Functional Analysis in OCD

Clinical worksheet

Instructions

This worksheet is used to examine the function an OCD strategy serves within the wider pattern.

The aim is not to assign blame, but to understand what rituals, mental analysis, avoidance, reassurance or monitoring are trying to achieve.

Three questions in the functional analysis

1 What activates OCD?

Describe the situation, doubt, thought, feeling or sensation that set the pattern in motion.

2 What do I do to obtain relief or certainty?

Record both visible actions and less visible strategies such as analysis, monitoring and reassurance seeking.

3 What does OCD learn from the response?

Examine the short-term relief the response provides and how it may keep the pattern going.

Completed by

Name _____

Date _____

Clinician _____

OCD theme _____

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Section 1: A specific situation

Choose one specific episode. Keep the description brief and precise so that it can be used in treatment planning.

Date	Situation	Distress or doubt 0-10

What activated OCD?

What did OCD suggest might be wrong, dangerous or unresolved?

What did OCD urge me to do?

What did I do to obtain relief, certainty or control?

- ☐ Observable compulsion
- ☐ Checking or rechecking
- ☐ Reassurance from others
- ☐ Monitoring thoughts, bodily sensations or feelings
- ☐ Family accommodation
- ☐ Mental analysis
- ☐ Avoidance or postponement
- ☐ Searching for information
- ☐ Trying to create a clear memory or piece of evidence
- ☐ Other

Describe the main strategy in your own words

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Section 2: Function and learning

Tick the function that best fits. More than one function may be active at the same time.

☐ **Retrospective function**

The strategy tries to clarify, reconstruct or prove something about what has already happened.

☐ **Reactive function**

The strategy tries to reduce distress, doubt or anxiety in the present moment.

☐ **Proactive function**

The strategy tries to create certainty in advance to prevent later doubt.

What short-term relief did the strategy provide?

How might the strategy teach OCD that it was necessary?

If this strategy is reduced, where might the function shift to?

Which less visible strategy should we pay particular attention to?

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Section 3: A new response

The plan should address the function, not only the visible action.

The previous OCD response was

The function the response was trying to serve was

The new response will be

When doubt returns later, I will practise

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Section 3: A new response (continued)

Support, agreements and the next small step.

If other people become part of the evidence chain, we agree to

Supportive statement

Next small exercise

Example of a supportive statement

"I can feel that OCD wants more certainty. I am practising letting the doubt be there without looking for new evidence."

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