WORKSHEET 114 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Responding to good news

Strengthening relationships by sharing joy

AIM

Learn the “active constructive” response to the good news of people close to you, which strengthens the quality of relationships.

WHO IT IS FOR

Couples, family, friendships; people who tend to respond distractedly or by playing things down.

DURATION

10 min of explanation; observation over a week

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Introduce the four ways of responding to good news (active or passive, constructive or destructive), with examples.
2. Help the person recognise their usual way of responding.
3. Suggest practising the active constructive response: interest, questions, shared joy.
4. Note the situations and the effect on the relationship.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Positive psychology complements support, it doesn’t replace it. With marked depression, these exercises can increase the sense of failure if offered too early or as an obligation to “be fine”: adapt the pace and first validate the difficult emotions.

REFERENCES

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A. & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87(2), 228-245.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 114 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Responding to good news

When someone close shares good news, our response matters a lot. An enthusiastic, interested response ("Brilliant! Tell me how it went") strengthens the relationship more than support in bad times alone.

1. Notice how you usually respond: enthusiastically, distractedly, looking for the problem or talking about something else.
2. Next time, show your interest: look at the person, smile.
3. Ask questions: "How did you find out? How did you feel?".
4. Note the situation and the other person's reaction.

The good news	Who	What I replied	Their reaction

What I notice about the way I respond, and about our relationships:

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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