

Becoming Aware of Your Upsetting Thoughts and Feelings

What to Know

Many teens deal with their problems by trying to avoid painful thoughts, feelings, sensations, and memories. They think if they just distract themselves, they will be fine. However, while avoiding these unpleasant inner experiences may help temporarily, these strategies usually only work for a short period of time.

There is also a significant personal cost to avoidance. Some teens spend hours each day avoiding the things that could upset them instead of using this time to enjoy life.

This exercise is designed to help you examine how you are avoiding the things that cause you to be anxious and upset, and how this keeps you from having a happier and more fulfilling life.

What to Do

Begin by listing the feelings you are trying to avoid. List three feelings that upset you.

List three thoughts that upset you.

List three sensations that upset you.

List three memories that upset you.

Write any additional upsetting thoughts, feelings, sensations, or memories here.

What do you do to avoid these unpleasant inner experiences?

List activities or events you avoid to keep from having painful inner experiences.

List the places you avoid to keep from having painful inner experiences.

List the people you avoid to keep from having painful inner experiences.
