

ARC Module 7: Emotions Speech Exercises

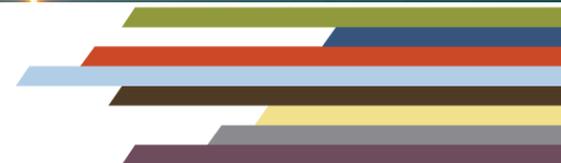
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Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

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Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration





How to Navigate this Activity



Click this button to return to the introductory page for the exercise

If you see this button, click it for some extra information related to the activity

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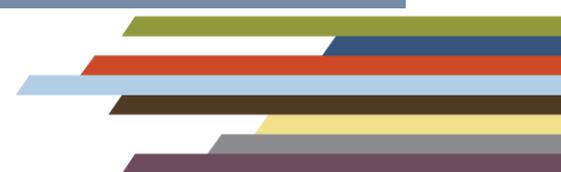
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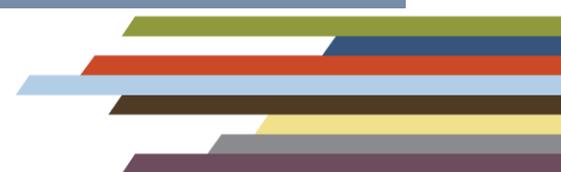
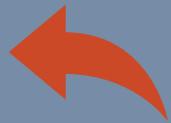
Speech Exercises for Thought Defusion

Language is a tricky thing. It helps us understand our world and communicate with others. It also helps us guide our thinking. But language is also arbitrary. For example, in English, there is no real reason for a chair to be called a “chair.” It could have just as easily been called a “bed”.

But we put in, and get out, a lot of meaning from our language. And one of the things is when we become stuck, or fused, to those meanings even if those are arbitrary. And our “inner critics”, that part of us that criticizes and demeans us, really likes to use language to create unhelpful thoughts.

Here are three exercises to help you learn how to defuse, or get unstuck, from difficult thoughts. These can easily be used in your everyday life. They may feel a little weird to do and that’s the point.

Try all 3 exercises.



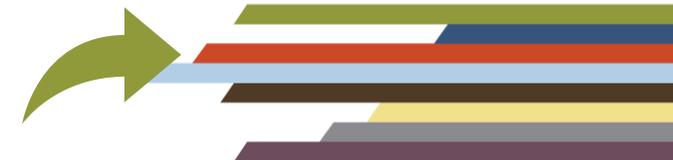


Exercise 1: Describing and Labeling

“I am stressed.” Notice how saying that makes it seem like stress is a part of you. It is never going away. We have fused, or become stuck, to that idea of who we are.

It is much better to practice accurate description of your experience. You are not stressed. You are feeling stress. So you can say, “I am having a stress feeling”, or you can get real accurate and say, “I am experiencing a stress response right now.”

Let’s try it out.





Exercise 1: Describing and Labeling

Pick an unhelpful thought or feeling you have had recently.

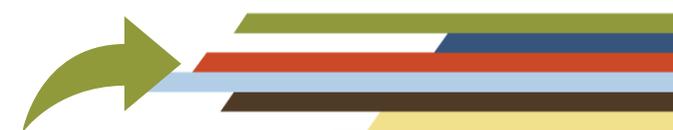
- “I am _____”

Answer this question: how empowered do you feel having that thought/experience?

Now, defuse from it by saying:

- “I am having the thought/feeling of _____”

Answer the same question: how empowered do you feel describing your thought/experience in this way?





Exercise 2: Slow it down

Pick a thought about yourself you have recently had. What was it?

• _____

Now, say this thought repeatedly but slow it down. Make it last at least 30 seconds each time. Try it for 3-4 repetitions.

What do notice about your emotional reaction to that thought? What about your interest?

How might this strategy help you in your work?





Exercise 3: Say it in a silly way

Watch this clip of SpongeBob demonstrating this technique:



This is a classic defusion strategy. Take a thought you have had about yourself recently and repeat it saying it in different ways such as: shouting it, whispering it, using a “whale” voice, announcing it like a sports commentator, do an impression while saying it.





Reflecting on language

It is common for people, once they finish these exercises, to still be confused about how why they just did them. That's okay. You may not notice the benefit right away. Like a lot of the strategies in this module, and the whole ARC, things take practice for it to really click.

Select two of the strategies that you will continue to use.

Strategy #1: _____ Strategy #2: _____

Select one unhelpful thought you have been dealing with lately

Select how many times a week you will practice these strategies: 1x 2x 3x 4x 5x 6x 7x

Once you have set your commitment, you have completed this exercise.

