



CLIENT HANDOUT 3.1

Decisional Balance Exercise

THE BEHAVIOR I AM THINKING OF CHANGING IS:

WEIGHING DECISIONS

When people weigh decisions, they look at the **costs and benefits** of the choices they can make. **Remember that having mixed feelings often occurs when making decisions.**

DECISIONAL BALANCING

Many people change on their own. When they are asked what brought about the change, they often say they just **“thought about it,”** meaning they **evaluated the consequences of their current behavior and of changing before making a final decision.**

You can do the same thing with the costs of changing on one side and the benefits of changing on the other side. This exercise will help you look at the good things and less good things about changing.



To change, the scale needs to tip so the costs outweigh the benefits.

Weighing the pros and cons of changing happens all the time—for example, when changing jobs or deciding to move or get married.

DECISION TO CHANGE EXERCISE

One thing that helps people when thinking of changing is to list in one place the benefits and costs of changing or continuing their current behavior. Seeing the full array of costs and benefits can make it easier to decide if you should change. Below is an example of a Decision to Change Exercise.

EXAMPLE: DECISION TO CHANGE EXERCISE

	Changing	Not Changing
Benefits of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased control over my life Support from family and friends Decreased job problems Improved health and finances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More relaxed More fun at parties Don't have to think about my problems
Costs of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased stress/anxiety Feel more depressed Increased boredom Sleep problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disapproval from friends/family Money problems Damage close relationships Increased health risks

(cont.)

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DECISION TO CHANGE EXERCISE: IT'S YOUR TURN

Fill in the costs and benefits of changing and of not changing. Compare them, and ask yourself **are the costs worth it?**

	Changing	Not Changing
Benefits of		
Costs of		

IT'S YOUR DECISION

The next page asks you to list the most important reasons why you want to change. **You are the one who must decide what it will take to tip the scale in favor of changing.**

(cont.)

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The most important reason I want to change is:

If someone gave you \$5 million to change the behavior you are thinking about changing for just one day, would you change, and why?

What steps would you have to take to achieve the change and thus receive the \$5 million?
