WORKSHEET 29 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Dropping the rope

Stopping the tug-of-war with the anxiety monster (acceptance)

AIM

Show with a metaphor that you can give up the exhausting struggle against anxiety without needing to "beat" it, freeing up energy for what matters.

WHO IT IS FOR

Struggling with emotions, exhaustion, people who believe they must eliminate anxiety before they can live. After worksheet 28.

DURATION

10-15 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Tell the metaphor: you are in a tug-of-war with a monster, over a cliff edge. The harder you pull, the harder it pulls. You feel you have to win.
2. Ask: what other solution is there? Let the person find it: drop the rope.
3. Clarify: the monster is still there and may keep growling; but your hands are free to do something else.
4. If possible, do it physically with a scarf or a belt: pull and then let go. What changes in the body?
5. Identify the moments in the week when the person "pulls on the rope" and what they could do with their hands free.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Dropping the rope is not giving up or resigning oneself: it is leaving a struggle that doesn't work. First validate how hard it is to let go.

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 29 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Dropping the rope

Imagine you are in a tug-of-war with a monster (your anxiety), at the edge of a cliff. The harder you pull, the harder it pulls. What if you dropped the rope? The monster is still there, but your hands are free.

1. Identify the moments when you "pull on the rope": fighting, ruminating, controlling everything.
2. Notice how much energy it costs you.
3. Try letting go: let the anxiety be there, without fighting.
4. With your hands free, what can you do that matters to you?

Situation	How I was pulling on the rope	What I did when I let go	Energy afterwards /10

What would I do with my hands free?

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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