

Daily Connections Getting Started:

Purpose of Daily Connection Sheets:

- To strengthen emotional processing pathway that allows you to have a better relationship with self and others, while decreasing activation of emotional processing in the part of the brain that is contributing to psychiatric symptoms.
- To allow you to take ownership of your recovery. You are in therapy one hour/week to process; how will you build connections and process the other 167 hours of the week?

Getting started: Practice with benign interactions, events, observations in the last 24 hours only. Anything can be processed. The first hour of your day, preparing dinner, driving to work. Give yourself time to consider *all* emotions on list. If you stick with only one or two emotions that come without looking at the list, you are likely not building new connections and could potentially be reinforcing connections that are leading to symptoms. This is intended to be challenging, you are “exercising” underdeveloped pathways.

Be specific: He/she said, then I said or first, then next and so forth...

Reminder:

- People and emotions are complex nothing/no one is “all good” or “all bad”.
- Process each event as a unique experience
- No one has perfect emotional processing ability, though practice and repetition will bring progress
- Recommendation: get a notebook and use this format to write as many connections as you want. Do you want to be the individual running a marathon that has trained occasionally when you had time, or the athlete that followed a daily regimen in preparation?

Avoid:

- Avoid connection to overgeneralization, such as rating your overall mood as a “good day”/ “bad day”- or- “I feel depressed/anxious”. *Instead break down narratives to specific “chewable bites” to allow for the full spectrum of emotions to come into focus vs “all bad” or all “good”*
- Avoid the purpose of daily connections to be seeking an outcome, solution, *instead allow insight to be gained by moving emotional processing to the frontal lobe. Work from the inside out and allow yourself to sit with the emotions that you come up with and put them into perspective*
- Avoid processing hypotheticals or possible outcomes based on previous interactions/events, *instead base on reality and treat each experience /interaction as a unique event.*
- Avoid processing traumatic events: Though trauma is very important, processing trauma before you are able to build connections in a productive way is likely to retraumatize and increase suicidal thoughts. *Instead stick with recent events to build connections to prepare for larger things to be processed.*
- Avoid processing when under the influence of substances. Substance use forces shutting down of the areas of the brain that daily connections are trying to access. This will be unproductive at best, at worse could reinforce processing deficits.

Barriers reported to doing daily connections: Shame, seems silly, don't understand the purpose or "I don't see how that will help, overgeneralizing, trying to process complicated/traumatic events too soon. Waiting to do daily connections until polarizing event, then not knowing where to begin. Not starting right away in treatment and not having many interactions increases difficulty doing DCS.

LET'S PRACTICE!!!

Specifically, what was said/done observed first? Using emotion list how did you feel?

Specifically, what was response during the interaction/ what came next? Using emotion list how did you feel?

And so onuntil narrative is completed.

What were you hoping would be said, done, observed? How did you feel when this did/didn't happen?