



DBT

Mindfulness
Journal





MINDFULNESS

“MINDFULNESS IS THE PRACTICE OF BEING PRESENT, IN THE MOMENT, ON PURPOSE, WITHOUT JUDGMENT, AND NOT CLINGING TO ANY MOMENT.”



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS IN DBT?

In dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), mindfulness is also defined as observing, describing, and participating in the moment. It involves doing it non-judgmentally, one thing at a time, and being effective, such as doing what works best for you. It can include focusing on something specific or narrowing your attention. Other times, mindfulness is about noticing everything around you or expanding your attention.

Learning and practicing skills, including mindfulness, is important in DBT and is thought to play a crucial role in what helps people get better and build a life worth living. Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways. Mindfulness is the opposite of being on automatic pilot. You do things unconsciously or out of habit when you're on automatic pilot.

An example of being on autopilot that many people can relate to is arriving at work but not really remembering anything about the car ride there. You didn't have to think, ok. First, I open the car door, sit down, put the key in the ignition, etc. You just did all those things automatically and found yourself at work.

Mindfulness is powerful!

When you can control your attention through mindfulness, a whole world of choice opens up. You no longer have to act, and react, out of habit, fear, or rapidly changing emotions.

In the context of DBT, mindfulness is broken down into “what” skills and “how” skills.

QUICK AND EASY DBT MINDFULNESS EXERCISES TO START RIGHT AWAY

1. Mindful Breathing

- Deep breathing: In through the nose and out through the mouth. You may add in words like “in” and “out” or count the length of each inhale and exhale.
- Breathing colors: Start by choosing two colors. Imagine one of the colors as you inhale. Then, picture the other color as you exhale.

2. Sounds

Tune into the sounds happening around you. Choose one and focus on it.

3. Mindful Eating

Eat without doing anything else except eating.

5. Practice Compassion For Others

This cliché exists for a good reason. It's true. When we help others, we help ourselves.



WHAT SKILLS

“ IN TODAY’S RUSH, WE ALL THINK TOO MUCH-SEEK TOO MUCH-WANT TOO MUCH-AND FORGET ABOUT THE JOY OF BEING ”

ECKHART TOLLE



"WHAT" SKILLS

The Mindfulness module incorporates the “What” skill of Observe, Describe, and Participate. Mindfulness encourages you to connect with yourself, others, and the world around you in a new way.

The “What” skills are “core mindfulness skills”. Core mindfulness skills in DBT teach us to:

1. Accept reality.
2. Reduce judgment of ourselves, other people, and the world, and
3. Live in and be effective in the moment

OBSERVE

When you observe, you give attention to events, sensations, and feelings without necessarily trying to stop them when they become uncomfortable. Generally, you will want to “step back” from what is happening to observe it.

Notice your environment, thoughts, feelings, and any physical sensations without reacting to them, observe your emotion or thought, and avoid reacting to your emotion or thought. Notice it.

DESCRIBE

Use words to describe your experience. It can be helpful to say this out loud. “I am observing that I feel anxious. I had the thought that I am in danger. I notice that my heart rate is speeding up.” Once again, be careful not to attach any labels or judgments to what you are describing.

Describe, not judge, for example, “I feel unloved”, not “I am unloved.”

PARTICIPATE

When you participate, you enter completely into an activity without being self-conscious. Integrate your observation and describe skills into what you are doing.

Open yourself up to every experience without judgment, expectations, or labels. This means that you try to make it feel natural and normal. You are trying to enter the event rather than keeping it separate from it.



MINDFULNESS SKILLS

Can you think of a time when you were distressed and used a DBT Mindfulness skill? Could you describe what happened below?

Observe skill used

Describe skill used

Participate skill used

How did practicing mindfulness help with the following..

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helped calm breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced reactivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helped rationalize thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased connection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced anxious thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced rapid heart rate | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased focus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced Help calm breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased positive thinking |

Describe how the mindfulness skill helped and the outcome of the situation.



HOW SKILLS

“ TO LIVE FULLY, DBT ENCOURAGES US TO BE NON-JUDGMENTAL, MINDFUL OF THE MOMENT, AND TO FOCUS ON THE DESIRED OUTCOME FOR EACH SITUATION ”



"HOW" SKILLS

How you practice the WHAT skills. These skills are practiced at the same time:

- Nonjudgmentally
- One-Mindfully
- Effectively

When you practice mindfulness, you let go of judgments.

Most of us judge automatically, habitually, and continuously. Judging becomes such a part of our internal dialogue that we don't notice how: It is important to let go of judgments as they increase emotional pain and damage relationships.

NON-JUDGMENTAL

The act of taking a non-judgmental stance. To begin observing our thoughts and emotions objectively, we must commit to being non-judgmental about them.

- It is effective to focus on the consequence of behavior instead of judging others or ourselves.
- It is helpful to fully describe what is observed and collect just the facts; without judging those involved or the circumstances.

ONE MINDFUL

The act of focusing on one thing at a time. This is the opposite of multitasking, a common habit in our modern, overstimulated environment.

- Try not to become distracted by thoughts or images of the past.
- Try to put your worries about the future away and focus on the task.
- Engage in the activity of the moment with your eyes wide open.

EFFECTIVE

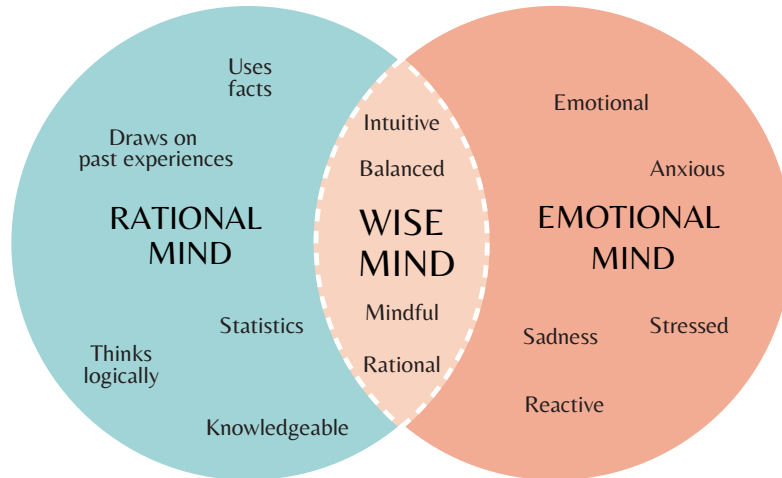
Being effective means progressing and strengthening your mindful muscles as you move along. As you practice mindfulness, you become more aware of the spaces between your thoughts and your actions - giving yourself a newfound ability to reduce impulsivity.

- Try not to worry about being "right."
- Focus on the outcome you desire.



THE WISE MIND

THE BALANCE BETWEEN REASON AND EMOTION



OBSERVE ----- **DESCRIBE** ----- **PARTICIPATE**

↓
Your bodies
sensations

↓
What you
observe and
are feeling

↓
Engage fully
in the
moment

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) presents three basic states of mind: reasonable mind, emotional mind, and wise mind, with the wise mind being the ultimate aim of DBT. The concept of the 'wise mind' is to help encourage you to find the balance between both your emotional and reasonable mind.

Imagine that you had two lenses, one viewing the world from the rational mind and the other considering the world from the emotional mind.

First, let's look at the emotional mind lens. You live your life by being highly reactive and impulsive. You act or judge situations based on your emotions without thinking things through. For example, you would buy the latest iPad based on how it made you feel without considering whether you could afford it. Living your life this way can feel disorganized and chaotic.

Now, let's look at the rational mind through a lens. You live by viewing events and relationships with logic, analyzing the facts, and avoiding emotions. Therefore, you would not consider buying the iPad if you knew you could not afford it.

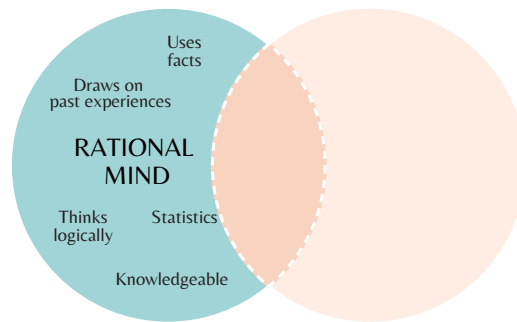
Living life this way can feel lifeless, cold, and not enjoyable.

To live a balanced life in great harmony, the rational and emotional mind must integrate with reason and emotion.

"There is a wisdom of the head and a wisdom of the heart.' - charles dickens.



THE RATIONAL MIND



Sometimes, being in a rational state of mind is very useful. For example, you would want to be in this state of mind during a crisis, such as defusing a bomb, escaping from danger, or even making important decisions about your health. The rational mind allows you to be calm and level-headed without letting your emotions interfere with your decision-making.

However, always being in this state of mind might get boring as you need more inspiration, passion, and creativity. You would pick a career path that makes logical sense for your future rather than what drives you from within; you would miss out on those spontaneous adventures and might not grieve the things you cherish in your life.

If you lived your life always in a rational state of mind, what might you be missing out on?

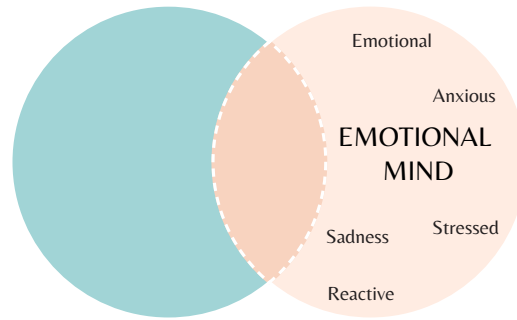
Are there situations in which you need to be in a more rational mind state?

Can you think of any examples of when you acted purely with your rational mind?

What are the positives and negatives of thinking this way?



THE EMOTIONAL MIND



The emotional mind is good for creativity, motivation, spontaneity, and responding to things based on your gut instincts. Logical reason is not considered, and you do not evaluate the facts.

The emotional mind has also helped us through evolution. For example, imagine back in the caveman days when we were hunters and gatherers, and you were face to face with a tiger; the basic human emotion of fear drives the behavior to escape for safety and is necessary for our survival.

The emotional mind also allows you to take risks and get inspired; for example, you feel like you need more drive, inspiration, and motivation in your life, so you decide to change careers based on how you feel rather than if it is the most logical choice. On the other hand, the emotional mind can cause you to respond inappropriately at times, such as arguing in public because you reacted to something someone said that upset you.

While there are times that the emotional mind can serve us well, if you lived your life only in the emotional sense, you would become exhausted from all of your big emotions, and you might take too many risks that lead to an unstable life with no balance.

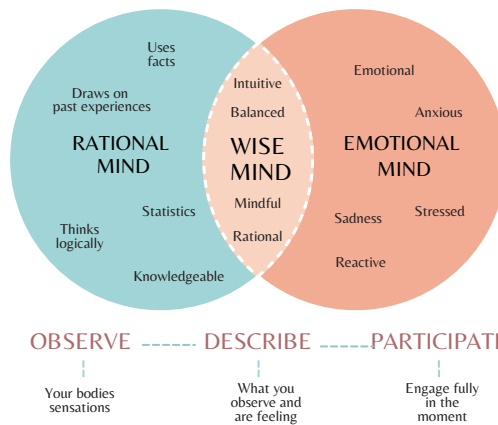
Can you think of any examples when you acted purely with your emotional mind?

What are the pros and cons of the emotional mind?

What are the benefits of the wise mind, the balance between the rational and emotional mind?



USING THE WISE MIND TO THINK THROUGH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



When we merge our rational mind and our emotional mind together, our wise mind helps us make sense of how we are feeling. This can be very beneficial when you are feeling anxious or worried. Next time you are stuck on a thought, use this worksheet to help you think things through calmly and wisely.

EMOTIONAL MIND

- What is the situation?
- What went through my mind?
- How is it making me feel?
- What is the worst thing that could happen?
- What do I want to happen?
- Are my emotions making me overreact to the situation?

RATIONAL MIND

- What are the facts and evidence?
- Is there any logic to how I am feeling?
- What advice would I give to a friend?
- Is it as important as it seems right now?
- Will this worry or thought matter in a week, a month, or next year?

WISE MIND

- Stop. Take some deep breaths.
- How can I view the situation differently when I use my wise mind?
- What would you say is the best response to the situation?
- When I consider everything, what will be helpful and effective in getting through this situation?



MINDFULNESS SCRIPT

Sit comfortably and breathe in and out slowly. This exercise aims to notice how each part of your body feels.

Start at the top of your head. Can you feel your hair? What does it feel like? Is it rubbing on your face? Have you got a hat on? Can you think of your hair tie?

Start to make your way down to your shoulders. Can you feel any tension in your shoulder area? Do you feel tight? Take a deep breath and try to loosen your shoulders and neck. Next, do a few neck stretches, turn your head to the left and slowly to the right.

Stand up straight. Place both feet shoulder-width apart.

Find your balance.

Slowly stretch your arms up high; imagine you are trying to touch the sky.

Stretch so high that you have to stand on your tippy toes.

Wriggle your fingertips and feel the stretch in your toes, calves, back, shoulders, arms, and fingers.

You can sit back down or lie down on the floor. Let go of every tension in your body.

Imagine yourself floating on a cloud.

Imagine a big white fluffy cloud floating above you.

You gently float up and land lightly on it.

I'd like you to imagine what it looks like.

What color is it?

What does it feel like?

What does it smell like? Does it smell like fresh air, marshmallows, or something entirely different?

What do you think it sounds like?

Can you hear anything in the sky, the wind, rain, or birds?

What is its shape?

This is your special cloud, where you feel safe, accessible, and peaceful.

Your cloud can drift and take you to any place that you wish to be.

Where do you want to go?

What things do you see as you float away?

Just rest in your cloud and enjoy the quiet and relaxation.

Relax for 10 seconds, and when you are ready, slowly bring your awareness to the present moment.