WORKSHEET 10 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

What I fear, what happened

Testing an anxious prediction (behavioural experiment)

AIM

Turn a fear into a testable prediction, test it in reality and compare the result with what was expected, so that the belief is revised through experience rather than argument.

WHO IT IS FOR

Any anxiety based on predictions (“I’ll stumble over my words and everyone will laugh”, “if I don’t check, something will happen”).

DURATION

15 min of preparation in session; 10 min of review at the next session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Phrase the prediction precisely and observably: what exactly will happen? How will we know?
2. Note how strongly the person believes it (0-100%).
3. Design the experiment: what to do, when, without which safety behaviour.
4. Anticipate obstacles and plan what to do if the fear partly comes true.
5. At the review: what really happened? What does it teach? How strongly do they believe it now?

POINTS TO WATCH

> Choose an experiment whose outcome is not entirely predictable: the point is to learn, not to “prove” the person wrong. If the fear partly comes true, work on their ability to cope with it.

REFERENCES

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Craske, M. G., Treanor, M., Conway, C. C., Zbozinek, T. & Vervliet, B. (2014). Maximizing exposure therapy: An inhibitory learning approach. Behaviour Research and Therapy, 58, 10-23.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 10 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

What I fear, what happened

Best done with your psychologist

Anxiety makes predictions. Instead of arguing with them in your head, you can test them, like a researcher.

1. My prediction (what will happen, precisely): _____
2. I believe it ___ %. My experiment (what, when, without which protection): _____
3. What really happened: _____
4. What I learn. Now I believe it ___ %.

Prediction	I believe it % (before)	What happened	I believe it % (after)

What has this experiment taught me about the way I predict things?

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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