

Client Exercise Sheet 7

The OCD Bubble

The exercise for this week is the same as the one you will find on your weekly training card. You will go through this exercise at least a couple of times each day every time an obsession occurs with the purpose to stop you from automatically falling into the OCD Bubble. You will not be asked to completely resist the OCD. But you are asked to see that there is a moment of choice before the compulsive urge arrives and that you are not completely at the mercy of the OCD.

The exercise consists of a number of different steps, which will slow the entire obsessional process down. The first step is to identify the first thought that carries you from the real world into the imagination. The second step is to slow down the process of crossing over from reality into the imagination. The third step is to hold still between the worlds of the imagination and of reality without reacting to the doubt. The final fourth step is that you will reflect on how obsessional doubt is resolved

Step 1

You already have some practice in identifying obsessional doubts and the particular story behind them, and determining whether or not there is any direct evidence in the here and now for the doubt. Ask yourself the following questions whenever a doubt occurs:

1. What was the first thought that came to mind that took me beyond the senses?
2. How does this thought make my senses seem irrelevant?

Step 2

As soon as you have identified the particular thought that makes you cross from reality into the imagination, do not immediately react with rituals, avoidance or anything else. Hold off everything for at least one minute and try the following visualization. Imagine yourself standing in the middle of a bridge. This bridge is the thought that carries you from the world of the senses into the world of the imagination— the cross-over point. Standing on the bridge makes you feel you need to act upon the doubt. You cannot help but feel that the doubt will be resolved somehow at the other end of the bridge through carrying out a ritual, avoidance or trying to solve the problem in whatever form. However, look back for a moment into the world of the senses where you came from. Out there, the doubt was irrelevant.

There was nothing that supported the doubt to begin with. You can move into the world of OCD, think more about the doubt, try to solve it somehow and likely get more upset, or you can move back to the world of the senses where the doubt is 100% arbitrary and irrelevant. Try to hold your balance like this for at least one minute, and longer if possible.



Step 3

Now again you can choose what to do. You can further move into the doubt with the hope that you will find some kind of resolution in the world of OCD, or you can decide that the doubt is arbitrary to begin with, and move back to the world of the senses. If you went into the OCD, ask yourself this: did you eventually stop the rituals as dictated by the whims of the OCD? Do you think the doubt is resolved permanently? Will it come back in similar situations? If you decided to move back to the world of the senses, ask yourself on what basis you decided the doubt was imaginary and not something that needed your attention. Did you use your senses in deciding whether it was imaginary? How permanent is this resolution?

Step 4

Write down the most important thoughts that took you beyond the senses (or your 'inner senses'), and add them to the obsessional story using the entries. Hand them over to your therapist in the next session so that he or she can help you adapt the obsessional story.

Thoughts that took me beyond reality:

Client Training Card 7

The OCD Bubble

Learning Points (Front)

- OCD takes you beyond the senses into more doubt – the OCD Bubble.
- There already is certainty before the obsessional doubt.
- OCD does not keep you safe and secure. It makes you insecure.

Daily Exercise (Back)

Step 1: Identify the thoughts that you have during the day that try to take you beyond the senses. Ask yourself how this thought makes your senses seem irrelevant.

Step 2: Hold off every ritual and feeling associated with this thought for at least one minute. You are now at the cross-over point in between the world of the senses and that of the imagination. Look in both directions, and realize there is a choice there.

Step 3: Make your choice. If you went into the OCD Bubble, ask yourself later whether anything was resolved. If you move back into the world of the senses, ask yourself what was there to help you stay there.

Step 4: Write down the most important thoughts that took you beyond your senses. Add them to your OCD story.



Cartoon 10. The O'Seedys doubt depot.