WORKSHEET 88 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Observing, describing, participating

DBT mindfulness

AIM

Practise the core DBT mindfulness skills: observing without reacting, describing without judging, participating fully in the activity, one thing at a time, effectively.

WHO IT IS FOR

Intense emotions, impulsivity, self-judgement; the basis of all the other DBT skills.

DURATION

10 min in session; a few minutes a day

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Introduce the three “what” skills: observe, describe, participate.
2. Introduce the three “how” skills: non-judgementally, one thing at a time, effectively (doing what works).
3. Practise a short exercise (observing an object, describing an emotion in terms of facts).
4. Suggest a short daily practice.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Practices should be short at first, especially with very overwhelmed people or those with traumatic experiences.

REFERENCES

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

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness. Delacorte.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 88 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Observing, describing, participating

DBT mindfulness fits into a few simple gestures: observing what is happening, putting it into words and taking part fully in what you are doing, without judging, one thing at a time.

1. Observe: I notice, without reacting (a sound, a sensation, a thought).
2. Describe: I put words to the facts ("I notice a lump in my throat").
3. Participate: I get fully involved in what I am doing.
4. How: without judging, one thing at a time, doing what works.

Day	What I practised	Duration	What I noticed

Which "how" do I find hardest: not judging, one thing at a time, or doing what works?

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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