

Client Exercise Sheet 8

Reality Sensing

The exercise on this worksheet will help you practice everything you have learned to far. You will begin to use and trust your senses in obsessional situations. And if you trust your senses, you will have all the certainty that you need to dismiss the obsessional doubt. Do not worry that you have to be successful each time. The more you do the exercise, the more your confidence will go up, and the easier it will get over time. Again, the exercise here is the same as the one on your training card, just described in more detail. Try to do the exercise at least several times a day when an obsession occurs.

1. When an obsessions or thought occurs that takes you beyond the senses, hold still and imagine yourself between worlds – a bridge between reality and the imagination.
2. Focus your attention back to reality, and look what is there. Only look once and take in the information of what your senses tell you. Don't put any effort into this.
3. Realize for a moment that this is all the information you need and that trying to obtain more information from elsewhere means you have already crossed into OCD land.
4. Look down from the bridge you see yourself standing on. Take note of any feeling that makes you feel you are not doing enough. It is the void that is left behind by not engaging in any rituals. It represents all the anxiety and discomfort you feel by not going into OCD land and only trusting your senses.
5. Take a moment to realize that this void is merely imaginary, and that there is certainty by remaining in the world of the senses. Try to feel that sense of certainty. It is common sense. There is absolutely no need to cross the bridge into OCD land.
6. Next, act upon the information from your senses by dismissing the obsession and not engaging in any compulsive behaviours.

There are a number of things you need to keep in mind while you are doing the exercise, which is to use the senses in a natural and effortless way. Trusting the senses means you use the senses normally, as you would do in any other situation where you have no obsessions. Anything else means you have already passed into OCD land. Of course, you can still get back, but try to avoid any of the following:

1. Staring: if you are staring, you are putting in too much effort to overcome your OCD. You are in your OCD Bubble the moment you stare.

2. Fast looking: creating ambiguity by quick looking will reinforce your imagination. Take a look as you would do... in any other situation where you have no obsessions.
3. Imposing your imagination on reality: if you can't see something clearly (for example: something in the distance that you may feel justifies the obsessional doubt), be aware that this is not 'real looking'.

Doing this exercise often will make it progressively easier to stay out of the OCD Bubble and not act on your obsessions. You will even find that your obsessions will begin to disappear, occurring far less often and becoming less intense. And the best part is that the imaginary void will slowly disappear, as it fills up with more normal reasoning and awareness which is real. So go out there and get to know your real self!

Basic Steps to Reality Sensing

1. You intend using your senses exactly as you do in everyday non-OCD situations.
2. You will tune into the world in a natural non-effortful mindful way, open to whatever happens.
3. If you are performing an act, you decide on what criteria you will observe with your senses to know the task is accomplished.
4. If an OCD doubt appears on the horizon and tries to muscle in on the action, you dismiss it and appeal to your senses to know what is actually there or is really happening.
5. You stop the task when your senses and common sense say what needs to be done and when all is done.

Example

You shower yourself... your senses say you are clean... You do not wait and reflect on whether maybe you are clean. You leave the shower.

You lock your front door. Your senses say it's locked. You go about your business and dismiss any subsequent doubt as irrelevant.

Client Training Card 8

Reality Sensing

Learning Points (Front)

- Obsessional doubts are wrong and false.
- Obsessional doubts conflict with reality.
- Reality sensing is staying with the information from the here and now.
- Trusting your senses will add to your confidence each and every time.

Daily Exercise (Back)

Follow this sequence:

Step 1: When a doubt or obsession occurs that takes you beyond the senses, hold still and imagine yourself between worlds – a bridge between reality and the imagination.

Step 2: Focus your attention back on reality, and look at what is there without effort.

Step 3: Look down the bridge between worlds and take note of any feeling that you might not be doing enough. It is the void left behind by not engaging in any rituals.

Step 4: Realize this void is imaginary, and that there is certainty in the world of the senses. Try to feel that ground under your feet. It is common sense.

Step 5: Act on the knowledge from your senses by dismissing the obsession and not engaging in any compulsive behaviours.