

EXTRA ACTIVITY

What My Mind Thinks About Me

ACTivate Your Life has a lot to say about how your Mind works – including how it often gets things wrong, how it often criticises people (including you) and how it can nudge you into doing things that may cause you a lot of grief. When your Mind is having a go at you, you may wonder why it is being so unfriendly and why it is not on your side. Rest assured it's not just you, Minds tend to be like that!

Think of some of the criticisms and negative ideas your Mind comes up with – especially when it's having a go at you. When you realise that your Mind often makes things up, and that most people's Minds come up with negative stuff, this can help you recognise that a lot of it is just rubbish. This way you relax about it – just shrug your shoulders and let those criticisms go over your head. It's useful to recognise your Mind's favourite negative themes, so think about nasty, critical thoughts that regularly come into your head (especially when your Mind is being spiteful to you) and write them down in the space below.

Because your Mind probably says a lot of negative, critical things about you, it is good to balance this by reMinding yourself of the things that are positive about you. Don't let your Mind put you off doing this! So, in the space below, write down some good things about yourself. This is a time to be friendly to yourself (you deserve it, everybody does!).

EXTRA ACTIVITY

The Thoughts and Feelings That Really Bother Me

Think about the thoughts and feelings that are really bothering you and spoiling your life these days. Try to identify these as things that are 'inside you' – such as worries, emotional feelings, urges, and physical symptoms of distress – rather than external things such as difficult aspects of a close relationship or problems with your physical health.

When you have thought of the main things that are causing you grief, write them down in the spaces below. Then think how long each of these things has been seriously bothering you. Is it just weeks? If so, how many? Or maybe this problem has been bothering you for some months. If so, how many? Or maybe the problem has been causing you grief for years. If so, think how many years.

As with all the Extra Activity sheets, it is recommended that you keep your answers private. By ensuring privacy, you can be completely honest in identifying the thoughts, urges and feelings that are upsetting you at the moment (and may have been stressing you for some time).

The main thoughts and feelings that are spoiling my life at the moment:

How long this has been a problem?

1 _____	_____
2 _____	_____
3 _____	_____
4 _____	_____
5 _____	_____

You can think of this list as identifying issues that the ACTivate Your Life course may be able to help you with. We hope that, as the course proceeds, you will be able to see very clearly how the course material applies to your own circumstances and your own problem issues.

As you look back through the list, you may wish to think about the following questions:

Which of these thoughts or feelings have had the strongest negative effects in terms of spoiling your life?

Can you identify a particular issue from the list as being the 'central' issue?

Have you used any strategies to try to overcome these problems in the past?

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Introducing Mindful Activities

ACT is a Mindfulness-based therapy and Mindfulness will be discussed in detail in ACT 3. However, we would like you to practice Mindfulness throughout the course, and so we will suggest Mindful Activities for you to do each week. This week we would like you to begin your Mindfulness practice by doing a simple Mindfulness Activity – Mindful Breathing.

Mindfulness simply involves noticing what's going on – just noticing what is going on here and now without making any judgement or trying to change anything.

MINDFUL ACTIVITY: Mindful Breathing

At least two or three times a day, take a Mindfulness mini-break and focus on your breathing as you take just six to eight breaths. Don't attempt to control or change your breathing in any way. Don't analyse what you are doing or judge anything – this activity is just about noticing. Simply focus directly on your breathing and notice all of the sensations as you breathe. Notice the movements of your chest as you breathe in and out... and notice the sensations as the air passes in and out of your body. Breathe naturally and keep your attention focused on your breathing for six to eight breaths – about half a minute.

ACTivate Your Life – Notes

Use the space below to write down any thoughts and feelings that you have about your own problem issues and about something you have learned from the ACTivate Your Life course. Reflecting on things in this way will help you to get the most from the course.

Because some of the notes you make on these sheets may be very sensitive, please make sure that you keep them in a safe and private place.