**DBT Worksheet: Mindful Moments - The Power of "Being Present"**

**Purpose:**

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based treatment primarily designed to help individuals struggling with intense emotions, particularly those with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), but has since been found to be useful for a wide variety of emotional regulation challenges. The word "dialectical" refers to the balancing act of opposing forces—acceptance and change. In DBT, you learn to both accept yourself and your circumstances as they are *while* working toward positive change in how you think, behave, and regulate your emotions.

Mindfulness is one of the core skills taught in DBT, and it plays a central role in emotional balancing. Emotional balance means not allowing your feelings to control your actions or overwhelm you, and not suppressing your emotions or pretending they don’t matter. It’s about finding a middle ground where you can experience your emotions fully without them taking over, and respond to situations in a way that aligns with your values. The purpose of this worksheet is to help you practice mindfulness as a tool for emotional balance. By becoming more present and aware in each moment, you can start to notice how your emotions, thoughts, and actions connect, and how you can break the cycle of reactive behaviors.

Through mindfulness, DBT teaches you to recognize and observe your thoughts and emotions as they arise, without judgment. This creates space between stimulus and response, allowing you to choose how to act, rather than reacting impulsively based on emotion. Over time, these skills lead to better emotional regulation, less emotional reactivity, and a greater sense of control. This worksheet is designed to help you explore and develop your mindfulness skills so you can begin to bring more balance into your emotional world, one mindful moment at a time.

**Instructions:**

1. **The Present Moment: Stop and Observe** Before we start, it’s important to understand what mindfulness is. It’s the act of focusing on the present moment without getting lost in your thoughts, worries, or distractions. Take a moment to pause and observe what’s happening right now.

**What is happening around you right now?**  
(Describe the sounds, sights, and physical sensations you are noticing right now.)  
*Example: "I hear birds chirping, I feel the warmth of the sun on my skin, and I can see the clouds moving in the sky."*

1. **Mindful Breathing: Focus on Your Breath** Take a deep breath in through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth. As you do this, pay attention to the air moving in and out of your body. Let’s practice focusing on the breath to calm the mind and center yourself.

**Take 3 deep breaths. What do you notice about your breathing?**  
*Example: "The air feels cool when I breathe in, and warm when I breathe out."*

1. **Body Scan: Checking in With Your Body** Now, let’s do a quick “body scan” to check in with how your body feels. Starting at your feet and moving up to your head, notice any tension, discomfort, or relaxation. This will help you become more aware of any physical sensations connected to your emotions.

**How does your body feel right now?**  
*Example: "My shoulders feel tight, and my hands are cold."*

1. **Observing Thoughts Without Judgment** Mindfulness involves noticing your thoughts without judging them or reacting to them. Imagine your thoughts are like clouds in the sky. They come and go, but they don’t control you. Your job is to observe them with curiosity.

**What thoughts are passing through your mind right now?**  
*Example: "I’m thinking about what to have for dinner later."*

**Do any of your thoughts bring up emotions?**  
*Example: "I feel a little anxious about work tomorrow."*

1. **Non-Judgmental Awareness: Let It Be** Often, we judge our thoughts and feelings as good or bad. Mindfulness asks us to observe what we’re experiencing without labeling it. Just let the experience be what it is. Try not to judge your emotions or thoughts. They are just part of being human.

**How does it feel to observe your thoughts and feelings without judgment?**  
*Example: "It feels freeing, like I’m not pressured to fix everything immediately."*

1. **Wise Mind: The Balance Between Emotion and Reason** In DBT, we focus on the "Wise Mind," a place of balance between your emotional mind and your rational mind. This is where you make decisions based on both your feelings and your logical thoughts.

**Can you identify when your emotions are leading your decisions, or when you’re thinking too logically without considering your feelings?**  
*Example: "When I’m angry, I just want to yell, but when I think it through, I realize I need to stay calm and address the situation thoughtfully."*

1. **Grounding Exercise: The 5-4-3-2-1 Technique** A grounding exercise can help you refocus and stay in the present moment, especially during overwhelming emotions. One popular technique is the 5-4-3-2-1 method, which helps you use your senses to reconnect with your environment.

**Use the 5-4-3-2-1 method to ground yourself:**

* + **5 things you can see:**
    - **4 things you can touch:**
    - **3 things you can hear:**
    - **2 things you can smell:**
    - **1 thing you can taste:**

1. **Mindful Action: Incorporating Mindfulness Into Your Day** Mindfulness isn’t just for moments of stress—it’s something you can incorporate into your everyday life. This means taking time throughout your day to stop and bring your attention to the present moment. You can do this while eating, walking, talking to someone, or even while doing chores.

**When will you practice mindfulness today?**  
*Example: "I will take a minute to focus on my breath before I start my homework."*

1. **Mindful Reflection: How Are You Feeling Now?** After practicing mindfulness, take a moment to reflect on how you feel. This will help you notice how mindfulness affects your emotional state.

**How do you feel after practicing mindfulness?**  
*Example: "I feel calmer, less anxious, and more focused."*

**Conclusion:**

Congratulations! You’ve taken the time to practice mindfulness, which is a key tool in DBT for managing your emotions. By becoming more aware of the present moment and observing your thoughts and feelings without judgment, you are strengthening your emotional resilience. Remember, mindfulness is a skill that you can practice every day. The more you practice, the easier it will become to use in moments of stress or challenge.