

STUDY Record Recommendation: Use this record for at least 1 day before the examination. Practice becoming aware of whatever thoughts you have for at least 1 day before the examination, practice defusing from these thoughts without having to write the thought on the thought record, practice embracing thoughts, and practice using a (gentle) refocusing task whenever attention has wandered from study material.

S – Situation	T - Thoughts, etc.	U – Urge (and consequences)	DY - Defuse Yourself
<p>Bring to mind a time while studying, taking practice questions or completing an exam where you got caught in the struggle with your inner experience? E.g., studying, doing questions, taking test itself</p>	<p>What showed up in your mind?</p>	<p>What did you feel drawn, compelled or an urge to do when you had the thought(s)? What did you end up doing after having the thought(s)?</p>	<p>Defusion involves seeing thoughts and feelings for what they are (streams of words, passing sensations), not what they say they are (dangers or facts). What defusion technique could you use?</p> <hr/> <p>Examples of Defusion Exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Noticing</i> unhelpful thoughts: “I’m having the thought that…” · <i>Getting of your buts</i>: Replacing buts with ands.. “I am sick of studying, and I am going to review one more brief section .” · Saying unhelpful thoughts slowly or in funny voices. · Writing them down (<i>use this form!</i>). · Label unhelpful thoughts and emotions, e.g. an judgement, a prediction, a feeling, a sensation, a memory etc · Use metaphors to help get a different view of your thoughts, feelings, and self evaluations: E.g. Passengers on the Bus, The Thought Train, Radio Doom & Gloom, Mind Monsters, Quicksand, Storyteller · STOP, STEP BACK, OBSERVE · Practice mindfulness so that you can better notice when you are in the present moment versus when you are stuck in your head in the past or future.

Gentle refocusing details/Example metaphors

- *Gentle refocusing*: Adapted from MBSR and DBT skill manuals, these skills can be used when you notice getting caught up in the struggle with thoughts or feelings during examinations or during studying. At each occurrence, no matter how frequent, the participant is taught to notice the distraction without judgment and gently. E.g.: Neck rolling with the breath during a test question that has triggered a struggle with unhelpful thoughts. Mindful movement during studying as a break from the struggle unhelpful inner experience (i.e., pattern of thoughts, feelings, sensations). Other mindfulness exercises such as 3 minute breathing space (see drop box link) or as mindfully eating a tasty snack can be deployed outside of test setting or just before the exam.
- *Tug of war with the monster metaphor* (Hayes et al., 1999 – demonstrates that ceasing to struggle with test anxiety allows them to have more attentional resources devoted to the test): Imagine you're in a tug of war with a test-anxiety monster. You've got one end of the rope and the monster has the other. In between you is a bottomless pit. You're pulling backward as hard as you can, but the monster keeps pulling you ever closer to the pit. What's the best thing to do in that situation? Pull Harder? That's what comes naturally, but the harder you pull, the harder the monster pulls. You're stuck. What do you do? Drop the rope? Yes. The monster is still there, but you are no longer caught up in a struggle with it and can do something more useful.
- *Passengers on the bus*: (Hayes et al., 1999 – demonstrates how the three concepts unify to allow individuals to act in accordance with their values). I am the driver of the CH Transit bus, you are each passengers who say their anxious thoughts out loud and describe their sensations out loud. As the bus driver, when I engage with each of you I have to stop driving the bus or risk a major accident. I can struggle to quiet the passengers (thoughts), but you see then that we are not getting to campus in time for class. An alternative is to utilize willingness to remain aware of the situation, accept what is happening and defuse from the struggle (with inner experience) so that I am able to accomplish my goal of driving. How might this related to your experience of test taking anxiety?
- *Quicksand*: If you are stuck in quick sand, what do you need to do to get unstuck? You have to spread you arms and legs out and become very still so that you can float to the top and then very deliberately make your way out of it.
- *Radio Doom & Gloom*: This is the practice of labeling our negative thinking, ruminating, worrying, anxious and otherwise unhelpful thoughts as *Radio Doom & Gloom*, like those talk shows we have all heard about and maybe even listened to. Our mind is like this station, only we can't turn it off. We can, with practice, turn down the volume and choose to do other things and take valued action rather than listen to it.
- *The Thought Train*: Visualizing the words of your thoughts or the types of thoughts as items on a freight train passing under you while you stand on a bridge overlooking the train tracks.