DBT Skills: Introduction to Emotion Regulation

Objective

To learn the DBT skill of identifying feelings, then observing and naming them as a way of helping you to regulate your emotions.

You Should Know

Most of us go through the day experiencing a range of emotions—from pleasant to unpleasant, some of which are in our awareness and others are out of our awareness. Sometimes the emotions that happen outside of our awareness can cause us to make poor decisions, say things we regret, or take actions that cause us or others harm.

You can learn specific skills that can help with "emotion regulation," that is, controlling your emotions and keeping them more in balance rather than shifting between extremes. In this worksheet, you will learn about the range of emotions and then practice simply observing and naming your own.

What to Do

In order to manage an emotion, you need to know what it is. The first step in learning emotion regulation is to become familiar with the range of emotions that we can experience. Read the following list of pleasant and unpleasant emotions.

<u>Pleasant</u>	mellow	agitated	
affectionate	ate open		
amused	optimistic	angry	
appreciative	passionate	annoyed	
calm	peaceful		
caring	pleased		
comfortable	relaxed	ashamed	
confident	relieved	bad	
curious	rested	bored	
delighted	safe	confused	
empowered satisfied		contemptuous	
ncouraged secure		depressed	
excited	strong		
friendly	endly surprised		
fulfilled	thrilled	discouraged	
grateful	trusting	disgusted	
hopeful	peful warm		
joyful	<u>Unpleasant</u>	edgy	
loving	aggravated	embarrassed	

enraged insecure scared exasperated irritated self-conscious exhausted Ionely suspicious frightened needy tense terrified frustrated nervous furious overwhelmed tired guarded remorseful uncomfortable resentful guilty unhappy helpless restless upset vulnerable impatient sad Are these feelings all familiar to you? Which ones are? Which ones aren't? Write some reflections on the lines below the list.

Now, note down a few situations or experiences in which you become aware of (notice) your feelings in the coming week. By labeling your feelings, you can use the power of your mind to take a step back and assess (mindfulness), then, over time, learn how to make a good choice about what to do next.

Start with PLEASANT or UNPLEASANT. Then try to identify the general feeling you notice, such as HAPPY, SAD, ANGRY, SCARED. Then, if you feel ready, try to be more specific. Use the above list of feelings as a guide, but feel free to use different words for feelings that come to mind that might not appear on this list.

Day	Situation/experience when you noticed a feeling	Pleasant or unpleasant?	General (happy, sad,	Specific (see list)
Sunday	reening		angry, scared)	
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

Reflections on This Exercise
1. What emotions did you become aware of that you weren't previously aware of?
2. What was the main obstacle you encountered in identifying your emotions?
3. What was easy about it? What would you like to do to continue the practice of naming and noticing your emotions? Be specific.
How helpful was this exercise? (1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)
What could you do differently to make progress in this area?