WORKSHEET 12 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Examining a worry

Probability, severity, resources: bringing the fear back to its real size

AIM

Help the person assess a worry more realistically: the probability of the worst happening, its real severity and the means to cope with it if it did happen.

WHO IT IS FOR

Catastrophic worries, generalised anxiety, health anxiety.

DURATION

15-20 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Start from a specific worry and ask them to describe the worst scenario they imagine.
2. Estimate its probability (0-100%) together and list the evidence for and against.
3. Describe the most likely scenario and the best scenario.
4. If the worst happened: what could the person do? Who could help them? How would they be in a week, a month, a year?
5. Rate the probability and the anxiety again.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Avoid reassuring on the person's behalf: they are the one doing the examining. In some cases (OCD, severe health anxiety), examining can become a form of checking; then prioritise defusion (worksheet 01) or postponement (worksheet 02).

REFERENCES

Clark, D. A. & Beck, A. T. (2010). Cognitive Therapy of Anxiety Disorders: Science and Practice. Guilford.

Beck, J. S. (2020). Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Basics and Beyond (3rd ed.). Guilford.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 12 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Examining a worry

A worry often seems more likely and more serious than it is. Take it seriously, but look at it closely.

1. My worry: _____. The worst I imagine: _____
2. Probability that it will happen: ___ %. Anxiety: ___ /10.
3. The most likely: _____. The best: _____
4. If the worst happened, I could: _____. Who could help me: _____

What supports my fear	What goes against it

After examining it: probability ___ %, anxiety ___ /10. What I take away:

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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