

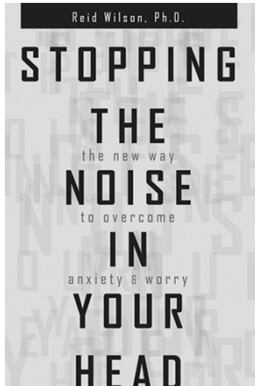
Mastering the Anxiety Game

WS 10
Brief Therapy Conference
December 9, 2016

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Chapel Hill

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Graphics courtesy of
HCI Books



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Shorter treatments

- support a stepped care approach
- skilled CBT therapists can see more clients
- may entice more people into care
- reduce attrition rates

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Video clips courtesy of *Psychotherapy.net*
Strategic Treatment of Anxiety Disorders



6

Efficacy of briefer treatments

- PTSD
 - 8 90-120-min. sessions over 4-6 weeks = 10-15 weekly or twice-weekly 90-min. sessions (Simon et al., 2008)
- OCD
 - 2 meta-analyses – psychosocial treatments – longer tx may not improve on shorter tx (Abramowitz, 1996; Rosa-Alcázar et al., 2008)

▪ **Panic disorder** 7

- 5 tx sessions + 2 booster sessions over 3 months (6.5 contact hours) = 12 weekly sessions + 2 booster sessions (Clark, Salkovskis, Hackmann, Wells, Ludgate, & Gelder, 1999)
- 2-day individual tx (10 subjects), 9 contact hours. 90-100% reached non-clinical levels (Deacon & Abramowitz, 2006)
- 5-session panic disorder intervention (series of studies – Otto et al., 2012)

Sudden gain 10
(Nonlinear patterns of change)

- **SAD** – 15 of 67 subjects (22.4%). (Bohn, Aderka, Schreiber, Stangier, Hofmann, 2013)
- **Transdiagnostic CBT group** – 17 of 98 subjects (17.3%) (Norton, Klenck, & Barrera, 2010)
- **panic disorder** – 10 of 43 subjects (43%) (Clerkin, Teachman, & Smith-Janik, 2008)

▪ **OCD** 8

NORWAY – 1st study

- Intensive 4-day group tx — 5 therapists & 5 patients
- 35 patients—23 “severe” to “extreme”
- 6 mo. follow-up: 27 (77%) classified as recovered

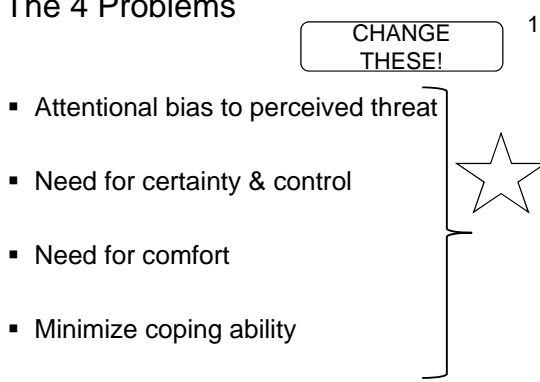
2nd study

- 22 adolescents with OCD
- 4-day treatment delivered to 2–3 patients & parents
- Then 3 weeks of self-administrated ERP
- 91% (n=20) were responders at post-treatment; 77% (n=17) at 6-month follow-up.
- 73% (n=16) in remission at post- & 68% (n=15) at 6-months.

The 4 Problems 11

CHANGE THESE!

- Attentional bias to perceived threat
- Need for certainty & control
- Need for comfort
- Minimize coping ability



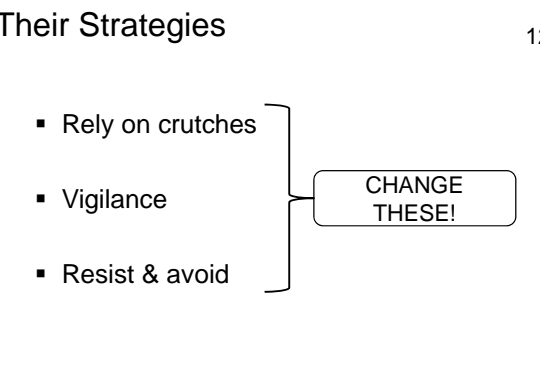
“I don’t think you have it right” 9

- Mary’s heart
- Laura’s snake phobia — one session
 - No need to learn about specific snakes
 - You’re going to have a startle response
- Michael needed to accept that first 10 to 15 seconds after he hyperventilates

Their Strategies 12

- Rely on crutches
- Vigilance
- Resist & avoid

CHANGE THESE!



Poor strategy 13

It's all defense!

Opening moves 16

- Get rapport
- Nature of problem
- Coping behaviors/safety behaviors
- Avoidances

14

Don't teach a protocol —
EMBED it

Chunk it up 17

- Be explicit regarding symptoms — then package them & move them up into theme = easier
- Here:
— restriction & suffocation fears

Clip 1 3 min
Clip 2 1½ min

Mary 15

10 years
Claustrophobia + Panic
— flying, tunnels, elevators, parking garages

Humor begins detachment 18


- "...lock me up in a small place"
- "...I have the combination here somewhere..."

Clip 3 1 min

19

Establish their goals


Educate on habituation



22

“What symptoms... *concern you?*”


Challenge distortions (of course)



20

Listen for/address beliefs

- “How do you get better?”
- (you won’t hear this) She believes it is “in subconscious”



23

The shoulder shrug

- “I think you are making an error in logic”

The hand wave

- “You are adding a problem. Anything we can do to remove the problem...”


Clip 4

5 min

21

Normalize fearful response

- “That makes perfectly good sense to me”




24

Step back


Change their frame of reference

"This is serious!"



→

"This is a mental game"



Step Back — Anxiety's Rules 28

1. Be careful or you might cause a horrible problem OR
Be worried that you've already caused one
2. If a fearful thought pops up, take it seriously
3. Feel absolutely certain
4. Use your anxiety as a gauge: if you feel uncomfortable, then there is still Danger
5. Always act defensively

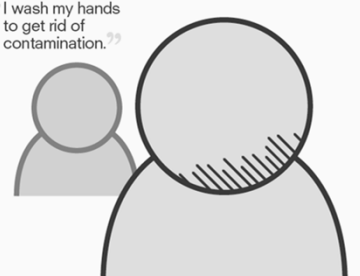
| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Back away/avoid | Worry/dread future |
| Give up territory | Do rituals/compulsions |

26

- Step away from the content –
Make the content irrelevant
- Step back from the moment & label it

29

"I wash my hands to get rid of contamination."



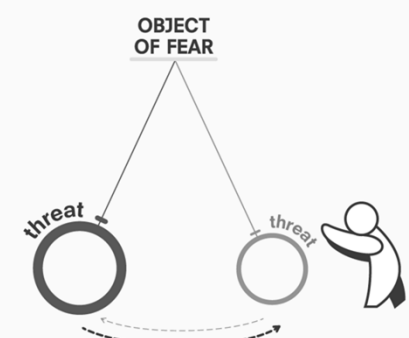
"I do a repetitive behavior to get rid of my doubt about something that seems risky or dangerous."

27

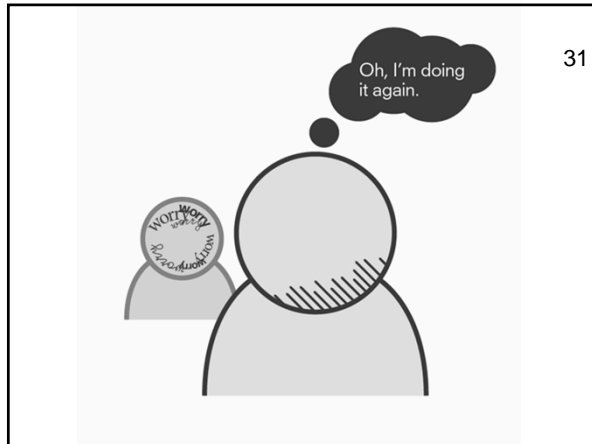
- 1st response is always Signal.
- Have to be willing to to be suddenly afraid & then get past it.
- "Is it danger? No, it's the leaves."
- NOTHING comes before stepping back

30

OBJECT OF FEAR



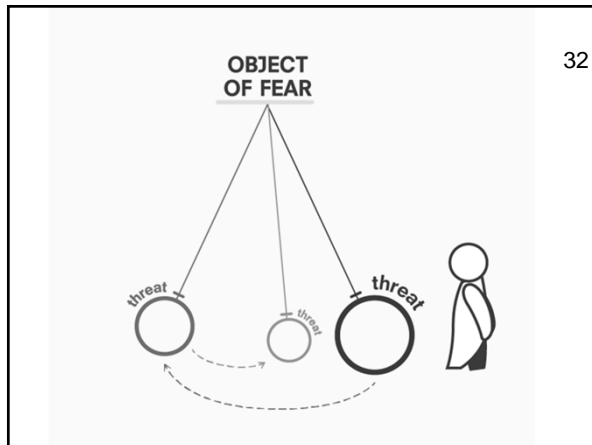
- more symptoms
- more fear
- stronger urge to avoid



“NOT removing symptoms” 34

- “Had trauma in past – predicting trauma in future”
- Introduction to interceptive exposure
 - “We’ll only do what makes sense to you”

Clip 5 3 min



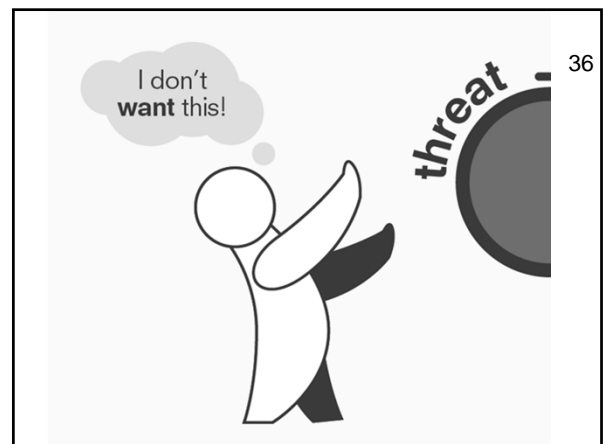
35

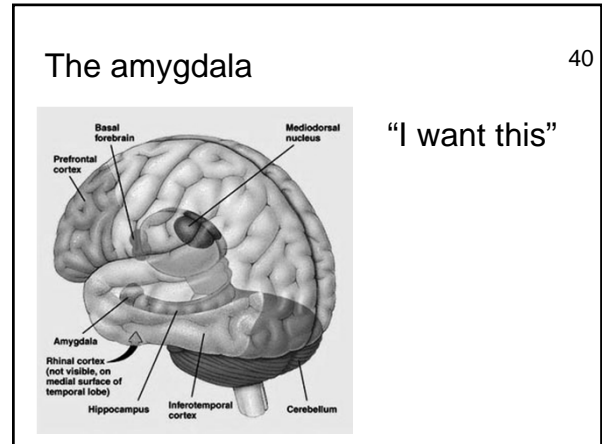
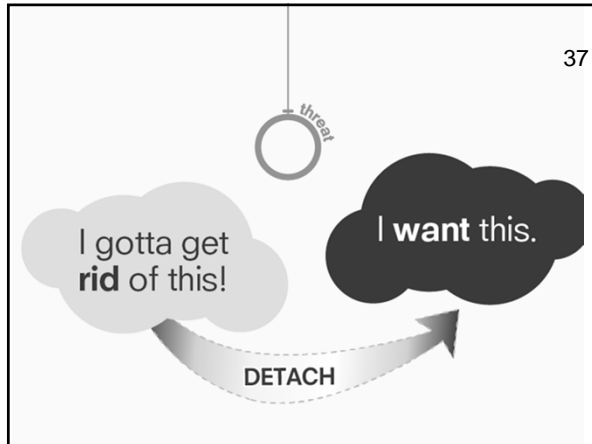
Want it

Establish contract 33

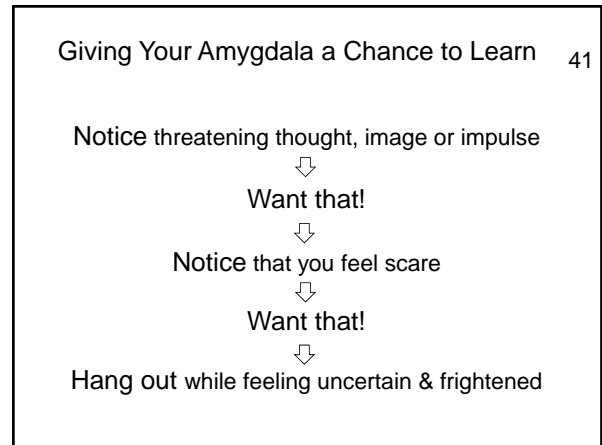
- “Focus on tolerating (the feeling of suffocation & feeling trapped)”
- “First, we have to be on same page”
- “How could that be useful to you?”
- from “I can’t tolerate this” to “I can handle this”

➔

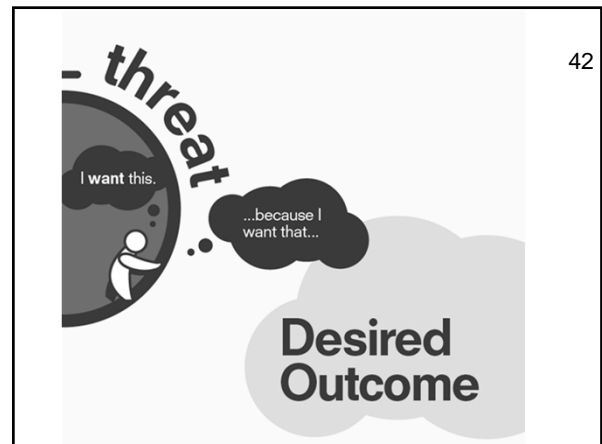




- 38
- Want this very moment... what's going on right now.
 - You only have 2 choices



- Honest Stance toward symptoms/worry/uncertainty... 39
- Purposely, voluntarily, choose...
- ✓ "I want it"
 - ✓ "If it lasts, I want it to last"
 - ✓ "If it's strong, I want it to be strong"



43

Welcoming your current experience is a PERFECT response to your current experience

46

Interoceptive Exposure
in service of
Reappraisal/Belief Change



- 47
- Rating List for Mary
- Breathing thru cocktail straw
 - Breathing thru cocktail straw while wearing nose plug
 - Standing inside storage box - top opened
 - Standing inside storage box - top closed
 - Scarf tight around neck
 - Wearing 2 tight sweaters
 - Breathing thru painter's mask
 - Breathing thru painter's mask – wearing nose plug
 - Wearing pillowcase over head
- ➡

45

The message
“fine this is happening”
is a message that
you have to earn

- 48
- Wearing pillowcase over head - taped closed around neck
 - One hand bound to arm of chair
 - Both hands bound to arms of chair
 - Hands bound by side
 - Legs bound to chair
 - Zipped up in sleeping bag
 - In a sleeping bag head-first
 - Wearing a nose plug
- ➡


1st interoceptive exposure (IE)
in service of reappraisal 49

- Interpretation — not experience — brings distress
- Using IE to immediately challenge belief

Clip 6 6 min


“What point of view are you adopting?” 52

- Changed her perspective within 30 minutes!
- Manifest within self-talk
 - “Some fears I have are unfounded”
 - “I can handle more than I think I can *at this moment*”



“Let's see if we can understand” 50

- “Are you telling me you can undo it just like that?” [snap finger]
- Time 2: “How did you do that?” [from 8 sec. to 30 sec.]
- “Also, I kept in mind that I was in control of it”



Introduction of “I want this” 53

- Two voices
 - *Not* getting rid of being scared
 - Changing interpretation & adding point of view – in the moment
- How does body respond to message of “I don't want this?”

Clip 8 3½ min

Keep clarifying moment-by-moment goals 51

- “I can handle being uncomfortable & scared”

Link misinterpretations together

- “This is like your heart...”

Clip 7 5 min

54

— Parallel points of view

— We elevate one

*We need to do it,
& they need to do it*

55

Step forward

Be sure everything is OK
Get comfortable
Treat fearful thoughts seriously
Stay safe
Feel confident before acting

threat

Seek out doubt
Provoke your discomfort
Treat fearful thoughts absurdly
Aggress into new territory
Scare yourself

Protect & Defend

Courageously Step Forward & Risk

DETACH

56

“Only do what you want to do”

“And if you want to get stronger,
you have to want to do the hard
stuff”

59

- scarf
- “50” is fine, because she has
already incorporated interpretation!

Clip 9

½ min

57

I can't do this!

Detach

“I want this”

Step forward

60

“Voluntarily choose the
experience”

- Convert involuntary to voluntary

“Treatment is aggressive”

Clip 10

2 min

Plant seeds of future provocative work 61

- "...a box, a sleeping bag, a pillowcase, some packing tape..."
- "So that... you can say, 'been there, done that'"

Clip 11 1½ min

The possibility of conscious-unconscious integration 64

- After she describes trauma driving in Chicago (not shown), has one other traumatic memory


Clip 14 3½ min

Debrief homework practice as behavioral experiment 62

Clip 12 6½ min

Ask them to generate a list of principles from their experiences with you 65

Always look for opportunities to move to higher level of abstraction



"Unfortunately..." 63
"Drat"
"I thought about it quite a bit..."
Self-talk: "It's not going to collapse..."
"It won't be pleasant..."
Detachment & Absorption!
"I went to the darkest place I could find..."
"I tried to make it as unpleasant as I could"


1. Face your fears in small ways that you have control over. Gradually do these things longer & then do the harder things. 66
2. Talk yourself through it in a really strong, commanding voice
3. Talk to your primitive brain. Let it overreact, & then say, "I like your expression, but you don't have to juice me up so much next time. I'm fine. Save that for real situations."

Clip 15 1½ min

67

This is not habituation —

This is change through single set of experiences, plus insight related to them



| Type of symptoms | Task | Instructions | Possible symptoms |
|------------------|--------------------|---|------------------------|
| Heart Symptoms | Step-ups | Take one step up onto a stair, & immediately step down. Do this repeatedly at a fast rate (enough to get your heart racing). 1-2 minutes. | Heart racing, sweating |
| | Any brisk exercise | Walk up & down stairs, or use an aerobic exercise machine. 1-2 minutes. | |

68

Challenge their safety behavior

- “What’s the intention of the practice?”
- Safety behaviors are manifestation of belief that “I can’t handle it otherwise”

Clip 16 3 min

| Type of symptoms | Task | Instructions | Possible symptoms |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| Breathing Symptoms | Breath holding | Take a deep breath & hold it. 30 seconds. | Shortness of breath, heart racing |
| | Breathe through straw | Breathe through thin straw for one minute. Then 2 minutes. Don't allow air through your nose. (slightly pinch your nostrils together if needed.) | Breathing difficulties, choking feelings |

Chart 1: Practice Creating Symptoms

| Type of symptoms | Task | Instructions | Possible symptoms |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| Detached Feelings | Stare at spot | Pick a spot on an empty wall & stare at it without moving your eyes. | Detachment from self, seeing spots, visual distortions |
| | Stare at light | Stare at a light for 30 seconds, then look at a blank wall. | |
| | Stare in mirror | Look at your face in the mirror. Choose one spot, such as the bridge of your nose, & remain gazing there, without moving your eyes. | |

| Type of symptoms | Task | Instructions | Possible symptoms |
|------------------|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Dizziness | Roll head | Drop your chin down to your chest & roll your head to the right. When you get to your shoulder, move your head across to your left shoulder (don't roll toward your back), & continue rolling down to your chest. 1 minute. | Seeing spots, dizziness |
| | Shake head | Lower your head slightly & shake it from side to side for 30 seconds | |
| | Walk in circles | Walk around in a small circle, about 3 feet in diameter (do this near a wall, chair or couch in case your need to catch your balance) 1 minute | Seeing spots, dizziness, faintness |

| Type of symptoms | Task | Instructions | Possible symptoms |
|------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Dizziness | Spin standing up | Stand & turn around quickly (do this near a wall, chair or couch in case you need to catch your balance) 1 minute | Seeing spots, dizziness, faintness |
| | Spin in chair | Spin yourself in a swivel chair. Have someone else spin you. Stand. Walk around. 1 minute | |
| | Hyper-ventilate | Breathe deep & fast. Exhale with a lot of force. 1 minute | |

NoiseInYourHead.com 76

- 6 FREE brief episodes teaching principles
- FREE download of all 50 charts, tables and figures from *Stopping the Noise in Your Head*

74

Interoceptive Exposure in Office or at Home

- Do practice 5-8 times in a row
- Do it several times a day
- Therapist might have to leave room during practice to provoke distress

The Observer

The part of us that can detach from our worried, self-critical, or hopeless judgments in order to simply notice what we are thinking and feeling.

Observing the Signs of Resistance

Practice stepping back to notice these tendencies

- stalling or procrastinating
- checking repeatedly
- becoming numb or feeling flat
- seeking the "right answer"
- retreating to a safer place
- detailed thinking-through of all possible options
- over-preparing
- continually researching
- continually seeking advice
- worrying!

FIGURE 2: STEP BACK TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE

PAGE 12
Chapter 9: Be Mindful of the Moment

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Adding Interoceptive Exposure to In-vivo Exposure

- Hyperventilate while sitting in car
- Run in place in closet
- Walk briskly in mall
- Drink coffee at party
- Wear tight scarf at work

Thank you