

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Guide Question: What activities, interests, events, people, places, and opportunities you’ve avoided, withdrawn from, and missed out on because you wanted to avoid feeling bad or you did not feel good?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

https://thehappinesstrap.com/upimages/Complete_Worksheets_2014.pdf)