Example Form 13.1: Progress Evaluation

Use this form to identify the specific ways in which each skill has been helpful to you.

Mindful Emotion Awareness

What are some specific improvements you've noticed in your ability to stay present in the moment instead of getting caught up in the past or worrying about the future? What are some specific improvements you've noticed in your ability to nonjudgmentally observe your emotions and your reactions to them? In what ways have you found this skill helpful?

I have gotten better at not beating myself up so much when I'm feeling down. Normally I would get angry at myself because lots of people have things worse off than I do, but now I am trying to just notice the way I'm feeling without judging it. When I am able to be less critical of myself for feeling a certain way, I don't get as wrapped up in it and I'm able to move on quicker.

Where do you see room for continued improvement? Are there situations where you find it more difficult to stay in the present moment or to not judge your emotional experiences?

When I get home from work, it is really hard for me to be present with my family. Sometimes my kids will be telling me a story about something that happened at school and I realize that I am totally checked out—a lot of times I am worrying about how I am going to get everything done.

Cognitive Flexibility

What are some specific improvements you've noticed in your ability to be more flexible in the way you think about situations? Are you jumping to conclusions or blowing things out of proportion less often? How has this skill been useful?

I still jump to conclusions or blow things out of proportion, but now I am better at noticing when I'm doing it. Once I catch myself, I am able to think of other possible explanations for the situation (like when my boss seemed short with me during our meeting). I've noticed that when I force myself to think about things from different perspectives, the anxiety is still there, but it doesn't feel so overwhelming or intense.

Where do you see room for continued improvement? Are there situations where you find it more difficult to be flexible in your thinking?

For some reason, it is a lot harder for me to be flexible in how I interpret things that are said in emails or text messages. I find myself thinking that someone is upset with me because they gave me a one-word response or said "sure" instead of "sure!"

Confronting Physical Sensations

What are some specific improvements that you've noticed in the way you respond to the physical sensations that are associated with your intense emotions? Are you doing activities that you previously avoided due to uncomfortable physical sensations? How has this skill been useful?

I've been getting better at not reading too much into it when I'm feeling really tired and weighed down. When I'm depressed, it always feels like I can't do things—I just don't have the energy. Now I am able to remind myself that those physical sensations don't mean anything bad and won't last forever, which helps me push myself to do things (like not canceling dinner plans with a friend at the last minute) even when it feels like I can't get going in the moment.

Where do you see room for continued improvement? Are there certain physical sensations that you still find highly distressing?

Even though I know it isn't dangerous, it still really bothers me when my heart starts racing, especially in situations where I am already feeling somewhat anxious (like before pitching a new client to our management team). Once I notice my heart racing, my anxiety spikes and I start obsessing about whether I'll be able to perform well when I'm feeling so anxious.

Countering Emotional Avoidance

What are some specific improvements that you've noticed in your ability to identify your unhelpful emotional behaviors and replace them with alternative actions? How has this skill been useful?

I am doing better at not shutting down when I am upset. Normally I would pretend everything was fine, but now I am working on telling people how I feel even though it makes me very anxious. I am learning that the response is normally positive, and even when people disagree with me, it isn't the end of the world.

Where do you see room for continued improvement? Are there specific emotional behaviors that are more difficult to replace with alternative actions, or certain situations where you find it more challenging to use an alternative action?

When I can't do something and I know I am going to be letting someone down, it is still really hard for me to say "no." I end up avoiding the situation by not responding, but then the more time that passes, the more I feel like a horrible person because the other person is probably thinking that I don't care enough to even respond.