

Changing Your Perceptions About Yourself

As humans, we tend to confuse our subjective interpretations of any experience with the concrete, objective reality of what actually happened. Because our perceptions are often biased and can be used to justify unhealthy, inappropriate, or unproductive behavior, it is important to distinguish between how we think about an experience and what the experience actually is.

The words we use to understand and define our experiences take conscious effort to change. This worksheet can help you reframe your perceptions.

Reflect on what brought you to therapy in the first place. Then create a list of up to five predominant symptoms that negatively affect your life. Avoid listing diagnoses, like depression. Instead, identify the symptoms that contributed to a diagnosis. For example: 1. *lack of motivation*.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Next, identify specific and recent events that you feel were caused by the symptoms you listed. Write each event next to the number that corresponds to the symptom. For example: 1. *My lack of motivation caused me to sleep in and miss my morning meetings*.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Finally, identify and describe the factual events that correspond to the above sections. For example: 1. *I missed my morning meeting because I chose to ignore my alarm and I overslept.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

The above section demonstrates that a past or present problem can affect your interpretation of an experience; however, you can choose to interpret the experience objectively. When you look at things objectively, you are giving yourself permission to make choices in a way that is meaningful to you, and not predetermined by a symptom.