

Radical Acceptance

Worksheet

Radical Acceptance is a DBT exercise that can help you or your client deal with intense negative emotions and experiences. Use this worksheet to identify, consider, and understand a situation or emotion you are struggling to accept.

The goal is to help you acknowledge that you cannot control every aspect of what you experience. Rather, you can accept this lack of control and choose to respond mindfully instead of reacting emotionally. This acceptance can help you move beyond the distress you experience without trying to change or control the situation.

This worksheet has 5 sections:

- Box 1 is a space for you to determine or specify the problem or situation that you find problematic or painful.
- The second step is to describe the role your behavior played in this situation keeping in mind that you do not control others' behavior. Part b) of this step is for recounting how others' behavior contributed to the situation. In the third part, try to determine what you could control and what you could not.
- Use Box 3 to write about your reaction to the situation. The prompts should help you differentiate between emotional (often impulsive) reactions and mindful responses.
- Box 4 invites you to think about the impact of your reactions on those around you.
- Box 5 is a space for you to identify more mindful, considered ways to respond in the future. Remember and try to accept that you can only control *your own actions and behaviors*.

Acceptance is about appreciating that we cannot control others behavior. We can, however, control our own actions in a way that minimizes our distress when we find ourselves experiencing difficult situations.

1. What is the problem or situation that you find problematic or painful?

What happened prior to the situation that arose? How did it occur? How did it unfold? Who was there? What emotions did you experience during this situation?

2. What role did your behavior play in this situation? How about others' behavior?

a) Describe your actions and behaviors during this experience and consider how your actions influenced what occurred. Remember, you cannot control how others will act.

b) How did other people's behavior influence the situation? How did their actions contribute to what happened?

c) What were you able to control during this situation? What were you unable to control?

3. Consider and describe your reactions to the situation.

How did you react, act, or behave to what occurred? What effects did your reactions have on you emotionally? Remember that a response is considered, deliberate behavior. A reaction, in contrast, is when you allow emotions to guide your behavior.

4. What was the impact of your reaction on others around you?

Describe how they acted or behaved when you reacted the way you did.

5. How might you behave next time so that you can minimize your reactive response?

How could you respond, instead of reacting, to reduce your own emotional distress?