

TOLERATING WORRIES, INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES

EXPERIENCE: Something that might be happening, that you are doing or experiencing.		Is it a trigger (T) or a true danger (D)?		Rate the level of discomfort associated with this experience (from 0 to 100)	NOTES (write down the reasons for which you view this experience as triggering or dangerous)
1.	Crossing the street in high traffic without paying attention.	Т	D		
2.	Worrying about being in an accident.	T	D		
3.	Crossing a quiet street in a designated crossing area.	Т	D		
4.	Having a memory of an accident.	Т	D		
5.	Worrying about being deadly ill.	Т	D		
6.	Entering a contagious diseases unit while maintaining all the necessary precautions.	Т	D		
7.	Entering a contagious diseases unit without maintaining any precautions.	T	D		
8.	Watching a show in which someone dies from a serious illness.	T	D		
9.	Asking someone for a date.	Т	D		
10.	Applying for a job.	T	D		
11.	Eating your breakfast.	T	D		
12.	Having intrusive images of chocking on breakfast.	T	D		
13.	Having minor trouble with swallowing your food.	T	D		
14.	Being alone at home.	Т	D		
15.	Being at a crowded place where people go about their business.	Т	D		
16.	Worrying about a panic attack.	Т	D		
17.	Experiencing a panic attack.	T	D		
18.	Having intrusive thoughts about harming yourself or others.	Т	D		
19.	Wanting to harm yourself or others.	T	D		
20.	Experiencing sudden chest pain without prior history of panic and/or with history of cardiac problems.	Т	D		
21.	Having memories of painful traumatic events from the past.	Т	D		

TRIGGERS are by definition triggering. Anything can be a trigger. We might react to and try to avoid body sensations, specific thoughts, worries, memories, situations or activities.

DANGERS are not always noticeable and consequently might not necessarily be triggering.

Exposure to worries, unwanted intrusive thoughts and memories can be done by writing (see worksheets) or by recording your script and then listening to it a few times per day. The premise behind these exercises is to help us tolerate mental experiences because mental events such as worries, intrusive thoughts and memories can be painful but trying to avoid or suppress them makes the experience even more painful. Remember: What happens when you try not to think of a green apple.

Many persons have trouble setting these exercises correctly on their own – please make sure to consult your therapist before starting.

EXPOSURE TO WORRIES

	Predicted level of			
	distress (0-100)			
ist your worries and rank them in terms of distress that they cause you.	Predicted Level of Distress (0- 100)	Order of implementation		
	,			
Write a script for a worry that causes you between 60 and 75 % percent of dis	stress.			

EXPOSURE TO UNWANTED THOUGHTS

GOAL: Not to be overwhelmed by unwanted thoughts			Predicted level of distress (0-10)	
List	your unwanted thoughts	Predicted Level of Distress (0- 100)	Order of implementation	
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
get b	that mental events do not represent our reality. Now start writing your unward bored. Be prepared to write it many many times and spend from 15 to 60 min rience a peak in discomfort when you start writing that will last for quite some start writing that will be start writing that writing the start writing that writing the start writing that will be start writing that writing the start writing the start writing the start writing that writing the start writing the start writing that writing the start writing the start writing the start writing the start w	nutes writing	g. You will	
			 	

EXPOSURE TO PAINFUL MEMORIES

Going through traumatic events is painful enough. Being hunted by the unwanted memories often adds to the pain as a person who managed to escape war and natural disasters or who survived an assault or car accident, finds themselves reliving the event. A trauma survivor might be perfectly safe but feels as if the event were happening over and over again. This is due to a combination of three processes. First, trauma survivors remain excessively vigilant and might end up by perceiving danger where none exists. They might insist on being absolutely certain about her current safety. In our 5th meeting we have learnt that vigilance combined on insistence on certainty actually creates a state of agitated uncertainty that makes us believe that disaster is just around the corner. Second, trying to suppress the memories, actually forces us to remember what it is that we are trying to suppress – just remember the green apple example in meeting 4 when we talked about worries. Finally, the inability to go with the process of controlled recall in a safe setting prevents the affected person from realizing that despite creating very painful emotions, the memories themselves do not pause danger to our physical wellbeing. It's no longer a life and death situation. With practice, we can handle our memories. The memories might still bring pain and regret but at least we no longer feel like we have to fight for our lives whenever a memory is triggered by something that became associated with the painful event. Remember: triggers cannot be avoided.

GOAL: Not to be overwhelmed by traumatic memories			Predicted level of distress (0-10)	
List	List your traumatic memories		Order of implementation	
1		100)		
2				
3				
4				
5				

Start with an unwanted memory that creates 60-70% level of distress. Remind yourself that a memory of dangerous or painful event is not dangerous even if it is painful. Ground yourself by looking around, name few things that you can touch, see, smell, hear. Build a mind image of your current situation (e.g., sitting safely in your bedroom with reading light on). Focus on one event only – make sure that you do not conflate different situations into a single memory. If you miss chunks of your memory, just note it. Write down only what you remember. **Make sure that you bring your memory to a conclusion**

which is the fact that you are still here and managed to survive what you have survived. Below is an example that can guide you:

It was a sunny day. We were going fast on 401, just passing a red vehicle in front of us. Suddenly a Car in front lost control. I don't remember much other than feeling frightened and hearing my kids scream in the back. I thought we were going to die. We swivelled and our car started to go off the road. I heard terrible noise and then remember nothing. Then I recall the medics taking me out. Everything was eerie, very slow and almost silent. They were shaking me and telling me that kids only had minor injuries. I blanked out and woke up in a hospital bed. There were tubes attached to my body, I felt pain. I remember being terrified of what might happen next.

Now I am in my pedroom. I survived and so did the kids. I still have Chronic pain but I am not fighting

for my life in present.		

KEEPING TRACK AND KEEPING HONEST

No sen of anxi whatso				Anxiety interfere with what you ar doing, but you ar still able to conti	re that	xiety is so strong you have to stop at you are doing regroup	do anything assistance f	oo strong to g – you need from others lay you ever
		10 20	30	40 50	60	70 8	30 90	100
DATE:								
Rate the	100							
intensity of your overall	90							
anxiety	70							
throughout the day using								
the scale	50							
above and	40							
mark it on the graph.	30							
are grapm	10							
	0	ļ	<u> </u>	<u> </u>			<u> </u>	<u> </u>
What challe								
stresses wer								
faced with t	oday?							
What skill h		Dostpone the worry (APPLE) Gaining Perspective Problem Solving Behavioural Experiment Grounding	□ Postpone the worry (APPLE) □ Gaining Perspective □ Problem Solving □ Behavioural Experiment □ Grounding	□ Postpone the worry (APPLE) □ Gaining Perspective □ Problem Solving □ Behavioural Experiment □ Grounding	☐ Postpone the worry (APPLE) ☐ Gaining Perspective ☐ Problem Solving ☐ Behavioural Experiment ☐ Grounding	□ Postpone the worry (APPLE) □ Gaining Perspective □ Problem Solving □ Behavioural Experiment □ Grounding	□ Postpone the worry (APPLE) □ Gaining Perspective □ Problem Solving □ Behavioural Experiment □ Grounding	□ Postpone the worry (APPLE) □ Gaining Perspective □ Problem Solving □ Behavioural Experiment □ Grounding
What were to accompliduring the d	sh							
What expose exercises of challenges set for your	did you							
How much was spent o worrying?								
How much was spent o something proactive (p solving, tak action steps	n doing roblem ing							