

Exposure and Response Prevention

Developing a Fear Hierarchy

[Male Speaker] We begin ERP by first creating a list along with our cheerleaders of all the different things OCD makes us do where we need to regain control again. On this list we may write down where we are when OCD makes an appearance, what it is that he makes us do, which we call the compulsion and what it is he does in our heads that makes us do it called the obsession. Now, obsessions can be specific thoughts, like, my brother is in my room or they can be more general feelings of being uncomfortable in your head. Compulsions, on the other hand can be things you do out here like checking your room for unwanted brothers, or things that you do up here in your head like reciting five times, without making mistakes the reasons that your room is going to be just fine anyway. Now, when you are coming up with your list, just be very matter of fact about all the ways OCD is getting you. You have nothing to be embarrassed about. We are talking about OCD here, and what he is making you do. You don't have to take it personally, you don't have to feel judged cause we are not judging you, we are judging the OCD. Now, if there are particular thoughts that you really don't want to tell anyone that OCD is sticking in your head, the specific things that OCD is saying are not as important as just making sure that you let your cheerleaders know that OCD is making you think something that you really don't like and wish would go away. So in making our list how do we know if something is OCD or not, well don't worry there are lots of ways. If there are various different made up rules in your head that you or other people have to follow and you feel really worried or annoyed or really tight in your head until those rules are followed, that's probably OCD. If you don't really feel like you have a choice in whether or not you do it at all, like if you're feeling trapped, that is probably OCD. If there is a situation you've really been avoiding for a long time because it scares you so much and then you find yourself in that situation and nothing bad at all happens, that was probably OCD. Or if there are different thoughts that keep popping up, getting stuck in your head that you really hate and wish they would go away because they make you feel just awful about yourself, that's probably OCD too. Also, in coming up with your list, remember that there are four different flavours of OCD. We all know about the hoarding OCD and we've all heard about that kind of OCD where we are worried about germs. But, don't forget there is also just right OCD and bad thoughts OCD. In fact, these two kinds of OCD, those two flavours are even more common in our club, in the leaky brake club. Some things that you're putting on your list may seem to other people that those are just your bad behaviours. Don't worry about that, that's normal. Often times, the discomfort that OCD makes us feel leads to those inappropriate behaviours if there is someone or something in our way of being able to scratch that itch. Also, some of the things that belong in your list maybe things that you actually really like to do. Don't worry about that, our goal here with ERP is not to make you stop doing things that you like to do, rather, it's just to make sure that you're in control of everything that you do. Whether it is something you like or not.

Once you've got your list, we're going to want to rank how strong each of those OCD symptoms are for you. To do this, we are going to use something we call, the Fearmometer. Now, a one, two or three on the Fearmometer are items where it's pretty easy to beat OCD or you're often beating him almost all the time maybe on those items. On the other hand, a seven, eight, nine or ten these are items for right now they are quite strong for you. Maybe you have never beaten OCD in those areas and you can't imagine ever beating him. In the middle, a four, five or six these are items that are challenging for you but still, you beat OCD in those areas as often as he beats you.

[Female Speaker] Ok Hilary, so I see you have lots of tens there so we're going to try to break down the first one and what do you have written here again?

[Female Speaker 2] Getting sick on long car rides

[Female Speaker 1] Getting sick on long car rides, so that right now really out of control for you. Are there shorter car rides that might be a bit easier for you?

[Female Speaker 2] yeah they are easier for me

[Female Speaker 1] So what number would you put that at?

[Female Speaker 2] Probably use a three

[Female Speaker 1] A three? Okay, good observation. So let's write that down right here. So, shorter car trips, and that's a three. Because we like to start with lower things on our list. What else? Are there certain peoples cars you can go in that are less scary?

[Female Speaker 2] My moms

[Female Speaker 1] Your moms car. Okay, so what number would you give that?

[Female Speaker 2] I think it's just a little lower, so just a two.

[Female Speaker 1] A two, okay, let's put that one down too. So going in moms car, two. And is that with your mom by herself or is that with your sisters as well?

[Female Speaker 2] Well my sister helps me a lot, so with her, it's probably just a one.

[Female Speaker 1] So when you go with your mom and your sister, it's pretty much a peace of cake, okay, let's write that one down. And you know what? That would be a great place for us to start, because we like to start at the very bottom here. And are there certain places you are going to that is easier for you as well? Like if you are going to beach versus going to school for an exam?

[Female Speaker 2] Yeah I think it would be easier to be outside and places

[Female Speaker 1] Okay, so if you're going outside, so what number would you give that then? If you are going outside?

[Female Speaker 2] Probably like a two.

[Female Speaker 1] A two, okay, let's write that one down as well.

[Male Speaker] It is important to make sure that we've got some easy items, some challenging items and some really hard items on our list. Kim has just done an excellent job of showing us the kinds of questions we and our cheerleaders can ask to break hard to beat items down into easier steps. You'll see why it is really important video why we do this, when we talk about Exposure Assignments. In the mean time, I'm Dr. Dunk, tool, toolbox.

[Text Summary of Video]

Developing a Fear Hierarchy

List all things OCD makes a problem for you!

- Where are you!
- What you do (compulsions)!
- Why you do it (obsessions)!

IS it OCD?

- made-up 'rules' that seem important?
- Feel you 'have' to do it?
- Avoiding something harmless?
- Constant awful unwanted thoughts?

When making list:

- remember all 4 "flavours" of OCD!
- Remember OCD can cause 'bad' behaviour!
- Remember you want control over fun things too!

Rank symptom strength with the Fear-mometer!

Break down hard, 'higher' items on Fear-mometer into easier, 'lower' assignments!