WORKSHEET 155 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Accepting help

For those used to doing everything on their own

AIM

Work on the deactivation of the attachment system (difficulty asking for and receiving support) through small, graded experiences of receiving help, observing the associated thoughts and sensations.

WHO IT IS FOR

Very self-reliant people, who minimise their needs, look after others without ever asking, or feel uncomfortable being looked after.

DURATION

15 min to prepare, then one small experience a week

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Acknowledge the value of self-reliance: it is often a strength built in order to adapt.
2. List with the person small ways of receiving: accepting a favour, saying “yes, thank you”, sharing a worry.
3. Order them from easiest to hardest and choose the first one.
4. After the experience, note the thoughts (“I’m a nuisance”), the sensations and what really happened.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Go very gradually: deactivation often protects against old disappointments. Don’t present self-reliance as a flaw. These worksheets are not attachment tests: none of them replaces a clinical interview or a validated questionnaire. Avoid locking the person into a “style”. If there is current violence in a relationship, safety comes first, not attachment work.

REFERENCES

Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R. & Pereg, D. (2003). Attachment theory and affect regulation: The dynamics, development, and cognitive consequences of attachment-related strategies. Motivation and Emotion, 27(2), 77-102.

Feeney, B. C. & Collins, N. L. (2015). A new look at social support: A theoretical perspective on thriving through relationships. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 19(2), 113-147.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 155 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Accepting help

Some people learnt very early on to rely only on themselves. It is a strength, and often a protection. But over time, you can end up alone with everything. Receiving a little help can be learnt, step by step.

1. List small ways of receiving: accepting a favour, saying “yes, thank you”, talking about a worry.
2. Order them from easiest to hardest.
3. Choose one for this week.
4. Afterwards, note what you thought, what you felt and what really happened.

What I try to receive	What I thought	What I felt	What really happened

What I learn about myself and others by receiving a little help:

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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