WORKSHEET 04 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Dropping anchor

Coming back to the present moment when anxiety rises

AIM

Offer a brief exercise for staying in contact with the present during a wave of anxiety, without fighting it, and regaining control of what you do.

WHO IT IS FOR

Anxiety peaks, emotional overwhelm, intrusive rumination. In session and on your own.

DURATION

2-5 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Explain the image: an anchor doesn't stop the storm, it stops the boat from drifting.
2. Guide the three steps on page 2 (acknowledge, come back to the body, open up to the surroundings), slowly, 3 or 4 times in a row.
3. Then ask: "What matters to you right now? What small action can you take?"
4. Practise it first when anxiety is low, so that it is available when anxiety is high.

POINTS TO WATCH

> The exercise does not aim to reduce anxiety (sometimes it does, but that is not the goal). If there are intrusive traumatic memories, prioritise a longer sensory grounding and fit it into the treatment plan (stabilisation in EMDR).

REFERENCES

Harris, R. (2019). ACT Made Simple: An Easy-to-Read Primer on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (2nd ed.). New Harbinger.

Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D. & Wilson, K. G. (2012). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: The Process and Practice of Mindful Change (2nd ed.). Guilford.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 04 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Dropping anchor

When anxiety rises, you can't stop the storm. But you can drop anchor so that it doesn't carry you away. Do these three steps slowly, 3 or 4 times.

1. Acknowledge: "Right now I notice anxiety, thoughts like…" (say it, without judging).
2. Come back to your body: press your feet into the floor, straighten your back, feel your hands, breathe at your own pace.
3. Open up: look around and name 5 things you can see and 3 you can hear. Where are you? What are you doing?
4. Then: what small action that matters to me can I take now?

When? (situation)	Anxiety before /10	Anxiety after /10	Small action I took

What helps me most to "drop anchor"?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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