Understanding My Patterns

A guide to the Mental Health Check-In and Behavioral Chain Analysis

Why use these worksheets?

Anxiety, OCD symptoms, low mood, and behaviors we want to change do not always have obvious triggers. These pages help us notice connections between our physical state, stress, thoughts, feelings, and responses. Awareness of patterns gives us choices. Once we understand a pattern, we can develop strategies to shift it. The goal is curiosity, not self-judgment or finding a perfect explanation.

Page 2 | Mental Health Check-In

Begin with a snapshot of today. Notice symptoms and their intensity, along with sleep, hunger, pain, stress, and what has supported you. This may help identify vulnerabilities that make you more susceptible to repeating emotional or behavioral patterns you are working to change. Check what fits, add your own observations, or leave items blank.

Page 3 | Behavioral Chain Analysis: Before, Event, Inside, Urge, Action

Choose a specific moment when distress increased or a behavior occurred, including avoidance or compulsions. Explore the cause-and-effect sequence: what was happening beforehand, what activated you, what you thought or felt, what you wanted to do, and what you did. Activating events do not always seem logical. Our nervous systems respond to perceived threats as well as actual danger. Understanding this chain can reveal places to respond differently when familiar reactions make things harder in the long run.

Page 4 | Behavioral Chain Analysis: After and Patterns

Explore the effectiveness of your responses, both immediately and over time. Did something bring relief, or did the response create another difficulty? What helped, even a little? This is an opportunity to identify patterns and consider alternatives without blaming yourself.

A gentle way to begin

You do not need to complete every page or answer every question. Start with the check-in or one moment you remember. “Not sure” is a valid answer. If you become overwhelmed, pause and orient to the present. You can revisit your observations with your therapist.

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

A quick daily snapshot. Check what fits; leave the rest blank.

Date: **Time:** **Today feels:**

- [ ] Positive
- [ ] Manageable
- [ ] Mixed
- [ ] Hard

01 What am I noticing today?

- [ ] Anxiety / worry
- [ ] Intrusive thoughts / OCD
- [ ] Low mood
- [ ] Panic / body alarm
- [ ] Urges to check / repeat
- [ ] Numb / disconnected
- [ ] Irritable / overwhelmed
- [ ] Low motivation
- [ ] Not sure
- [ ] Other

Symptom intensity (0 = none, 10 = strongest):

02 Body basics: what might affect me?

- [ ] Slept well
- [ ] Poor sleep last night
- [ ] Several poor nights
- [ ] Hungry / skipped meal
- [ ] Thirsty / dehydrated
- [ ] Very tired
- [ ] Too hot / too cold
- [ ] Sick / recovering
- [ ] Pain / discomfort
- [ ] Hormonal changes
- [ ] Medication / substance change
- [ ] Sensory overload

Other physical sensations or conditions:

03 Stress load: not just today

Stress level today (0-10):

How long has stress been building?

- [ ] Today
- [ ] Days
- [ ] Weeks
- [ ] Months+

- [ ] Work / demands
- [ ] Relationships
- [ ] Health concerns
- [ ] Uncertainty
- [ ] Too little rest
- [ ] Not sure / other

04 What supported me today?

- [ ] Rest / food / water
- [ ] Movement / fresh air
- [ ] Connection
- [ ] Grounding / breathing
- [ ] Doing one small task
- [ ] Enjoyable / creative activity
- [ ] Nothing yet / unsure

BEHAVIORAL CHAIN ANALYSIS

Choose one moment when symptoms increased. It is okay not to know why.

Date / approximate time:

Symptom or behavior:

1 BEFORE: vulnerabilities & accumulated stress

- ☐ Poor sleep
- ☐ Hunger / pain
- ☐ Stress building
- ☐ Not sure

What had been going on?

2 EVENT: what happened or what did I notice?

- ☐ Interaction / task
- ☐ Memory / thought
- ☐ Body sensation
- ☐ Conflict / confrontation

What happened?

3 INSIDE: thoughts, emotions & body sensations

Thought / meaning:

Feeling (or unsure):

Body sensations:

4 URGE: what did I feel pulled to do?

- ☐ Avoid
- ☐ Check / repeat
- ☐ Seek reassurance
- ☐ Withdraw
- ☐ Fight / confront
- ☐ Self-harm

5 ACTION: what did I actually do?

- ☐ Avoided / delayed
- ☐ Compulsion / mental ritual
- ☐ Withdrew
- ☐ Became aggressive
- ☐ Self-harm / thoughts of self-harm

BEHAVIORAL CHAIN ANALYSIS

What happened next, and what might I learn from it?

5 ACTION: continued

What did I actually do? (Include anything not listed on the previous page.)

6 AFTER: short-term relief and longer-term effects

Right away (minutes):

Did I feel relief, calmer, more anxious, guilty, or something else?

Later (hours / days):

Did the feeling return? Did my response help, create another problem, or change anything?

What helped, even a little?

What made the situation easier to manage, even briefly?

7 A PATTERN I MIGHT EXPLORE

No clear trigger? That is useful information too. Curiosity, not blame.