Opposite Action Worksheet

DBT emotion regulation: change an emotion by acting opposite to its urge.

Name _____ Date _____

1. Emotion and intensity (0–10)

Be specific: "anxious", not "bad".

2. The urge

What is this emotion pushing me to do? Avoid, attack, withdraw, isolate?

3. Check the facts

Does the emotion fit the situation? Evidence for and against.

4. Decide

If the emotion doesn't fit, or acting on it would make things worse, use opposite action. If it fits, problem-solve instead.

5. The opposite action

The specific thing I'll do instead. Avoid → approach. Attack → be gentle.

6. All the way

Posture, tone of voice, facial expression and behavior, not just one of them.

7. Afterwards

Intensity now (0–10), and what shifted. Give it 20–30 minutes before judging.

Free from DBT Pal (dbtpal.app). For learning and practice between sessions; not a substitute for therapy or crisis support. In the US, call or text 988 in a crisis.

Log Opposite Action on your DBT Pal diary card, and check whether an emotion fits with its step-by-step Check the Facts. Free for iPhone and Android: dbtpal.app/get?c=pdf-opposite-action