WORKSHEET 41 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Listening to sounds, then thoughts

Observing what comes and goes (mindfulness)

AIM

Train open attention: listening to sounds that appear and disappear, then observing thoughts in the same way, as events that pass.

WHO IT IS FOR

Rumination, intrusive thoughts. After some initial practice with the breath or the body scan.

DURATION

10 min

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Ask the person to sit with their eyes closed or their gaze lowered.
2. For a few minutes, listen to sounds: near, far, loud, soft, without trying to name or judge them.
3. Notice that they appear, last and disappear.
4. Then observe thoughts in the same way: they appear, stay a while, go, like sounds.
5. Discuss the experience and what was difficult.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Moving from sounds to thoughts can be destabilising at first: keep it brief and suggest going back to sounds if it becomes overwhelming.

REFERENCES

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Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness. Delacorte.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 41 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Listening to sounds, then thoughts

Sounds arrive, stay a while and leave. So do thoughts. This exercise trains you to watch them pass instead of following them.

1. Sit down, close your eyes or lower your gaze.
2. For 5 minutes, listen to the sounds: near, far, loud, soft. Notice when they start and stop.
3. Then observe your thoughts in the same way: they arrive, stay, leave.
4. If it is too much, go back to the sounds.

Day	Duration	Sounds I noticed	Thoughts that passed

What changes when I observe my thoughts like sounds?

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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