

Acceptance

Embracing Experience Worksheet

What is Acceptance?

Acceptance involves embracing thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations without trying to change, suppress, or eliminate them. It is the willingness to experience difficult feelings and internal events without unnecessary struggle.

The goal is not to like or want difficult experiences, but to allow them to be present without adding suffering through resistance. Acceptance reduces the secondary suffering that comes from fighting against primary emotions.

Key Characteristics:

- Acknowledging and embracing difficult emotions without resistance
- Allowing experiences to exist without judgment
- Experiencing feelings fully without trying to control or avoid them
- Practicing willingness to have uncomfortable internal experiences
- Reducing the struggle against inevitable human experiences

| Exercise 1: Willingness Scale

Duration: 10 minutes | Difficulty: Beginner

Purpose: Assess and develop willingness to experience difficult emotions

Instructions:

1. Think of a difficult emotion or situation you've been avoiding
2. Rate your current willingness to experience this on a scale of 0-10:
 - 0 = Completely unwilling, will do anything to avoid
 - 5 = Somewhat willing, but uncomfortable
 - 10 = Completely willing, fully open to the experience

What difficult emotion or situation are you avoiding?

Current willingness rating (0-10): _____

Reflect on the following questions:

What has avoiding this emotion cost me?

What activities or relationships have I avoided?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

How has avoidance affected my life?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

What would I do if I were willing to feel this?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

Consider: What if you increased your willingness by just 1 point?

What would that look like?

[Empty dashed box for writing]

New willingness rating (0-10): _____

Key Insight:

Willingness is a choice you make moment by moment. You don't have to like the feeling to be willing to have it. Start with small steps toward willingness.

Exercise 2: Expansion Technique

Duration: 10-15 minutes | Difficulty: Intermediate

Purpose: Practice accepting difficult emotions and physical sensations

Instructions:

1. Identify a difficult emotion you're currently experiencing (or bring one to mind)
2. Notice where you feel this emotion in your body
3. Observe the physical sensations without trying to change them

What emotion are you working with?

Describe the physical sensations:

Where exactly is it located in your body?

What's the shape or size?

Is it moving or still?

What's the temperature (hot, cold, warm)?

Is it heavy or light? Solid or fluid?

Now, practice making space:

- Breathe into the sensation
- Imagine creating space around it

- Allow it to be there
- Make room for it in your body
- Say to yourself: "I can make room for this feeling"

After Practice - Reflect:

What happened when you stopped fighting the feeling?

What was it like to make space for the emotion?

Exercise 3: Acceptance Statements

Duration: 5 minutes | Difficulty: Beginner

Purpose: Practice accepting difficult experiences through language

Practice saying these acceptance statements:

When you notice a difficult thought, feeling, or sensation, practice saying:

- "I notice I'm having the thought that..."
- "I'm noticing a feeling of..."
- "I'm aware of a sensation of..."

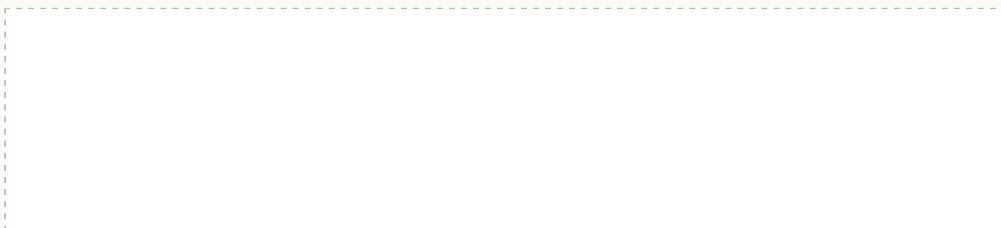
Then add an acceptance statement:

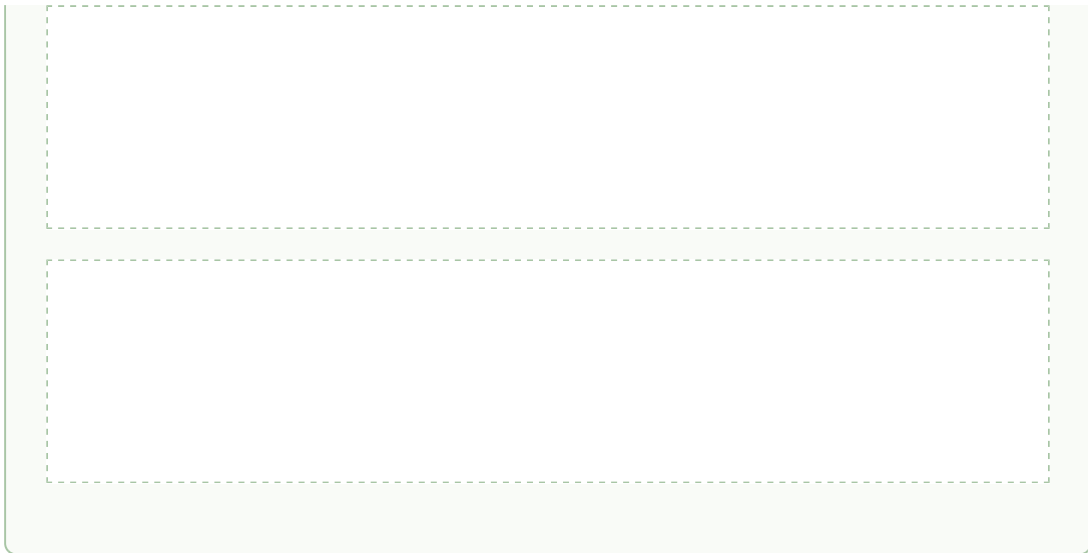
- "...and I can make room for this"
- "...and I can allow this to be here"
- "...and I don't need to fight this"
- "...and this is part of being human"

Examples:

- "I notice I'm having the thought that I'm not good enough, and I can make room for this thought"
- "I'm noticing a feeling of anxiety, and I can allow this to be here"
- "I'm aware of tension in my chest, and I don't need to fight this sensation"

Practice with your own experiences:





Practice Tips:

- This is not positive thinking—you're not saying the experience is good
- You're simply acknowledging it's present and choosing not to struggle
- Making space doesn't mean you like the feeling
- Acceptance gets easier with practice
- Use expansion technique when emotions feel overwhelming
- Remember: acceptance is about willingness, not wanting
- The difference between pain and suffering is often our resistance

Hexaflex Model - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Practice regularly to develop psychological flexibility