

## Mentalization-Based Worksheet: Assumptions and Mentalization

### Exercise 1: Identifying Assumptions

1. Think of a recent situation where you assumed someone's thoughts, feelings, or intentions.
2. Write down the assumption you made.

---

---

---

3. Reflect on what evidence supported this assumption. Was it based on facts, past experiences, or emotions?

---

4. Consider alternative explanations for their behavior. List at least two other possibilities.

---

---

5. Reflect: How does considering multiple perspectives change how you feel about the situation?

### Example Situations Where Assumptions Are Made:

- You text a friend, and they don't respond for several hours. You assume they are ignoring you or upset with you.
- A coworker passes you in the hallway without greeting you. You assume they don't like you or are annoyed with you.
- Your partner seems quieter than usual. You assume they are angry with you rather than considering other reasons for their behavior (e.g., stress, fatigue).
- Someone interrupts you in a conversation. You assume they don't respect your opinion, instead of considering that they may be excited or unaware of the interruption.

---

### Exercise 2: The "Pause and Reflect" Strategy

1. The next time you catch yourself making an assumption about someone, pause before reacting.
2. Ask yourself:

## Mentalization-Based Worksheet: Assumptions and Mentalization

- What am I assuming about this person's thoughts or emotions?
  - What evidence do I have for this assumption?
  - Could there be another explanation for their behavior?
  - How might I check my assumption with them instead of reacting immediately?
3. Write down an example where you practiced this strategy and reflect on the outcome.

---

---

---

---

### Exercise 3: Perspective-Taking to Reduce Assumptions

1. Choose a recent misunderstanding or conflict you experienced.
- 
2. Write a brief summary of what happened and what assumptions you made.
- 
- 
- 
3. Now, rewrite the scenario from the other person's perspective. What might they have been thinking or feeling?
- 
- 
- 
4. Compare the two perspectives:
- What new insights do you have?
  - How might these insights help you in future interactions?

---

### Exercise 4: Identifying Assumptions vs. Non-Assumptions

1. Below are several statements. Identify whether each is an assumption or a non-assumption:

## Mentalization-Based Worksheet: Assumptions and Mentalization

- "She didn't say hello to me because she's mad at me."
  - "He looked away when I spoke, so he must not be interested in what I'm saying."
  - "She didn't say hello. I don't know why, but maybe she didn't see me."
  - "He looked away when I spoke. I wonder if he is distracted or thinking about something else."
2. Now, create two of your own examples of assumptions and two of non-assumptions.

A: \_\_\_\_\_

A: \_\_\_\_\_

N: \_\_\_\_\_

N: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Reflect: How does shifting from assumptions to non-assumptions change the way you interpret social interactions?

---

### Final Reflection Questions:

- How often do you find yourself making assumptions about others?
- What strategies can you use to remind yourself to mentalize instead of assuming?
- How does challenging assumptions improve your relationships and emotional well-being?

---

### References

- Bateman, A., & Fonagy, P. (2016). *Mentalization-Based Treatment for Personality Disorders: A Practical Guide*. Oxford University Press.
- Fonagy, P., Gergely, G., Jurist, E. L., & Target, M. (2002). *Affect Regulation, Mentalization, and the Development of the Self*. Other Press.