 - Being unclear about the things you value or the things that could bring meaning to your life.
 - Often not making choices or taking actions based on what is most meaningful to you.
 - Sometimes being distracted by thoughts and feelings that cause you to feel disconnected from whatever is happening in the present moment.
2. Go back through the list in #1 and put a check in front of each of the patterns **you personally think** could be adding to your current distress.
3. Rate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements on a 0–10 scale (0 = not at all true; 5 = somewhat true; 10 = extremely true).
 - Overall, I think the ABBT model does a good job explaining my distress.
 - Even though I think the ABBT model makes sense logically, I am having a **hard time accepting that some parts of it are true** (e.g., that everyone feels anxious when taking a risk, that people often end up more uncomfortable when they try and change how they feel).
 - Logically, I understand the model, but am struggling because I feel that **some parts of the model don’t seem fair** (e.g., there are limits to what I can control).
 - I understand the model, but I don’t think it is relevant to me.
 - I forget about the model outside of session, especially when I am in a challenging situation.
 - I don’t fully understand the model (some parts seem clear to me, others do not).
 - I don’t know what the ABBT model is.
 - Even though the model makes sense logically, I feel like other things are more strongly influencing my distress. Please list: _____

 - I feel like the model (and my therapist) overlook important aspects of my experience. List here: _____

(continued)

Treatment Progress Exploration *(page 2 of 2)*

4. Put a check in front of each of the following treatment strategies your therapist has suggested you might try to decrease your overall distress and/or improve your life satisfaction.

- Noticing that we all experience a full range of emotions and that all of our emotions, even the painful ones, serve a function.
- Noticing that certain ways of responding to painful thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations can make them more distressing and long-lasting.
- Learning to distinguish “clear” and “muddy” emotions.
- Using some type of monitoring and/or mindfulness practice to become aware of learned habits of responding.
- Using mindfulness practice as a way of responding differently to painful thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations.
- Practicing noticing when you feel pulled to control things out of your control.
- Thinking or writing about the things you value or the things that could bring meaning to your life.
- Practicing making choices or taking actions based on what is most meaningful to you rather than responding out of habit.
- Noticing when you are distracted and bringing your attention to the present moment.
- Cultivating self-compassion when you are feeling critical and judgmental.
- Using mindfulness practice as a way of becoming more intentional about the choices you make.

5. Go back through the list in #4 and rate the extent to which you **think** each of these strategies could be helpful if you learned how to apply them in your life on a 0–10 scale (*0 = not at all helpful; 5 = somewhat helpful; 10 = extremely helpful*). Mark a strategy N/A if you don't know anything about the strategy or don't understand it.

CLIENT HANDOUT 11.1. Treatment Review Writing Assignment

Set aside 20 minutes during which you can privately and comfortably do this writing assignment. In your writing, we want you to really let go and explore your very deepest emotions and thoughts about the topics listed below.

Write about any or all of the following topics. If you choose to write on only one of the topics, that would be fine. You may write about them in any order you wish. If you cannot think about what to write next, just write the same thing over and over until something new comes to you. Be sure to write for the entire 20 minutes. Please do not spend any time worrying about spelling, punctuation, or grammar—this writing is intended to be a “stream of consciousness”—that is, you may write whatever comes to mind.

- What have you learned about yourself over the course of treatment?
- What methods have you learned that have been helpful to you?
- What changes have you made (if any) that are important to you?
- What methods do you need to continue to practice most once treatment ends?
- What new commitments do you want to make with regard to values-based action?
- What concerns do you have (if any) about treatment ending?

CLIENT HANDOUT 11.2. Mindfulness Practices

Practice	Helpfulness
Breath	Basic portable practice.
Breathing Space	When racing from one activity to another or to check in and get centered.
Mindfulness of Emotions	When experiencing muddy or intense reactions.
Thoughts on Clouds, Leaves, or Movie Screen	When entangled, fused, or tied in judgments.
Mindfulness of Sounds/Eating Mindfully	When you are bringing expectations to a situation, not necessarily watching as it unfolds.
The Guest House/Inviting a Difficulty In	When you are struggling with willingness.
The Mountain Meditation	When you need help connecting to inner strength and stability in the midst of change.

THERAPIST HANDOUT 11.1. Evaluating and Responding to Potential Obstacles to Treatment Progress

When clients don't seem to understand all or part of the model:

- Revisit psychoeducation in Chapters 5–8.
- Correct any misunderstandings the client may have about the model (e.g., one has to feel self-compassionate in order to practice self-compassion).

When clients don't think the model applies to aspects of their experience:

- Consider that you may not fully understand the client's experience and ask for input on why the model is insufficient; broaden your assessment, and work with the client to develop a shared conceptualization, using Therapist Forms 3.1 and 3.2.
- Consider contextual factors that you may not have validated or addressed sufficiently; review Chapter 10 for guidance.
- Use information the client provided during the assessment or in treatment to date to place the model in context (e.g., suggesting to a client who doesn't think their struggle with worry or anxiety interferes with values-based actions, "It's like that time you told me that you were so worried that your partner was going to break up with you, that you shut down in a way that was different from how you want to act in that relationship").
- Ask the client if they're willing to bring mindful observation to their behavior and the consequences of behavior in order to get more direct information about the potential relevancy of the model.
- Place any potentially challenging piece of the model aside and ask the client if it could be revisited in the future.

When clients seem disengaged from treatment:

- Assess and address concrete obstacles to engagement in between session activities through problem solving and adjusting activities while maintaining intended function.
- Address any ruptures in the working alliance (see Chapter 4).
- Make sure you are clearly connecting any recommended treatment strategies or practices to the client's goals for treatment and your shared case conceptualization.
- Assess and address obstacles to engagement like nonattendance, possibly through values-based action.

When clients are struggling and/or their symptoms worsened:

- Determine whether their struggle is consistent with your case conceptualization.
 - If so, explain the nonlinear course of change to your client and continue to monitor progress for any unexpected changes.
 - If not,
 - Collaborate with your client in revisiting your conceptualization.
 - Ask your client to practice broadening their awareness and bringing mindfulness to their experiences to see if additional information can be gained to identify potential stuck points.
 - Use in-session mindfulness exercises to explore how application of skills is unfolding for the client, with particular attention to criticism and judgments that arise.
 - Assess whether the client is choosing actions that maintain avoidance rather than engagement.
 - Adaptive actions should lead to a greater sense of flexibility and choice and an increased sense of agency, while reactive, avoidant, or detrimental actions will result in an increased sense of being stuck.
 - Explore whether the client needs additional practice with ABBT skills (revisit Part II) or adjunctive treatment.