

Worksheets for Personal Reflection & Fact Sheets

ASSERTIVE BILL OF RIGHTS

Express yourself

Instructions:

Being assertive involves expressing your thoughts, feelings and needs while respecting the person you are talking to. It also means recognizing that other people have the right to express the same. Communicating assertively can help one feel understood, increase confidence, and decrease conflict. The following rights highlight the freedom you have to stand up for yourself and be clear about your position without disrespecting others. Review these rights, reflect on them, and then answer the reflection question that follows.

I have the right to...

- express my feelings and opinions appropriately and have them taken seriously by others.
- ask for what I want.
- disagree with others regardless of their position or numbers.
- take the time I need to respond.
- say “no” without feeling guilty.
- say “I don’t know”.
- be treated with respect and not be taken for granted.
- feel all of my emotions (including anger) and express them appropriately.
- offer no reasons or excuses.
- ask questions.
- set my own priorities.
- make mistakes.
- change my mind.
- make my own decisions and deal with the consequences.
- feel good about myself, my actions and my life.
- exercise any and all of these rights, without feeling guilty.

Looking at the rights above, what is one area you can benefit from working on and what is one action step you are willing to take in this area? _____

CHEERS TO GOOD HEALTH!

Lifestyle change for better self-care

Instructions:

Be good to yourself! Taking care of all aspects of yourself can positively impact your quality of life and help you deal with most any situation. While self-care is unique to everyone, following the acronym of CHEERS (to good health) can help get you started in developing your self-care plan. While you may already be working on one, several, or all of these areas, challenge yourself to create an additional goal in each section. Then, choose one thing you will do *today* to work toward at least one of your goals, take action, and enjoy the journey!

C change your mindset

•Altering the way you think about situations will alter the way you feel about and respond to them.

My goal is to _____

H healthy eating

•There is a correlation between what you eat and how you feel physically and mentally. Proper nutrition helps boost wellbeing.

My goal is to _____

E exercise

•Physical activity is one of the best self-care practices there is, so exercise regularly.

My goal is to _____

E enjoy

•Routinely engage in things you enjoy. Have pleasure outweigh pressure.

My goal is to _____

R relax

•Make a plan for how you will relax (e.g., breathing, imagery, music, sit in silence) and use these skills when needed.

My goal is to _____

S sleep

•Good sleep hygiene is critical to overall well-being.

My goal is to _____

One thing I will do *today* to work towards at least one of these goals is _____

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

How to effectively manage difficult conversations

Instructions:

This worksheet is designed to help you resolve conflict through use of effective communication. Use it to guide your actions in a way that produces a peaceful solution in time of disagreement.

First, let's take a look at the conflict you are facing using the Stop-Think-Act model:

1. **Stop!** Breathe. Calm Down. Now, you are ready to accurately look at the problem at hand.
2. **Think!** Ask yourself:
 - What exactly is the *problem*? _____
 - Is this *really* a problem? Why? _____
 - It is *my* problem? _____
 - Does it need *immediate* attention? _____
 - What do I want? What is my *goal*? _____
 - What might I be *assuming*? _____
 - What might be another person's *point-of-view*? _____
 - What are my *options*? _____
 - What are the potential *consequences* of each option? _____
 - What is my *best choice* here? _____
3. **Act!**
 - Take action and responsibility for that action
 - Evaluate your action and the outcome. What can I learn from this?
 - Does the problem still exist? If no, learn from your experience. If yes, start again

Next, if you have determined that there is indeed a conflict that needs to be resolved, here's some additional **CLUES** on how to resolve it...

- C** - communicate promptly, assertively, respectfully. Initiate a private conversation and share your perspective & goal. Remember, talk *to* people, not *about* people.
- L** - listen to the other person's point of view. Allow them to speak without interruption, hidden agenda or judgment. Then, reflect what you hear to clarify what they are saying.
- U** - understand their perspective. Practice empathy; "Help me understand your point-of-view." Also, discuss one issue at a time, get the facts, and clarify assumptions.
- E** - explore options & solutions. Brainstorm to generate options. Choose a solution that works for you both and act on it.
- S** - So, how did it go? Evaluate how it went. Then move one or plan next steps. What did you learn?

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION

How to effectively manage difficult conversations

Now, if you are still stuck wondering what to say in the face of conflict, try this...

- **Starting the conversion:** "I want to talk to you about something and I'd appreciate it if you would first listen to what I have to say and then I will do the same for you...OK?"
- **State the problem:** "I've noticed...or, I feel _____, Because _____, and What I want is _____"
- **Gaining understanding:** "Help me understand (your view point, what's going on, what that's like for you)..."
- **Reflecting/Paraphrasing:** "What I hear you saying is...Is that correct?"
- **Move towards action:** "Given what we just talked about, what are some possible solutions that could work for us both?"

Finally, here are some Conflict Resolution Dos & Don'ts

DO:

- Communicate face-to-face
- Manage your own emotions
- Use language that is understood
- Recognize and embrace differences
- Understand interests and perspectives of self and others
- Act sooner rather than later
- Focus on the present situation/problem
- Actively listen and pay attention
- Be present, clear, and direct
- Be honest, genuine, and respectful
- Assert yourself
- Be aware of body language
- Convey the value of your relationship

DON'T:

- Wait or avoid the issue
- Assume
- Get defensive
- Interrupt
- Ignore feedback
- Argue feelings, judge or criticize
- Use put-downs or sarcasm
- Rely solely on verbals or nonverbal
- Discuss the problem with others not associated with the issue
- Stop communicating

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GROUNDING

Create personal calm

Instructions:

Review this handout. Then, answer the reflection question that follows.

What is Grounding?

Grounding is a set of simple strategies that can help you detach from emotional pain (e.g., anxiety, anger, sadness, self-harm). It is basically a way to distract yourself by focusing on something other than the difficult emotions you are experiencing. You may also think of grounding as centering, distracting, creating a safe place, or healthy detachment.

Although grounding does not solve the problem that is contributing to your unpleasant emotions, it does provide a temporary way to gain control over your feelings and prevent things from getting worse. Grounding anchors you, gives you a chance to calm down, and allows you to eventually return and address the problem that is triggering the unpleasant emotions to begin with. And grounding can be done anytime, anywhere, and no one has to know.

Ways of Grounding:

There are three types of grounding. You may find that one of these types works better for you, or that each is helpful.

1. Mental (focusing your mind)
2. Physical (focusing your senses)
3. Soothing (talking to yourself in a very kind way)

Mental Grounding:

1. **Describe your environment in detail**, using all of your senses – for example, “The walls are white, there are five blue chairs, there is a wooden bookshelf against the wall...” Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers, and temperature. You can do this anywhere.
2. **Play a “categories” game with yourself**. Try to think of types of dogs, jazz musicians, animals or famous people that begin with each letter of the alphabet, cars, TV shows, writers, sports, songs, cities.
3. **Describe an everyday activity in great detail**. For example, describe a meal that you cook (e.g., “First, I peel the potatoes and cut them into quarters; then I boil the water; then I make an herb marinade of oregano, basil, garlic, and olive oil...”).
4. **Imagine**. Use a pleasant or comforting mental image. Again, use all of your senses to make it as real and vivid as possible.
5. **Read something, saying each word to yourself**. Or read each letter backwards so that you focus on the letters and not the meaning of words.
6. **Use humor**. Think of something funny to jolt yourself out of your mood.
7. **Count to 10 or say the alphabet**, very s . . . l . . . o . . . w . . . l . . . y.

Adapted from: *Seeking Safety* by Lisa M. Najavits (2002).

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Physical Grounding:

1. **Run cool or warm water over your hands.**
2. **Grab tightly onto your chair as hard as you can;** notice the sensations and the experience.
3. **Touch various objects around you:** a pen, your clothing, the table, the walls. Notice textures, colors, weight, temperature. Compare the objects you touch.
4. **Carry a grounding object in your pocket** – a small object (a small rock, ring, piece of cloth) that you can touch whenever you feel unpleasant emotions rising.
5. **Notice your body:** the weight of your body in the chair; wiggling your toes in your socks; the feel of your back against the chair.
6. **Stretch.** Extend your fingers, arms, legs as far as you can; slowly and gently roll your head around.
7. **Clench and release your fists.**
8. **Jump up and down.**
9. **Eat something in a savoring way;** fully experience the food; describe the sights, aromas, textures, flavors, and the experience in detail to yourself.
10. **Focus on your breathing,** noticing each inhale and exhale. Repeat a pleasant word to yourself on each exhale.

Soothing Grounding:

1. **Say kind statements,** as if you were talking to a friend or small child – for example, “You are a good person going through a hard time. You’ll get through this.”
2. **Think of favorites.** Think of your favorite color, animal, season, food, time of day, TV show.
3. **Picture people you care about** and look at photographs of them.
4. **Remember the words to an inspiring song, quotation, or poem** that makes you feel better (e.g., serenity prayer).
5. **Say a coping statement:** “I can handle this,” “This feeling will pass.”
6. **Plan a safe treat for yourself,** such as a piece of candy, a nice dinner, or a warm bath.
7. **Think of things you are looking forward to in the next week** – perhaps time with a friend, going to a movie, or going on a hike.

TIPS:

- **Practice! Practice! Practice!** Like any other skill, grounding takes practice. So practice as often as possible and before you actually need it. Then, when you need to call upon this skill you will have it, know it, and use it well.
- **Try to notice which methods you like best** – physical, mental, or soothing grounding methods, or some combination.
- **Start grounding early on in a negative mood cycle.** Start before the anger, anxiety, or other feeling gets out of control.

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- **Create your own method of grounding.** Any method you make up may be worth much more than those you read here, because it is yours.
- **Make up an index card or type in your phone a list of your best grounding methods.** Have the list available so it is there when you need it.
- **Create an mp3 of a grounding message that you can play when needed.** Consider asking your counselor or someone close to you to record it if you want to hear someone else's voice.
- **Have others assist you in grounding.** Teach family and friends about grounding, so that they can help guide you with it if you become overwhelmed.
- **Don't give up!**

Now, list three of the strategies described above that you think will work best for you. Then practice these skills regularly, so in times of need you will know what to do and how to do it successfully.

3 grounding strategies I am committed to learning, practicing, and applying:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

After practicing and/or applying these grounding strategies, what have you noticed? Do you feel more in control? Do your emotions change? Are you able to calm yourself and focus on something other than the unpleasant emotions and situations?

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MINDFULNESS

Learning to live the moment

Instructions:

Review this handout. Then, answer the reflection questions that follow.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a state of mind in which you are fully present in the moment and not thinking about other issues in your life. It is being fully aware of what is occurring right-here right-now in a nonjudgmental way. Mindfulness allows you to clear your mind of distractions and clutter while increasing clarity and focus. It can help you pay full attention to experiences, surroundings, or the task at hand even when experiencing difficult emotions such as anxiety, fear, and frustration. So learn, practice, and apply this skill and enjoy the journey of living the moment!

Mindful of your breath:

- Slow down. Then stop for a moment.
- Sit, get comfortable, close your eyes (or keep a soft gaze), and become aware of your breathing.
- Let go of everything, focus your full attention on your breathing in this very moment, and accept this moment just as it is.
- Don't try to change or alter your breathing, but instead just follow your breath into and out of your body as you inhale and exhale. Notice the sensations in your body, the temperature of the air, and the movement through your nose, throat, stomach, and into your chest. Notice how your body shifts in your clothes and on the chair as you breathe.
- Spend a few minutes focusing your attention on the full experience of breathing. Immerse yourself completely in this experience.
- For several minutes, don't try to change anything, just let go and breathe. Breathe and be still. Give yourself permission to allow these moments to be as they are. Just let go and fully accept the present moment.

[Variation]. Take five minutes, close your eyes, and breathe

Mindful of sounds:

- Slow down. Then stop for a moment.
- Sit, get comfortable, close your eyes (or keep a soft gaze), and shift your awareness to your ears. Become aware of and open to all sounds in your environment.
- Practice simply being open to all sounds where ever they arise. Do not go searching for sounds or holding on to the experience of certain sounds. Instead, just practice having an expansive awareness of all the sounds around you – sounds that are close, sounds that are far away, sounds that are soft, and sounds that are loud.
- Anytime that you notice that you are getting distracted by a thought, which is completely normal, gently bring your attention back to the sounds in your environment.

Adapted from: Goleman, D. (2013). *Cultivating focus: Techniques for excellence* [CD]. New York, NY: More Than Sound. & Tull, M. (2016). *Mindfulness Exercises*. Retrieved from <http://ptsd.about.com/od/selfhelp/tp/mindfulexercises.htm>

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[Variation]. Walk outside, close your eyes, and listen to the sounds of nature

Mindful of thoughts:

- Slow down. Then stop for a moment.
- Sit, get comfortable, close your eyes (or keep a soft gaze), and shift your attention to your thoughts. Bring awareness to whatever thoughts enter your mind.
- Try to view your thoughts as simply thoughts -- only objects in your mind. It may be useful to imagine your thoughts as simply clouds passing through the sky, leaves passing down a stream, or bubbles drifting away. Notice thoughts enter your consciousness and then float away.
- There is no need to seek out, hold onto, or follow your thoughts. Just let them arise and disappear on their own.
- Let your thoughts just come and go. Don't judge them, strive to change them, link them to any emotions, or look for new ones.
- Just be. Be here now; fully and totally in this very moment.
- Anytime that you notice that you are getting immersed in a thought (this is completely normal), just gently bring your attention back to having awareness of your thoughts.

Mindful eating:

- Choose a time and place for eating that promotes mindful eating. Try eating in a quiet, distraction-free environment. This means no eating in front of the television, computer, or device.
- Before you begin eating, look down at your food. Take in what it looks like, how it smells, and think about where it came from. See if you can notice the urge to eat (e.g., your mouth watering, the feeling of hunger), before you take a bite.
- Put a bite in your mouth. Notice textures, how the food feels in your mouth, and what it tastes like. Before you swallow, notice the things that happen in your mouth when you put food in. Notice how you salivate, notice the urge to swallow, notice the sensation of chewing.
- As you swallow your food, notice what that feels like. How does your stomach feel now that it is one bite fuller?
- Savor the moment. Savor your meal.
- Repeat your mindful eating for each bite until your meal is finished. Try to decide when the meal is finished based on the sensations in your body (e.g., the feeling of fullness in your belly, no more sensation of hunger) rather than on whether your plate is clean.

Mindful of this moment:

- Take a moment each day to stop what you are doing and pay attention to this very moment. Notice your surroundings like you have perhaps never seen them before; free

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MINDFULNESS

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your mind of clutter, judgment, and the desire to change anything. Simply let go, accept, and observe. Bring your total awareness to this experience; right here, right now.

[Variation] Wherever you are, look around with fresh eyes and a beginner's mind, even if it is a place you know well. Keep looking until you discover something you haven't noticed before.

[Variation]. Stop a moment to simply observe several things you can SEE, TOUCH, HEAR, SMELL, and even TASTE.

[Variation] Pick out an object and focus your attention on it for several minutes. Immerse yourself completely in that object as you look at it as if for the first time. Notice color, texture, scent, weight, temperature...

Don't get caught up right way in having a special experience or in making huge progress. You will slowly notice a difference in your awareness over time.

Reflection questions:

1. How might your life be improved if you become more mindful? _____
2. In what specific situations do you think mindfulness could be helpful to you? _____

3. Given what you have read here, what is one mindfulness strategy you are willing to practice regularly? _____



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