

# The Costs of Avoidance ACT Worksheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Instructions:

Complete the following sentences:

- The thoughts I'd most like to get rid of are:

\_\_\_\_\_

- The feelings I'd most like to get rid of are:

\_\_\_\_\_

- The sensations I'd most like to get rid of are:

\_\_\_\_\_

- The memories I'd most like to get rid of are:

\_\_\_\_\_

What have you done to avoid or eliminate these unpleasant thoughts or feelings? Write everything you've used or remember in the appropriate sections below:

## Distraction

**Guide Question:** What have you done to distract yourself, "zone out," or take your mind off the mentioned painful thoughts, feelings, sensations, or memories?

**Reflection Questions:**

Did this get rid of any thoughts/feelings in the long term?

- Yes
- No

Did it bring me closer to a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life?

- Yes
- No

If the answer to the 2nd question is “No”, what did this cost me regarding time, energy, money, health, relationships, and vitality?

**Opting Out**

**Guide Question:** What activities, interests, events, people, places, and opportunities you’ve avoided, withdrawn from, and missed out on because you wanted to avoid feeling bad or you did not feel good?

**Reflection Questions:**

Did this get rid of any thoughts/feelings in the long term?

- Yes
- No

Did it bring me closer to a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life?

- Yes
- No

If the answer to the 2nd question is “No”, what did this cost me regarding time, energy, money, health, relationships, and vitality?

### Thinking Strategies

Instructions: Tick the different ways of thinking you have tried - deliberately or unintentionally - when painful thoughts or feelings appear.

- Worrying
- Dwelling on the past
- Fantasizing about the future
- Imagining escape scenarios like leaving your partner or job
- Imagining revenge scenarios
- Imagining suicide scenarios
- Thinking “It’s not fair . . .”
- Thinking “If only . . .”
- Thinking of killing yourself
- Blaming yourself
- Blaming others
- Blaming the world
- Talking logically to yourself
- Talking positively to yourself
- Talking negatively to yourself
- Analyzing yourself and trying to figure out why you’re like this
- Analyzing the situation and trying to figure out why this happened
- Analyzing others and trying to figure out why they are like this
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reflection Questions:

Did this get rid of any thoughts/feelings in the long term?

- Yes

No

Did it bring me closer to a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life?

Yes

No

If the answer to the 2nd question is "No", what did this cost me regarding time, energy, money, health, relationships, and vitality?

### Substances

**Guiding Question:** What substances like cigarettes, recreational drugs, and prescription drugs or food have you used to try to feel better?

### Reflection Questions:

Did this get rid of any thoughts/feelings in the long term?

Yes

No

Did it bring me closer to a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life?

Yes

No

If the answer to the 2nd question is "No", what did this cost me regarding time, energy, money, health, relationships, and vitality?

## Anything Else

**Guiding Question:** What else can you think of that you have done to make yourself feel better when mentioned thoughts or feelings **appear**?

### Reflection Questions:

Did this get rid of any thoughts/feelings in the long term?

- Yes
- No

Did it bring me closer to a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life?

- Yes
- No

If the answer to the 2nd question is “No”, what did this cost me regarding time, energy, money, health, relationships, and vitality?

**Reference:** Harris, R. (2014). The Costs of Avoidance [E-book]. In *The Complete Set of Client Handouts and Worksheets from ACT books* (p. 29-30).

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