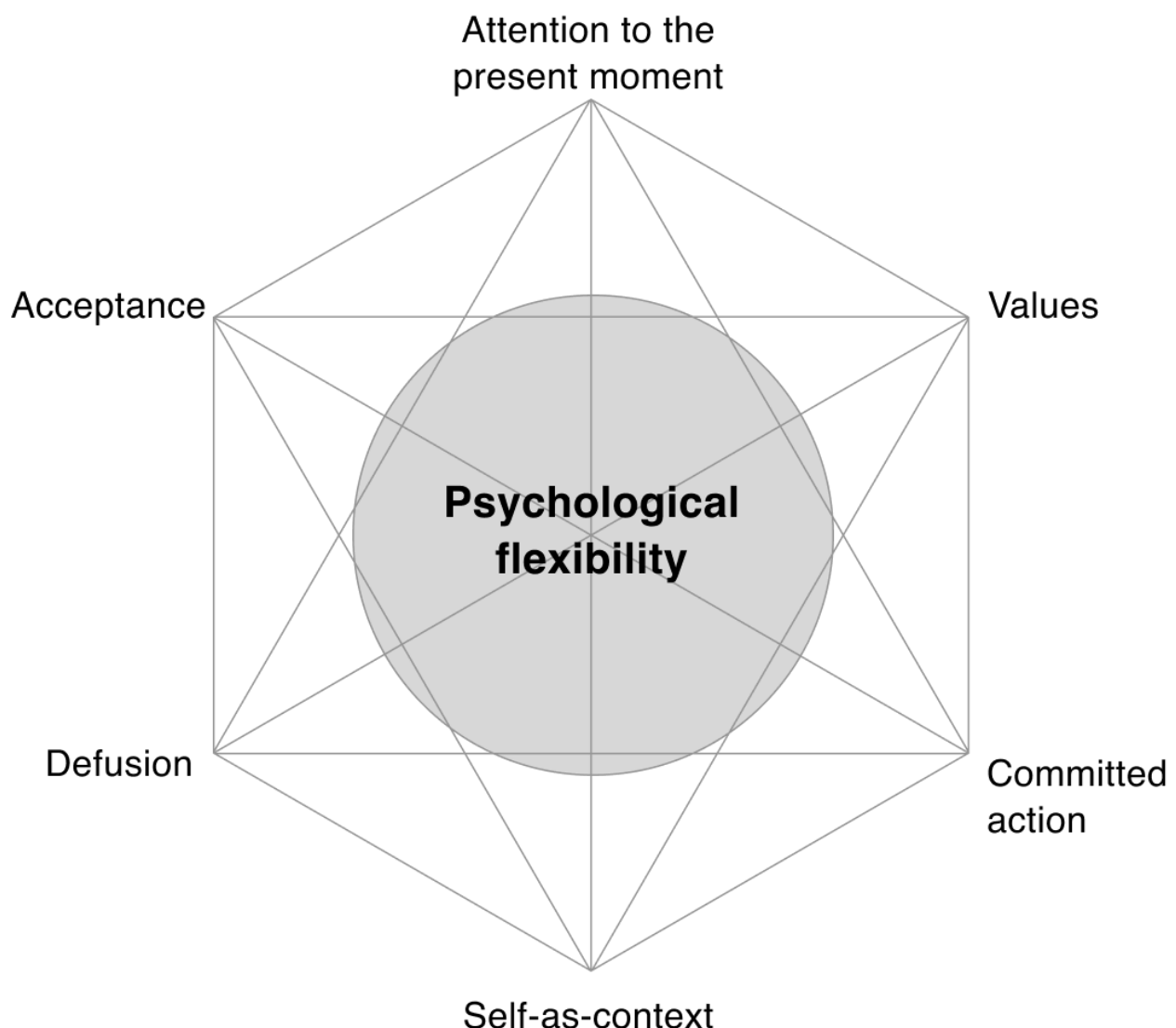


Psychological Flexibility Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Psychological flexibility describes the ability to stay open, aware, and engaged in the present moment even when facing difficult thoughts, emotions, or situations. It involves making choices based on your values instead of being driven by automatic or avoidant reactions.

This worksheet is designed to help you: Recognize unhelpful thoughts and emotions, develop acceptance and mindfulness skills, connect to what truly matters to you (values) and take committed, value-driven action.



Prevedini, A. B., Presti, G., Rabitti, E., Miselli, G., & Moderato, P. (2011). Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT): the foundation of the therapeutic model and an overview of its contribution to the treatment of patients with chronic physical diseases. *Giornale italiano di medicina del lavoro ed ergonomia*, 33(1 Suppl A), A53–A63. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21488484/>

Section 1: Attention to the present moment

Why focus on the present?

Many of us spend a lot of time worrying about the future, replaying the past, or getting lost in our thoughts. When this happens, we disconnect from the present moment—the only place where we can truly take action and experience life.

Present moment awareness is about deliberately bringing your attention to the here-and-now. This skill helps you notice your thoughts and emotions without getting swept away by them. It creates a pause where you can respond more effectively rather than react impulsively.

The following exercises will help you build the habit of grounding yourself in the present moment.

Exercise: Grounding in the here-and-now

1. Mindful Breathing Sit in a comfortable position. Breathe in and out slowly for 2 minutes, focusing on the physical sensations of your breath. Take note of any passing thoughts or feelings.

What did you notice? (e.g., wandering thoughts, tension, calmness)

2. Sensory Grounding (5-4-3-2-1 Technique) List what you observe around you:

5 Things you see:

4 Things you can touch:

3 Things you hear:

2 Things you smell:

1 Thing you taste or feel:

Reflection: How does focusing on the present moment change your experience?

Section 2: Defusion – unhooking from thoughts

Learning to step back from thoughts

Thoughts can often feel like facts, driving how we feel and behave. When we get "hooked" by unhelpful thoughts (e.g., self-criticism, worry), they can keep us stuck or lead us away from our values.

Cognitive defusion is the skill of stepping back from thoughts and seeing them for what they are: words or images created by the mind. Defusion helps you reduce the power of unhelpful thoughts so that you can make choices based on your values rather than your thinking patterns.

The exercise below will help you notice, label, and unhook from difficult thoughts.

Exercise: "Thank you, mind"

Write down 2-3 difficult or unhelpful thoughts you've had recently. Example: *"I'm not good enough."*

Thoughts:

1.

2.

3.

Now repeat each thought slowly, adding the phrase **"I notice I am having the thought that..."**

Say the thought again, but this time add the phrase **"Thank you, mind, for this thought."**

Reflection: How does this exercise affect the way you see the thought? Does it feel lighter, less controlling, or the same?

Section 3: Acceptance – making space for emotions

Allowing emotions instead of resisting them

When we experience painful emotions, our natural instinct may be to avoid, suppress, or fight against them. However, this struggle can intensify emotional pain and prevent us from moving forward.

Acceptance involves making space for difficult emotions, allowing them to exist without judgment or resistance. It doesn't mean you have to like the emotions or resign yourself to feeling stuck—it means you're choosing to drop the struggle.

The following exercise will guide you to allow your emotions and relate to them in a healthier way.

Exercise: Dropping the struggle with difficult feelings

1. Identify an emotion you've been avoiding or resisting:

2. Visualize the emotion as an object (e.g., a heavy rock, a cloud). Think

- *What does it look like?*
- *How big is it?*
- *Is it moving or still?*

3. Imagine holding this object in your hands. Allow it to just exist without trying to push it away.

How does it feel to stop fighting the emotion?

Reflection: How might letting go of resistance allow you to focus on other areas of life?

Section 4: Observing yourself over time

The changing and constant self

Throughout our lives, we go through countless changes – in our roles, relationships, beliefs, and circumstances. Yet beneath these changes, there's often a consistent sense of "I" that observes and experiences all these transitions. Understanding both what changes and what remains constant about ourselves can help us develop greater self-awareness and psychological flexibility.

Exercise: Your self across time

Reflect on yourself at three points in time:

1. **As a child:** How would you describe yourself then?

2. **As a teenager:** How would you describe yourself then?

3. Today: How do you describe yourself now?

Reflection: What has stayed constant about you through all these changes?

Section 5: Values

Understanding your core values

Our values are like a personal compass that guides us toward what matters most in life. They reflect our deepest desires for who we want to be and what we want to stand for. Unlike goals that can be achieved, values are ongoing directions we can move toward throughout our lives.

Who you are is more than your current thoughts, feelings, or situations. The observer self connects you to your experiences across time.

Exercise: Discovering your values

1. Write down your answers to the following questions:

Who do you want to be as a person?

What qualities do you want to show (e.g., kindness, honesty, courage)?

What is most important to you in relationships, work, health, and personal growth?

2. Choose your top 3 values:

1.

2.

3.

Section 6: Committed action

Moving from values to action

While values show us what matters most, committed action is about bringing those values to life through our daily choices and behaviors. Even small steps aligned with our values can create meaningful change and build momentum toward the life we want to live.

Exercise: Building small steps toward values-based living

1. Choose one value from the previous section:

Value:

2. Write down one small, realistic action you can take in the next 24 hours to move toward this value:

3. Identify any barriers (e.g., fear, doubt) and write how you can respond to them:

Barrier:

My response:

4. Commit: When will you take this action? (Specify a time or day.)

Reflection: How do you feel after taking this step?

Notes