

# Mental Health Activity Guide



Provided by Christie Clayton, LCSW



# Dialogue with a Symptom

ITEMS NEEDED:  
PEN AND PAPER

1

You can begin this exercise by take deep breaths, meditating, or finding an activity that helps you to feel calmer and focused.

2

Close your eyes (or gaze downward) and let a problem, issue or symptom come to you. Take your time identifying what this issue could be. If you are struggling with multiple issues pick just one.

3

With your eyes closed imagine that this problem is sitting across from you at a table. Let it take on some sort of form (color, human-like, aura). Look at your problem and begin thinking about some of its origins:

- a. When did this issue start?
- b. What does it look like?
- c. Is it a repeat concern?
- d. Does it get better or worse depending on certain things?
- e. How do you experience it?

4

Take a few more deep breaths and open your eyes. Then set a timer for 5-10 minutes (longer if you prefer).

5

Now, begin a written dialogue with this issue as if you two were speaking with each other. Your paper may look like this:

Dear XYZ issue,  
Christie: Why are you here?  
XYZ issue: Well, you have been struggling to move on from me  
Christie: That's true, I think about you a lot.  
XYZ issue: Why is that?

6

Free write with this issue until the timer goes off. Then reflect on what you have written.

- a. What is your issue trying to tell you?
- b. What are themes that have come up?
- c. Did you discover something new?
- d. What came up physically for you?
- e. What came up emotionally for you?
- f. Do you have any new thoughts on this problem?



*Revisit this activity at any time, especially when you experience feeling stuck, stagnant, or ambivalent.  
Adopted from The Center for Mind Body Medicine (CMBM.org)*



# Values Activity

ITEMS NEEDED: PEN, PAPER & VALUES HANDOUT (ON NEXT PAGE)

1

Read over the Values Handout on the following page.

2

Pick your top 5 values. If possible, narrow this list of 5 values down to 3.

3

Dialogue/write/explore with yourself about why these are your top 3 values. Some writing prompts for yourself could be:

- Why did I pick these values?
- Are these values the same or different than when I was child/adolescent/young adult/middle aged/older adult/etc?
- What were my values at different times in my life?
- Was it challenging to narrow my values down to 3? Why?
- When did I align with these values and yet my behavior did not?
- Who in my life also exhibits these values? What is my relationship with them, what do they mean to me?
- How did I learn that I needed these values in my life?



## GROUP / PARTNER VARIATION

You can complete this activity with your family, spouse, or friends as well. Some writing prompts and/or discussion as a couple/group could be:

- How are your values different?
- How are your values the same?
- When do you notice these values in your shared relationship?
- How does your partner/family member/friend help you to exhibit these values?
- How can you be supported in aligning with your values?



# Values Activity

*See previous page for steps.*

**STABILITY**  
certainty, predictability

**NEATNESS**  
tidy, orderly, clean

**SELF-CONTROL**  
self-disciplined, restrained

**PERSEVERANCE**  
pushing through to the end

**RATIONALITY**  
logical, clear reasoning

**HEALTH**  
physical well being

**JOY/PLEASURE**  
personal satisfaction

**PLAY**  
fun, spontaneity

**PROSPERITY**  
flourishing, well-off

**FAMILY**  
caring for, spending time

**APPEARANCE**  
dressing well, fit

**LOVE/INTIMACY**  
deep emotional/spiritual bond

**AESTHETIC**  
desire for beauty, artistic

**COMMUNITY**  
connected to others

**COMPETENCE**  
capable, effective

**ACHIEVEMENT**  
successful completion

**LEARNING**  
new ideas, understanding

**ADVENTURE**  
challenge, risk-taking

**CREATIVITY**  
new ways, innovative

**PERSONAL GROWTH**  
continual self-learning

**INTELLECTUAL STATUS**  
regarded as an expert

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH**  
higher purpose

**TEAMWORK**  
cooperation/common goal

**PEACE**  
inner & outer harmony

**HELPING**  
taking care of others

**COMMUNICATION**  
open exchange of ideas

**FRIENDSHIP**  
close, on-going relationships

**CONSENSUS**  
can live with decisions

**RESPECTFUL**  
honoring, considering

**SHARING**  
our gifts, talents with others

**TRADITION**  
respecting old ways

**SECURITY**  
safe, risk free

**POWER**  
control over others

**COMPETITION**  
winning over others

**HONESTY**  
sincere, truthful

**FAIRNESS**  
respecting all rights, equality

**COURAGEOUS**  
standing up for beliefs

**FORGIVENESS**  
able to pardon others

**ACCEPTANCE**  
of self & others

# Drawings/Collage Activity

Adopted from The Center for Mind Body Medicine (CMBM.org)



## ITEMS NEEDED:

BLANK PAPER, DRAWING UTENSILS (CRAYONS, MARKERS, COLORED PENCILS). OR COLLAGE WITH MATERIALS SUCH AS NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINES, ETC.



1

You can begin this exercise by take deep breaths, meditating, or finding an activity that helps you to feel calm and focused.



2

Make three different drawings or collages, representing:

- Yourself as you are now.
- Yourself with your biggest problem.
- Yourself with your biggest problem solved.



3

Free write in order to explore what this activity was like for you. Some writing prompts could be:

- What was this activity like for me?
- What do I notice in the first, second, and third drawing
- How did it feel to engage in an activity using art to express and explore my feelings?
- What do I notice about myself in this?
- What is my biggest problem trying to tell me?
- How might I experience life with that problem solved?

