

Ruminating Thought Worksheet

What to Do when Thoughts are Unhelpful

Ruminating Thought: _____

When did I start thinking that? (date and time) _____

How long did it last? _____

What was I **doing** while I started thinking that? _____

How **engaged** was I with what I was doing? _____

What were the **consequences** of thinking about that? _____

What might be the **function (or purpose)** of thinking about that? _____

Stop the Ruminating:

Option A: Practice with “attention to experience” strategies.

What colors, smells, noises, sights, & sensations do I see, smell, hear or physically feel?

What are the steps of my task that I need to do right now (i.e. parenting, work)

Option B: Select activities that will need my full attention

Sample Ruminating Thought Worksheet
What to Do when Thoughts are Unhelpful

Ruminating Thought: *“I was depressed all day yesterday because I was thinking about how my sister really doesn’t love me.”*

When did I start thinking that? (date and time) *About 10am yesterday when I was lying in bed.*

How long did it last? *All day until my sleeping med kicked in around 11pm.*

What was I doing while I started thinking that? *Lying in bed watching TV.*

How engaged was I with what I was doing? *Not very.*

What were the consequences of thinking about that? *I felt too bad about myself to make lunch for myself or get dressed and then my blood sugar got bad and I felt sick. I am now really anxious about seeing my sister, so now I’m thinking about skipping out on my niece’s school play tonight.*

What might be the function (or purpose) of thinking about that? *The longer I think about it, the more likely that I won’t be able to go to the play...which means that I get to avoid my sister. That might be good, but that means that I then don’t support my niece.*

Stop the Ruminating:

Option A: Practice with “attention to experience” strategies.

What colors, smells, noises, sights, & sensations do I see, smell, hear or physically feel?

I see the yellow flowers on the wall paper. I feel my butt on the chair. I feel my toes pinching on my shoes. I smell someone’s tunafish sandwich. I see that I really need to water my rubber tree plant.

What are the steps of my task that I need to do right now (i.e. parenting, work)

I need to 1) Take a Shower, 2) Get dressed, 3) put on make-up, 4) buy flowers for my niece & a card. Even if I decide not to see the play to avoid running into my sister, I can still leave her flowers and a card - and I can call a friend and go out for coffee.

Option B: Select activities that will need my full attention

I could....babysit for my neighbor’s 2 year old. He needs a LOT of attention, and she’s always grateful for it. I could...call some friends to play 3-on-3 basketball. I could...volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. If I ruminate there, I’ll wind up with a nail through my thumb. I could...go to the Humane shelter and work with the dogs and cats. I could...serve a meal at the homeless shelter. I could...take the kids to the park and play tag with them.