EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 8
(Emotion Regulation Worksheet 5)

Check the Facts

FACTS
Many emotions and actions are set off by our thoughts and interpretations of events, not by the events themselves.

Event → Thoughts → Emotions

Our emotions can also have a big effect on our thoughts about events.

Event → Emotion → Thoughts

Examining our thoughts and checking the facts can help us change our emotions.

HOW TO CHECK THE FACTS

1. Ask: What is the emotion I want to change?
   (See Emotion Regulation Handout 6: Ways of Describing Emotions.)

2. Ask: What is the event prompting my emotion?
   Describe the facts that you observed through your senses.
   Challenge judgments, absolutes, and black-and-white descriptions.
   (See Mindfulness Handout 4: Taking Hold of Your Mind: “What” Skills.)

3. Ask: What are my interpretations, thoughts, and assumptions about the event?
   Think of other possible interpretations.
   Practice looking at all sides of a situation and all points of view.
   Test your interpretations and assumptions to see if they fit the facts.

4. Ask: Am I assuming a threat?
   Label the threat.
   Assess the probability that the threatening event will really occur.
   Think of as many other possible outcomes as you can.

5. Ask: What’s the catastrophe?
   Imagine the catastrophe really occurring.
   Imagine coping well with a catastrophe (through problem solving, coping ahead, or radical acceptance).

6. Ask: Does my emotion and/or its intensity fit the actual facts?
   Check out facts that fit each emotion.
   Ask Wise Mind.
   (See Emotion Regulation Handout 11: Figuring Out Opposite Actions, and Emotion Regulation Handout 13: Reviewing Problem Solving and Opposite Action.)
Opposite Action and Problem Solving: Deciding Which to Use

Opposite action = Acting opposite to an emotion's action urge
Problem solving = Avoiding or changing (solving) a problem event

Ask:
Does this emotion fit the facts?

Yes
Check the facts

No

Ask:
Is acting on this emotion effective?

Yes
Check Wise Mind

No

Ask:
Is acting on this emotion effective?

Yes
Check Wise Mind

No

Be mindful of current emotions (Emotion Regulation Handout 22)

Act on emotion/action urge

Problem-solve unwanted emotions (Emotion Regulation Handout 12)

Do not act on emotion/action urge

Consider opposite action (Emotion Regulation Handouts 10–11)

Do not act on emotion/action urge

Change thoughts to fit the facts (Emotion Regulation Handout 8)

Do opposite action (Emotion Regulation Handouts 10–11)

Be mindful of current emotions (Emotion Regulation Handout 22)

Act, but accept the consequences gracefully

Reconsider opposite action
Problem Solving

Step 1. FIGURE OUT and DESCRIBE the problem situation.

Step 2. CHECK THE FACTS (all the facts) to be sure you have the right problem situation!

If your facts are correct and the situation is the problem, continue with STEP 3.

If your facts are not correct, go back and repeat STEP 1.

Step 3. IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL in solving the problem.

• Identify what needs to happen or change for you to feel OK.
• Keep it simple, and choose something that can actually happen.

Step 4. BRAINSTORM lots of solutions.

• Think of as many solutions as you can. Ask for suggestions from people you trust.
• Do not be critical of any ideas at first. (Wait for Step 5 to evaluate ideas.)

Step 5. CHOOSE a solution that fits the goal and is likely to work.

• If you are unsure, choose two solutions that look good.
• Do PROS and CONS to compare the solutions.
• Choose the best to try first.

Step 6. Put the solution into ACTION.

• ACT! Try out the solution.
• Take the first step, and then the second . . .

Step 7. EVALUATE the results of using the solution.

It worked? YEA!! It didn’t work? Go back to STEP 5 and choose a new solution to try.
Check the Facts

Due Date: __________  Name: ____________________________________  Week Starting: __________

It is hard to problem-solve an emotional situation if you don’t have your facts straight. You must know what the problem is before you can solve it. This worksheet helps you figure out whether it is the event that is causing your emotion, your interpretation of the event, or both. Use your mindfulness skills of observing and describing. Observe the facts, and then describe the facts you have observed.

Step 1

Ask: What emotion do I want to change?

EMOTION NAME: ___________________  INTENSITY (0–100)  Before: ___  After: ___

Step 2

Ask: What is the PROMPTING EVENT for my emotional reaction?

DESCRIBE THE PROMPTING EVENT: What happened that led you to have this emotion? Who did what to whom? What led up to what? What is it about this event that is a problem for you? Be very specific in your answers.

CHECK THE FACTS!

Look for extremes and judgments in the way you are describing the prompting event.

REWRITE the facts, if necessary, to be more accurate.

Step 3

Ask: What are my INTERPRETATIONS (thoughts, beliefs, etc.) about the facts? What am I assuming? Am I adding my own interpretations to the description of the prompting event?

CHECK THE FACTS!

List as many other possible interpretations of the facts as you can.

REWRITE the facts, if necessary. Try to check the accuracy of your interpretations. If you can’t check the facts, write out a likely or a useful (i.e., effective) interpretation.

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Step 4  Ask: Am I assuming a THREAT? What is the THREAT? What about this event or situation is threatening to me? What worrisome consequences or outcomes am I expecting?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

CHECK THE FACTS!
List as many other possible outcomes as you can, given the facts.
________________________________________________________________________

REWRITE the facts if needed. Try to check the accuracy of your expectations. If you can’t check out probable outcomes, write out a likely noncatastrophic outcome to expect.
________________________________________________________________________

Facts ➔
________________________________________________________________________

Step 5  Ask: What’s the CATASTROPHE, even if the outcome I am worrying about does occur? Describe in detail the worst outcome I can reasonably expect.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

DESCRIBE WAYS TO COPE if the worst does happen.
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Step 6  ASK: Does my emotion (or its intensity or duration) FIT THE FACTS? (0 = not at all to 5 = I am certain): _____
If you are unsure whether your emotion or your emotional intensity fits the facts (for example, you give a score of 2, 3, or 4), keep checking the facts. Be as creative as you can be; ask others for their opinions; or do an experiment to see if your predictions or interpretations are correct.
Describe what you did to check the facts:
________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________