

HANDOUT 5

LABELING EMOTIONS

- Start by sitting comfortably, eyes either closed or partially open. Take a few deep breaths, or if you prefer, bring your attention to the sounds around you.
 - Spend a few moments connecting with your anchor. When you are taken away by an emotion, note what the emotion is. With an attitude of warmth and acceptance, label the emotion. For example, note, “worry, worry, worry.” Don’t obsess about getting the label exactly right. It doesn’t need to be precise to be effective.
 - See where you find this emotion in your body. Allow yourself to simply be with it.
 - Notice the attitude you bring to this practice. Are you yelling at yourself when you notice “anger, anger, anger”? Are you telling yourself that you’re a bad person for having this emotion? See if you can label with kindness, warmth, and acceptance.
 - If the emotion becomes too intense and you start to get overwhelmed or lost in it, simply return to your anchor.
 - There is no need to hold on to or analyze the emotion. Let it rise and fall away. No need to go into the history or story behind the emotion either. Label it and let it go.
 - Label the emotions with as much warmth and kindness as possible. If you feel that negative emotions don’t deserve kindness, label this as well. Be open to pleasant emotions and label them too.
 - Continue to alternate between labeling the emotions and grounding with your anchor. When you’re ready, take a few deep breaths, wiggle your fingers and toes, stretch, and open your eyes if they have been closed. Try to continue to be aware of your emotional reactions as you move into your next activity.
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