



OVERCOMING ANXIETY – 9 FACING OUR TRIGGERS – 3

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.	T	D		
2.	Worrying about being in an accident.	T	D		
3.	Crossing a quiet street in a designated crossing area.	T	D		
4.	Having a memory of an accident.	T	D		
5.	Worrying about being deadly ill.	T	D		
6.	Entering a contagious diseases unit while maintaining all the necessary precautions.	T	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.	T	D		
10.	Applying for a job.	T	D		
11.	Eating your breakfast.	T	D		
12.	Having intrusive images of choking on breakfast.	T	D		
13.	Having minor trouble with swallowing your food.	T	D		
14.	Being alone at home.	T	D		
15.	Being at a crowded place where people go about their business.	T	D		
16.	Worrying about a panic attack.	T	D		
17.	Experiencing a panic attack.	T	D		
18.	Having intrusive thoughts about harming yourself or others.	T	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.	T	D		
21.	Having memories of painful traumatic events from the past.	T	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 PAINFUL MEMORIES

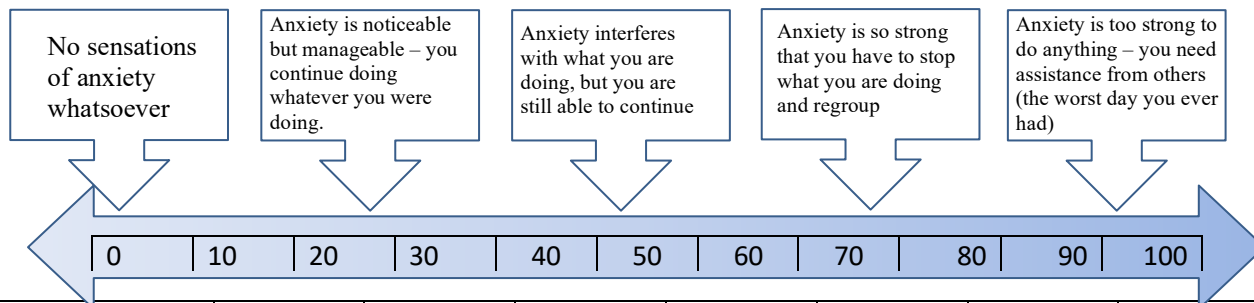
Going through traumatic events is painful enough. Being hunted by the unwanted memories often adds to the pain as a person who managed to escape war and natural disasters or who survived an assault or car accident, finds themselves reliving the event. A trauma survivor might be perfectly safe but feels 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 pose 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 your traumatic memories	Predicted Level of Distress (0-100)	Order of implementation
1		
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**

KEEPING TRACK AND KEEPING HONEST



DATE:								
Rate the intensity of your overall anxiety throughout the day using the scale above and mark it on the graph.	100							
	90							
	80							
	70							
	60							
	50							
	40							
	30							
	20							
	10							
	0							
What challenges / stresses were you faced with today?								
What skill have you practiced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding	<input type="checkbox"/> Postpone the worry (APPLE) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaining Perspective <input type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving <input type="checkbox"/> Behavioural Experiment <input type="checkbox"/> Grounding
What were you able to accomplish during the day?								
<i>What exposure exercises or challenges did you set for yourself?</i>								
How much time was spent on worrying?								
How much time was spent on doing something proactive (problem solving, taking action steps)?								

