WORKSHEET 27 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Passengers on the bus

Staying at the wheel even when thoughts shout (ACT metaphor)

AIM

Show, with a metaphor, that you can move in the chosen direction even when difficult thoughts and emotions "shout" in your head, without having to obey them or throw them off the bus.

WHO IT IS FOR

Avoidance, feeling driven by fear or self-criticism. Adults and adolescents.

DURATION

15 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Tell the metaphor: you are driving the bus of your life; passengers get on (fears, memories, criticisms). Some shout, threaten, demand that you take another route.
2. Explore what the person usually does: negotiating, stopping to fight with them, taking the route they impose. With what result?
3. Suggest the alternative: the passengers can stay and shout; you are the one at the wheel choosing the direction (your values).
4. List the person's passengers and what they say, and the direction they want to take.
5. Choose a small, concrete journey for the week, "with the passengers on board".

POINTS TO WATCH

> The passengers are not enemies: they represent experiences that have a history. Avoid letting the metaphor become another form of struggle ("making them shut up").

REFERENCES

Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D. & Wilson, K. G. (2012). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: The Process and Practice of Mindful Change (2nd ed.). Guilford.

Harris, R. (2019). ACT Made Simple: An Easy-to-Read Primer on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (2nd ed.). New Harbinger.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 27 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The passengers on my bus

Imagine you are driving the bus of your life. Along the way, passengers get on: your fears, your doubts, your old criticisms. Some shout “Turn round!”. You don’t need to throw them off: you are the one at the wheel.

1. Who are my loudest passengers and what do they shout?
2. What do I usually do when they shout (stop, negotiate, change route)?
3. Where do I want to go (what matters to me)?
4. A small journey this week, with my passengers on board: _____

Passenger	What it shouts	What it pushes me to do	My direction

What happened when I stayed at the wheel?

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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