

Exercise Sheet 12

Knowing and Doing: Moving On and Preventing Relapse

- The best way to maintain the gains you have made in your therapy is to continue to put into practice the coping strategies you have learnt.
- It is important first of all that you recognize the progress you have made. Please go back and refill in the forms you filled in at the start of the programme.
- How much improvement have you shown?
- If you have reached this stage, you will have gained a lot of insight and will have changed quite a bit of your way of thinking and behaving.
- What points specifically have you learnt, and which particularly help you?

Preventing Relapse

1. Identify future possible high risk situations, events, activities from your original self-efficacy scale.
2. Run through the sequence of how these could occur: trigger - doubt - emotion - ritual.
3. Rehearse stopping before you cross the bridge.
4. Be sure to label the doubt as obsessional doubt and hence invalid.
5. In general, it is helpful to label characteristics of the situations likely to trigger the doubt as ones that touch the insecurity related to your theme. If your vulnerable self-theme turns around ideas that 'you could be a bad worthless person', then you may be more susceptible to events which seem to elicit this theme.
6. Three questions to ask to help identify OCD doubt: (a) Does it touch my theme? (b) Is it a doubt? (c) Do I experience that old OCD feeling? If the answer to all three is yes, then it's OCD doubt to be dismissed.

If You do Slip Up

1. If you find you've slipped into an OCD doubt, do not panic. This slip does not mean you have relapsed. . . or lost out. On the contrary, you cannot unlearn your gains so easily. The slip may simply be part of the up and down of the learning curve and it will be helpful in the long run if we turn it into a learning experience.

2. So first of all retrace your steps. See where you went into the OCD, that is where you crossed over into OCD land.
3. What was particular about your state or activity at that point? Were you stressed, preoccupied, insecure, tired, etc. . . ?
4. Identify precisely the reasons you think OCD was able to grab you at this point. Please record the reasons for future reference:

Depending on the reason you may wish to recharge your knowledge by reading sections of the manual.

5. Now how can you prevent OCD grabbing you here again: (a) Be aware of the trigger; (b) Rehearse resisting OCD at this point; (c) See your self moving on past the trigger in a non-OCD fashion.

Please rehearse the solution until you feel you have mastered this OCD slip up. Ask yourself:

- Are there any other similar situations you need to consider?
- How confident do you feel now in dealing with this slip? Please note 0-100%
- If the confidence is less than 80%, please repeat the above steps.

Dealing with Remaining OCD Elements

- You may still be experiencing past emotional reactions. You anticipate becoming anxious or worry that the thought will hang around because it used to do so. But not now.
- The quicker you catch the OCD, the faster it disappears.
- We noted the importance of filling up the void left by the OCD with you and your goals and activities at the forefront.
- Think of activities which will give you more strength and recognition as a person.
- You might like to begin new activities, or make changes to your lifestyles which will allow you to explore more of your potential.

Complete Resolution of OCD

- You give zero credibility to the doubt.
- You have no reactions, emotional and behavioural, to the doubt.
- None of your behaviour, thinking or anticipating is driven by the doubt.
- You now react and use your senses in your old OCD situations as you do in any other situation.
- You plan ahead on the basis of the person you know you are, your authentic self.

Client Practice Card 12

Knowing and Doing: Moving On and Preventing Relapse

Learning Points

- Becoming non-OCD is a question of continuing to put IBT principles into practice.
- Usually if you succeed in overcoming OCD for 6 months, you will not relapse.
- If you slip up, identify where you slipped up and retrace your steps to the appropriate section of the exercises.
- If you managed to deal with OCD throughout the programme, you are capable of dealing with it for good.
- The insights of the programme should bring you to eventually complete resolution.

Practical Card

- Foresee stresses which might affect your insecurity.
- Plan ahead for any life events or occurrences likely to touch your sensitive theme.
- Carry on with the repositioning exercises which are a work in progress.
- Try to initiate non-OCD activities which give you feedback on your real self.
- Consider yourself non-OCD, and build your life and activities around your real self.

How much of you is non-OCD? _____%

If it is less than 80%, you may profit from repeating the programme steps to see where you are still caught up in OCD.





Cartoon 18. The untouchable.