WORKSHEET 75 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Naming my emotion

Breaking an emotion down to understand it better

AIM

Help the person observe and describe an emotion in parts (trigger, interpretation, sensations, urge, action, consequences), to recognise it sooner and name it precisely.

WHO IT IS FOR

Intense or confusing emotions, difficulty identifying what you feel. Adults and adolescents.

DURATION

15 min in session; after emotional moments

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Start from a recent emotional moment.
2. Break it down: trigger, interpretation, sensations, urge, what was done, consequences.
3. Look for the most precise word for the emotion (and its intensity).
4. Repeat with several situations to spot patterns.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Naming an emotion validates it; avoid judging it as “good” or “bad”. With very overwhelmed people, start with emotions of moderate intensity.

REFERENCES

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT Skills Training Manual (2nd ed.). Guilford.

Linehan, M. M. (1993). Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder. Guilford.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 75 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Naming my emotion

An emotion is a whole chain: something happens, we interpret it, the body reacts and we feel like acting. Breaking it down helps you recognise it sooner and choose better what to do.

1. What happened (the trigger).
2. What I thought and what I felt in my body.
3. What I felt like doing, and what I did.
4. The most precise name for my emotion and its intensity (0 to 10).

Trigger	Thought	Body	Urge	Emotion /10

Which emotions come up most, and with which triggers?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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