DBT-INFORMED

Emotion Wave Map

Track an emotion from first signal to after-effect and locate a skillful choice point.

FOR	Teens and adults	**TIME**	15-25 min

Emotions move through the body, attention, urges, and action. Mapping the sequence can make the next choice point easier to see without invalidating the emotion.

HOW TO USE

Complete this tool collaboratively or review it together afterward. Adapt language, pace, and format to the person's formulation, culture, access needs, capacity, risk, and preferences.

TOPICS: Emotions / DBT / Regulation

01

Before the wave

Include vulnerabilities and the prompting event.

What made you more sensitive that day?

Sleep, hunger, pain, stress, conflict, substances, or reminders.

What happened just before the emotion rose?

Describe the prompting event.

What meaning did your mind make?

Interpretation, image, memory, or prediction.

02

During the wave

Follow the sequence without judging it.

Emotion and intensity, 0-10

More than one emotion may be present.

Body signals

Where and how did activation show up?

Action urge

What did the emotion prepare you to do?

What you did and what happened next

Include others' responses and immediate consequences.

03

Find the choice point

Choose one place where a skill could support both acceptance and change.

What was valid or understandable about the emotion?

Name its message or function.

Where could a skill fit next time?

Before, during, or after the peak.

The skill and how you will rehearse it

Be specific about cue, steps, and support.

> *If the sequence includes self-harm, violence, or acute danger, use an appropriate safety and crisis response plan rather than this worksheet alone.*