

River of Feelings Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

This exercise helps you visualize emotions as a flowing river, observe their movement without judgment, and cultivate a sense of calm and detachment. It encourages mindful awareness of emotional patterns and gentle self-reflection.

Step 1: Visualize Your River

Close your eyes or focus softly on a blank page. If you have the opportunity, you may wish to go outdoors and sit by a river or a flowing stream. Imagine your emotions as a river flowing through your body and mind.

Consider how each emotion moves:

- Rushing / intense → rapid currents or rapids
- Blocked / stagnant → rocks, dams, or slow pools
- Calm / peaceful → smooth, steady flow

Reflection

What is the overall flow of your river right now? If your emotions were a river, what would be floating to the top right now?

Which areas feel blocked, “dammed up,” or rushing?

Step 2: Draw Your River

On the blank page that follows, draw your “River of Feelings.”

Use lines, colors, shapes, or symbols to represent:

- Rushing areas (red, zigzag lines, waves)
- Blocked areas (rocks, dark colors, obstacles)
- Calm areas (blue, smooth lines, gentle curves)

Draw your river in the space below:

Prompt Questions

Where does the river move most freely?

Where does it feel stuck or turbulent?

Step 3: Observe from the Riverbank

Imagine stepping out of the river and sitting on the riverbank. You are not stopping the flow, just observing it. Remember, telling yourself not to think about emotions is thinking about emotions. You're not trying to make them go away or to "dam up the river," but you don't have to drown in it either. Instead, you can just get out of the river, sit on the riverbank, and watch the feelings float on by, like a leaf floating downstream.

Notice your feelings with curiosity and compassion.

Reflection

How does observing the river change your experience of your emotions?

What emotions feel different when you step back and watch them flow?

Step 4: Integration & Practice

1. Revisit your River of Feelings when emotions feel overwhelming.
2. Combine this with grounding exercises (feet on the ground, slow breathing).
3. Over time, notice patterns, shifts, and areas where you can cultivate ease.