

## Client Worksheet 4

### The Vulnerable Self-Theme

The worksheet in this section covers:

- How to discover your vulnerable OCD self through decentring your everyday doubts around you.
- Understanding how the self-theme may dictate the type of everyday obsessions you experience.
- Understanding how the OCD is not a real self but an illusory self arrived at on the basis of inferential confusion.
- In other words, it is a possible self you are convinced you could become and who you do not wish to become, but are convinced you could become on the basis of an absorbing story.
- Your real self is exactly the opposite of the OCD feared self you fear could become.

Looking at the doubts listed on the clinical scale, perhaps we see:

- Doubt that I checked the stove.
- Doubt that I wrote the correct number.
- Doubt that I said the right word.
- Doubt that the car door is locked properly.
- First question to ask: 'What do the doubts share in common here?'

Answer: The first obvious point in common amongst the doubts is checking to see if everything was fine.

- The second question: 'What does this checking action tell us about your's self-construct?'

Answer: The client fears that she or he may have made an error, mistake or gaffe.

- The third question: 'What sort of person would do this?' introduces the self-theme.

Answer: A person who is clumsy, prone to gaffes, inadequate or careless.

- The self-theme is idiosyncratic and can be quite complex. It is important to cover all the options of self-themes with the client and include all components.
- Your doubts reveal your OCD self, since you only doubt obsessively in areas where your self-theme says you would be most likely to doubt. For example, a person who is constantly checking to see if the lights in the house are off clearly considers he is a person likely to leave the lights on.

At the same time he does not constantly check whether the car is parked correctly when the client goes out to a car park, clearly does not consider it any more likely than anyone else to find the parked incorrectly.

- The OCD self-theme plays an important part in determining the type of OCD you experience. Hence it is important to know it. In other words, the self is not a real self that you can identify with real positive attributes.

It is rather a non-existent self which you are afraid you will become. Or, more precisely, you think *maybe* you could become. Rather, it's another obsessional doubt and follows all the reasoning errors that make your obsessional doubt believable. Good news: you will readily identify all the imaginary and illusory tricks by which the OCD convinces you that you could become a self you fear, and don't want to be.

- Bad news: the OCD has done a really good job of convincing you that this illusory self is a real possibility.
- The OCD self is actually the complete opposite of who you really are, and in a later chapter we will cover how to replace the OCD feared self with the authentic self you really are.
- Obviously, knowing and changing this theme comprise a giant step in helping you overcome your OCD. Why? Well, because if this theme makes you vulnerable to doubt in the way you do, then repositioning you towards a more solid self will make you far less vulnerable. You will begin to base your self-evaluation on who you really are and what you are really likely to do, not on a self that OCD says you might possibly, one day, become.