WORKSHEET 82 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Radical acceptance

Fully accepting what cannot be changed

AIM

Help the person fully accept a reality that cannot be changed (the past, a loss, a situation), to reduce the suffering added by refusal, without approving or resigning themselves.

WHO IT IS FOR

Persistent refusal of a painful reality ("it isn't fair", "it shouldn't have happened"), rumination about the past.

DURATION

15-20 min in session; repeated practice

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Distinguish what can be changed (to be solved) from what cannot (to be accepted).
2. Show how refusal ("it shouldn't be like this") adds suffering to pain.
3. Offer concrete ways of accepting: saying it to oneself, adopting an open posture, noticing the resistance in the body.
4. Explain that acceptance is repeated: you "turn the mind" towards acceptance each time it goes back to refusal.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Accepting doesn't mean approving, forgiving or staying in a dangerous situation. With trauma or serious injustice, go slowly and validate the anger.

REFERENCES

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

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 82 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Radical acceptance

Some things can't be changed: the past, a loss, a decision that doesn't depend on you. Refusing reality ("it shouldn't have happened") adds suffering. Accepting it fully, without approving of it, can be freeing.

1. What I refuse to accept: _____
2. Can I change it? If so: I look for a solution. If not: I work on acceptance.
3. I tell myself: "It is what it is. I don't like it, and it is what it is."
4. I notice the resistance in my body and let it go a little.

What I refuse	Can it change? (yes/no)	Suffering from refusing /10	After accepting /10

What would become possible if I accepted this?

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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