WORKSHEET 80 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Distracting myself on purpose

Getting through an emotional peak without making things worse

AIM

Build a list of useful distraction activities (activities, helping others, comparisons, opposite emotions, pushing away, thoughts, sensations) to get through an emotional peak without acting impulsively.

WHO IT IS FOR

Emotional crises, urges, moments when the problem can't be solved straight away.

DURATION

15 min in session to prepare the list

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Explain the difference between lasting avoidance and distracting yourself while a wave passes.
2. Build a personal, varied, concrete list, to keep on the phone.
3. Plan options for different places (home, work, outside).
4. After the crisis, go back to the problem once the intensity has dropped.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Distraction is a crisis tool, not a permanent strategy: if it becomes the only way of handling emotions, it maintains avoidance.

REFERENCES

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT Skills Training Manual (2nd ed.). Guilford.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 80 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Distracting myself on purpose

When an emotion is too strong and you can't solve anything at that moment, distracting yourself on purpose helps you let the wave pass without making things worse. Prepare your list in advance.

1. Activities that absorb your attention (tidying, drawing, a series, a game).
2. Doing something for someone (helping, sending a kind message).
3. Changing emotion (a funny video, energetic music).
4. Changing thoughts or sensations (counting, reading, a shower, holding an ice cube).

My list: at home	At work or in class	Outside

What helped me most to let the wave pass?

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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