WORKSHEET 26 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Thank you, mind

Thanking your mind and naming its stories (defusion)

AIM

Help the person step back from repetitive thoughts by recognising them as “products” of the mind, with some humour, instead of fighting or obeying them.

WHO IT IS FOR

Self-critical thoughts, recurring worries, catastrophic scenarios known by heart. Adults and adolescents.

DURATION

10 min in session, then in daily life

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Explain that the mind is a thought-producing machine, often trying to protect us: there is no need to silence it.
2. When a familiar thought comes, suggest answering inwardly “Thank you, mind”, in a neutral or amused tone, not an ironic one.
3. Identify together the “stories” that repeat (“the useless story”, “the I’ll never make it story”) and give them a short title.
4. When the story comes back: “Ah, here’s the story of…”. Notice it and go back to what you were doing.
5. Ask them to fill in page 2 for a week.

POINTS TO WATCH

> This is not a way of mocking oneself or downplaying real suffering. If the person experiences it as invalidating, go back to validating the emotion before suggesting defusion.

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 26 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Thank you, mind

Your mind produces thoughts all day long, often to protect you. Some come back like an old song. Instead of arguing with them, you can recognise them and thank your mind.

1. When a familiar thought comes, say to yourself inwardly: “Thank you, mind.”
2. If it is a story that comes back often, give it a title: “the story of…”.
3. When it comes back: “Ah, the story of… again”. And go back to what you were doing.
4. Note what you notice.

Day	Thought or story	Its title	What I did next

Which story does my mind tell me most often?

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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