

Step-by-Step: How to Fill Out a Diary Card

Why do we fill out the diary card?

- The diary card is a tool for our own recovery where we can observe patterns regarding emotional experiences and behavioral urges/action
- Increase ability to monitor commitment to the treatment and recovery process through a nonjudgmental lens
- Increased awareness can provide the opportunity to make different choices

What is a target behavior?

- A target behavior is an identified behavior that we want to change (either to decrease or increase the frequency/intensity/etc.)
- Often a target behavior is used to avoid intense emotional experiences

How to determine which target behavior to monitor:

- Tier 1: Life-threatening behaviors:
 - o Any behavior that intentionally causes harm to self (e.g., suicidal ideation [SI], non-suicidal self-injury [NSSI], impulsivity, aggressiveness, severe eating disordered behaviors [ED], severe substance use/abuse behaviors)
- Tier 2: Therapy-*interfering* behaviors:
 - o Any behavior that intentionally or unintentionally interferes with therapy (e.g., tardy or avoids treatment, willfulness, arrive intoxicated, dishonest with treatment team, medication noncompliant)
- Tier 3: Quality-of-life *interfering* behaviors:
 - o Any behavior that intentionally or unintentionally keep you from living a life worth living (e.g., over/under eating, substance use/abuse, lying, dissociative behaviors, rumination, unproductive worry, perfectionism, negative self-talk, isolation)
- Tier 4: Quality-of-life behaviors and/or Increase skill use
 - o Increase engagement in behaviors or skills that allow you to live a life worth living

How often did you fill out this card? 1 2-4 5-6 7 Filled out in Session? Y / N
Target Behavior:

Why do we use the term target behavior?

- Helps us focus on change rather than the behavior
- Trains our brain to think differently, to pause, in order to create space to choose a different behavior other than automatically choose our target behavior

****As a reminder, individuals are recommended to complete the diary card 4+ times per week for at least two weeks before they transition into behavior chain****

1. Urge Column

- Uses a 0-5 subjective continuous scale that is intended to communicate your experience
- Consistently choose one method of measurement throughout the week, either frequency/pervasiveness or intensity

0 = No urge

1

2

3 = Strong urge that lasted until noon and skills were implemented

4

5 = Strongest urge and/or urge that lasted throughout the day (may reflect frequency/intensity)

2. Action Column

- Uses a 0-5 subjective continuous scale that is intended to communicate your experience
- Consistently choose one method of measurement throughout the week, either frequency/pervasiveness or intensity

0 = No behavior use

1 = Engaged in behavior and quickly stopped

2 = Engaged in behavior for a longer period of time and implemented skills to interrupt engagement

3 = Engaged in behavior for a longer period of time and received support to implement skills

4 = Engaged in behavior and did not seek support or implement skills

5 = "I am likely in relapse," engaged in a behavior for a long period of time without relief and did not seek support

3. It is important to document prescription medications (including PRNs, which are prescription medications taken as needed) and over-the-counter medications

4. It is important to document substance use/abuse (including caffeine and nicotine) and engagement in non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI).

5. Emotions Column

- Emotions are messengers that tell us information
- Uses a 0-5 subjective continuous scale that is intended to communicate your experience

0 = Not at all

1 = A bit

2 = Somewhat

3 = Rather strong

4 = Very strong

5 = Extremely strong (rare)

EVERY MOMENT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENT CHOICE

6. Skill Implementation Column

- This column is used to report the highest skill usage for the day
- Keep in mind that the goal is for skills to become automatic, in that minimal effort is expended to implement such skills

7. R Column (Reinforcement Column)

- Did you acknowledge your effort in using skills? A R is only a R if it increases the probability of repeating a skill

Target Behavior			Emotions							Skills	
How strong was your urge to use (or avoid) your target behavior? Did you?			Rate how intense your emotion was each day							*Use this scale to rate how you used your skills. Check "R" if you reinforced yourself for using skills.	
(0=least intense and 5=most intense)											
Day	Urge	Action	Rx/ OTC	Sub. Use/ SH	Sad	Guilt/ Shame	Anger	Fear/ Anxiety	Joy	Skills	R ✓
Mon											
Tues											
Wed											
Thurs											
Fri											
Sat											
Sun											

***USED SKILLS**
 0=Not thought about or used
 1=Thought about, not used, didn't want to
 2=Thought about, not used, wanted to
 3=Tried but couldn't use them
 4=Tried, could do them but they didn't help
 5=Tried, could use them, helped
 6=Didn't try, used them, didn't help
 7=Didn't try, used them, helped

Capitulation

- The act of surrendering or ceasing to resist an urge
- How we justify ongoing use

AIB or Apparently Irrelevant Behaviors

- Engagement in a behavior that is on the chain leading you to use a target behavior, and the part of the chain that led to the engagement of the behavior was treated as irrelevant or unimportant