

Emotions
are not
the enemy—
they are
our allies!

Why We Need *Emotions*



BRAIN

Emotions help us
think, learn,
and understand.



HEART

Emotions help
us **care, connect,**
and **feel.**



COMPASS

Emotions guide
us toward what
matters most.

They give direction to our decisions,
depth to our relationships,
and *meaning* to our lives. 

EMOTIONS



MOTIVATE

They give us
energy and drive
to take action.



PROTECT

They alert us
to danger and
help keep us safe.



CONNECT

They help us build
relationships and
understand others.



INFORM

They provide
important information
about our needs
and the world.



RECOGNIZING YOUR WINDOW

— WORKSHEET —

Name: _____

Date: _____



We all move in and out of our window of tolerance. The goal is not to stay in the window all the time, but to notice where you are and learn how to return.



INSIDE MY WINDOW I USUALLY...

When I am inside my window, I feel calm enough to handle life's challenges. I am present, thinking clearly, and able to make good choices.

EXAMPLES OF HOW I FEEL, THINK, AND ACT INSIDE MY WINDOW



Calm



Present



Focused



Able to Think



In Control



Connected

List specific examples of what it looks like when you are **INSIDE** your window. Think about how you feel in your body, what you think, and how you behave.



OUTSIDE MY WINDOW I USUALLY...

When I am outside my window, my emotions feel too big. It is harder to think clearly, and I may react in ways that are not helpful or hurtful.

EXAMPLES OF HOW I FEEL, THINK, AND ACT OUTSIDE MY WINDOW



Overwhelmed



Anxious



Angry



Out of Control



Panicked



Numb /
Disconnected

List specific examples of what it looks like when you are **OUTSIDE** your window. Think about how you feel in your body, what you think, and how you behave.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- 1 What situations or triggers tend to move me outside my window? _____
- 2 What early warning signs tell me I am leaving my window? _____
- 3 What helps me return to my window? _____
- 4 What is one strategy I will practice this week to stay in or return to my window? _____

TOOLS THAT HELP



Breathing • Movement • Self-Talk
Connection • Grounding • Rest



OUR GOAL:

Expand our window by building skills, resilience, and self-awareness.



Moving out of your window is normal.
Learning how to return is the goal.



BE KIND TO YOURSELF.

Awareness is the first step.
Practice is the path.

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NAMING EMOTIONS

— WORKSHEET —



Research shows accurately naming emotions may reduce emotional intensity.
The more specific we are, the better we can understand and manage how we feel.

Name: _____

Date: _____



ACTIVITY

Identify

10 emotions experienced this week.



TIPS:

- Think about different moments, situations, and interactions.
- Choose a variety of emotions—pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral.
- Be as specific as possible (e.g., “frustrated” instead of “bad”).
- There are no right or wrong answers.

1. THE EMOTION	2. WHEN DID I FEEL IT?	3. WHAT TRIGGERED IT?	4. HOW INTENSE WAS IT?	5. WHAT DID I DO?
What emotion did I feel? (Use one word)	What was happening? (Briefly describe the situation)	What happened right before or during the emotion? (What made me feel this way?)	Rate the intensity of the emotion. (1 = mild 10 = very intense)	How did I respond? (What actions did I take or what did I need?)
1			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
2			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
3			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
4			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
5			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
6			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
7			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
8			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
10			1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which emotions came up most often this week? _____
- Were there any surprises? _____
- What patterns do I notice about my triggers or responses? _____
- What can I do differently next time? _____



REMEMBER

Naming emotions is a powerful first step.
The more aware you are, the more choices you have.



AWARENESS BUILDS UNDERSTANDING. UNDERSTANDING BUILDS RESILIENCE. RESILIENCE BUILDS CHANGE. ★



COGNITIVE WARNING SIGNS

Learning to Recognize the Thoughts That Fuel Anger



- We've already learned that our bodies give us physical warning signs when anger is building.
- Our minds give us warning signs too. In fact, the thoughts we have about a situation often determine whether our emotions calm down or become more intense.
- Our brains are constantly interpreting what is happening around us. When we are stressed, tired, hurt, or overwhelmed, our brains may not interpret situations accurately. Instead, we may jump to conclusions, assume the worst, or fill in missing information without enough evidence.
- These **automatic thoughts** occur so quickly that we often do not notice them. Yet they strongly influence how we feel, how we behave, and how we respond to others.



COMMON COGNITIVE WARNING SIGNS



"I'M LOSING CONTROL."

When people think, "I'm losing control," their brain begins preparing for danger. Anxiety and frustration increase because the situation feels overwhelming.

A MORE BALANCED THOUGHT

- "I'm feeling overwhelmed right now, but I have skills I can use to regain control."



"NO ONE RESPECTS ME."

Feeling disrespected is one of the most common thoughts associated with anger. When we believe someone is intentionally disrespecting us, our emotional brain quickly shifts into protection mode. We may become defensive, argumentative, or aggressive before gathering all of the facts.



Remember: Behavior we interpret as disrespect may actually reflect distraction, stress, misunderstanding, poor communication, or another unrelated issue.

ASK YOURSELF

- What evidence do I actually have?
- Could there be another explanation?
- Am I assuming I know what the other person intended?



"THIS ALWAYS HAPPENS."

This thought reflects a common thinking error known as overgeneralization. Our brains sometimes take one difficult event and convince us that it happens all the time.

EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- "Nobody ever listens to me."
- "Everything goes wrong."
- "I always mess things up."
- "People never appreciate me."



Words such as **always**, **never**, **everyone**, and **no one** are often clues that our thinking may be becoming distorted.



UNDERSTANDING COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

Cognitive distortions are automatic patterns of thinking that can make situations seem more threatening, hopeless, or unfair than they actually are.

Everyone experiences cognitive distortions from time to time.
Learning to recognize them is the first step toward changing them.



1. ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Viewing situations in extremes without recognizing the middle ground.

Examples: "If I'm not perfect, I've failed."
"If one thing went wrong, the whole day is ruined."

BALANCED ALTERNATIVE

"Very few situations are completely good or completely bad."



2. OVERGENERALIZATION

Taking one event and applying it to every situation.

Example: Instead of saying "This meeting didn't go well," You begin believing "Meetings never go well for me."

BALANCED ALTERNATIVE

"This meeting was difficult, but that doesn't mean every meeting will be."



3. MIND READING

Assuming you know what another person is thinking without evidence.

Examples: "They think I'm incompetent."
"She's judging me." "He doesn't respect me."

BALANCED ALTERNATIVE

"I don't know what they're thinking unless I ask."



4. CATASTROPHIZING

Expecting the worst possible outcome.

Examples: "This is going to be a disaster."
"Everything is falling apart."
"I'll never recover from this."

BALANCED ALTERNATIVE

"This situation is difficult, but I can handle it one step at a time."



5. "SHOULD" STATEMENTS

Creating rigid expectations for yourself or others.

Examples: "People should always agree with me."
"My children should never argue."
"Drivers should know better."

BALANCED ALTERNATIVE

"People are imperfect, just like I am."

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CLINICAL REFLECTION

The important thing to remember is that thoughts are not facts. Just because a thought enters your mind does not mean it is true.

One of the most powerful skills you can develop is learning to pause and ask:

- ✓ Is this thought completely accurate?
- ✓ What evidence supports this thought?
- ✓ Is there another way to look at this situation?
- ✓ What would I tell a friend who had this same thought?



That brief pause allows the thinking brain—the prefrontal cortex—to become involved again, reducing the likelihood of reacting impulsively.



PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION

Ask yourself:

- Which of these thinking patterns do you notice most often in yourself?
- Have you ever reacted to something, only to discover later that your assumptions weren't accurate?
- What thoughts tend to increase your anger the fastest?

Remember: Cognitive distortions are common human experiences, not personal failures.



TRANSITION TO CBT

This is one of the central ideas of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT.



CBT teaches us that while we cannot always control the situations we face, we can learn to recognize, question, and change unhelpful thinking patterns. As our thinking becomes more balanced, our emotional responses become more balanced as well.



KEY TAKEAWAY

"Your thoughts shape your emotions, and your emotions influence your behavior. When you learn to recognize and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns, you create space for wiser choices, healthier relationships, and better emotional regulation."





DBT WISE MIND WORKSHEET

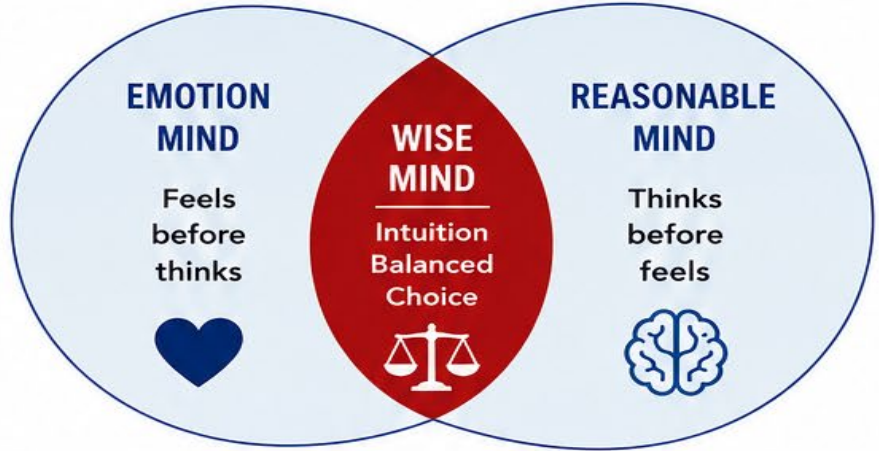
— Balance Your Emotions. Make Wise Choices. —

WHAT IS WISE MIND?

Wise Mind is the balance between Emotion Mind and Reasonable Mind. It helps us respond thoughtfully by using both our feelings and our logic.



Wise Mind = Emotion + Logic + Values + Experience



EMOTION MIND

- Driven by feelings and emotions
- Reacts quickly
- Can be impulsive
- Emotions provide important information

Example: Yelling, sending an angry text, walking away, making impulsive decisions.



WISE MIND

- Balances feelings and facts
- Responds thoughtfully
- Guided by values and long-term goals
- Creates balanced choices

Example: Pause, consider options, choose what aligns with your values and goals.



REASONABLE MIND

- Driven by logic and facts
- Analyzes situations
- Helps solve problems
- Can overlook emotions and relationships

Example: Planning, comparing options, analyzing facts, focusing only on logic.

EXPLORE YOUR THREE MINDS

Think about a recent situation that triggered strong emotions.

Situation:

1. EMOTION MIND

What was I feeling?
What did Emotion Mind say or want to do?



2. REASONABLE MIND

What are the facts?
What did Reasonable Mind notice or say?



3. WISE MIND

What is the balanced response?
What choice aligns with my values and goals?



WISE MIND QUESTIONS

Before responding, ask yourself:

- ☐ What am I feeling?
- ☐ What are the facts?
- ☐ What assumptions am I making?
- ☐ What response will help me reach my long-term goals?
- ☐ What choice will I feel good about tomorrow?
- ☐ What would my wisest self do?



MY WISE MIND PLAN

What will help me access my Wise Mind next time?



REMEMBER: You don't have to choose between your emotions and your logic. Wise Mind brings them together so you can make the best choice for you.

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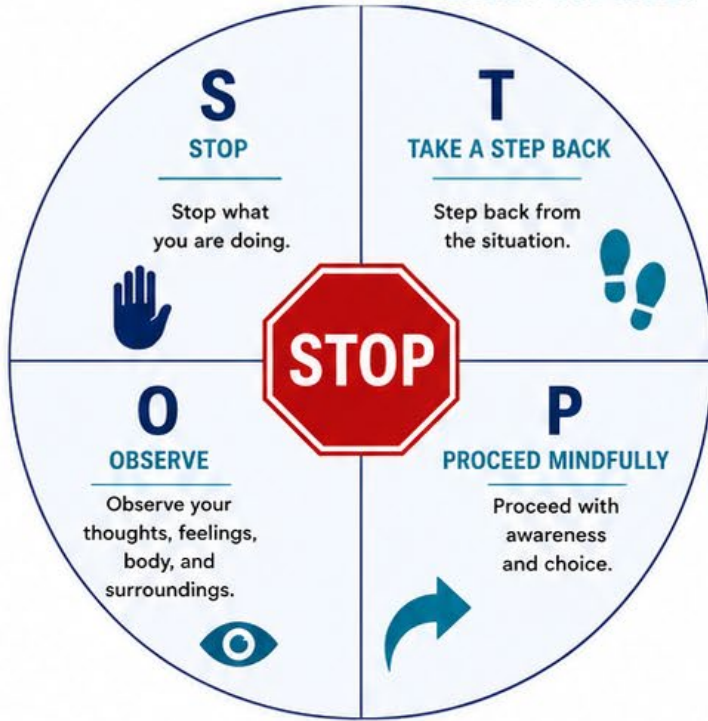




DBT STOP

Pause. Notice. Choose. Act Wisely.

Date: _____



WHAT IS THE STOP SKILL?

* The STOP skill helps you pause when emotions run high so you can respond instead of react. It gives your brain time to calm down and choose actions that support your values and goals.

- S STOP** – Stop what you are doing.
Pause before you say or do something you may regret.
- T TAKE A STEP BACK** – Step back from the situation.
Give yourself space to breathe and think.
- O OBSERVE** – Observe your thoughts, feelings, body, and surroundings.
Notice what is happening inside and outside of you.
- P PROCEED MINDFULLY** – Proceed with awareness and choice.
Choose what will be most helpful in the long run.

PRACTICE USING STOP Think of a recent situation that was difficult or triggered a strong emotion.

Describe the situation: _____



S STOP

What was I doing?
What made me want to react?



T TAKE A STEP BACK

How did I step back?
What did I do to create space?



O OBSERVE

What did I notice?
Thoughts? Feelings?
Body sensations?
Surroundings?



P PROCEED MINDFULLY

What choice did I make?
What was my response?
Did it align with my values?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How did using the STOP skill affect the outcome? _____
2. What was most helpful about stepping back and observing? _____
3. What will I do differently next time? _____
4. How can I remind myself to use STOP more often? _____

WHEN TO USE THE STOP SKILL

* I can use STOP when I notice:

- ☐ I feel angry, upset, or overwhelmed.
- ☐ I want to say or do something impulsive.
- ☐ My heart is racing or body is tense.
- ☐ I feel misunderstood or disrespected.
- ☐ I am feeling urges I don't want to act on.
- ☐ Other: _____



Daily Reminder

You have the power to pause.
In that pause, you have the power to choose.

Small Pause. Big Difference.

A few seconds of mindfulness can prevent hours, days, or even years of regret.

