Behavioural Experiment Worksheet

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PSYCHOTHERAPY

CHALLENGE ANXIOUS PREDICTIONS AND BUILD CONFIDENCE

Behavioural experiments are practical activities used in CBT to test anxious predictions and explore what actually happens. They help you gather real-life evidence, reduce avoidance and build a more balanced view.

1 Identify your prediction

What do you think will happen in this situation? Try to be specific and observable.
How strongly do you believe it will happen? (0–100%).

My anxious prediction:

How strongly do I believe it? (0–100%)

%

2 Identify your safety behaviours

What do you usually do to prevent the feared outcome or reduce anxiety? These can be visible behaviours or mental strategies.

My safety behaviours:

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-
-
-

3 Plan your experiment

Design a manageable activity to test your prediction. Try to reduce or remove safety behaviours where possible. Make sure it is realistic and safe.

What will I do?
(Describe the experiment)

When and where?
(Be specific)

What will I look for?
What evidence will help me test my prediction?

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4 Carry out the experiment

Do the activity as planned. Notice what actually happens and try to focus on observable facts rather than guessing what others might be thinking.

What happened?
Write a factual description of what happened, including any positive, neutral or negative outcomes.

5 Review and learn

Compare your prediction with what actually happened. What did you learn? How strongly do you now believe your prediction?

What did I predict would happen?

What actually happened?

Did I use any safety behaviours?
If so, which ones?

Was the outcome as bad as I expected?
What did I learn about the situation, my anxiety and my ability to cope?

How strongly do I now believe my original prediction?
(0–100%)

%

What could I try next time?
(Next steps or a new experiment)

Things to keep in mind

- A behavioural experiment is about learning, not passing or failing.
- You might still feel anxious, and that's okay.
- The aim isn't to prove nothing bad will ever happen, but to find out whether your prediction is accurate, how you cope and what you can manage.
- Start with something manageable and build up gradually.
- Be kind to yourself – every experiment provides useful information.