WORKSHEET 85 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Understanding a behaviour link by link

Chain analysis

AIM

Analyse in detail the chain of events, thoughts, emotions and sensations that led to a problem behaviour, to identify the points at which a different response was possible.

WHO IT IS FOR

Repeated problem behaviours (self-harm, anger outbursts, substance use, risky behaviour). With a psychologist.

DURATION

30-45 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Define the problem behaviour precisely.
2. Identify the vulnerability factors (sleep, conflicts, substances) and the trigger.
3. Reconstruct each link: thought, emotion, sensation, action, up to the behaviour and its consequences.
4. Identify at each link a skill that could have changed what followed, and prepare a plan for next time.

POINTS TO WATCH

> The analysis is done with curiosity and without judgement; it can be painful. It belongs within structured follow-up, especially if there is self-harm or suicide risk.

REFERENCES

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

Rizvi, S. L. & Ritschel, L. A. (2014). Mastering the art of chain analysis in dialectical behavior therapy. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 21(3), 335-349.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 85 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Understanding a behaviour link by link

Best done with your psychologist

A behaviour you regret doesn't appear "out of the blue": it is the last link in a chain. Reconstructing the chain, with your psychologist, helps you find where you can act differently next time.

1. The behaviour I want to understand: _____
2. What made me more fragile that day, and the trigger.
3. Each link: what I thought, felt and did.
4. Where I could have done things differently, and how, next time.

Link (thought, emotion, sensation, action)	What happened	What I could have done instead

My plan for next time:

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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