

GAD part 2

Session 3

Session 3 : Problem / Trigger

Some questions to think about:

What are the problems that will lead me to start worrying?

What do I expect / want my live to be?

What are my responsibilities in general?

Whom do I need to be responsible for?

What is under my control? What can I do for things that are under my control?

What is not under my control? What should I do for things that are not under my control?

What we can conclude from 1st and 2nd questions? Reality, uncertainty, expectation. Are they conflictual?

Triggers: Problems

When problems arise, we are affected, and we would like to be able to solve them.

Problems create changes/crisis, disturb equilibrium, and create uncertainty. We tend to use worry for problem solving. Worry can be productive or unproductive.

Problem → trigger worries → looking for solution → choose solution → take action → end

Unproductive worry: keep on ruminating on implausible events which are unlikely to happen. (looping on worrying, and not moving to the end). A reasonable person will not worry about them for too long.

Why we engage in more unproductive worries: (book Worry Cure Chapter 4)

1. Relate to our beliefs

Our expectation on our life. We want to have normal life. We struggle with unexpected events. We see problems as a threat, and we tend to reject them. Having anxiety means abnormal. Not able to tolerate the unwanted emotions.

Not able to tolerate uncertainty – worry about unanswerable questions.

Need to have perfect answer, not wanting to accept imperfect solution.

Not wanting to take risk or allow mistake. believes risk will lead to danger and mistake equals to not good.

Fear about losing control.

2. Confidence level about problem solving from past experience, learned that I did not handle the problem well, got anxiety, sleeping problem, etc. Fear to have the same experience or making mistake. Lose confidence as a result. Doubt about one's competency.

What to do:

1. Challenge our beliefs: refer to next page
2. Turn unproductive worries to solution and action.

Using problem solving skills: refer to handout "problem solving with new skills"

For improbable events: practice worry exposure

Use cost benefit analysis of worries (see table below)

My worry is:	
Benefit for worry about it (Pros)	Cost for worrying about it (cons)
How does it help when I keep worrying about it?	How does it not help when I keep worrying about?

Making decision: If the cost is greater than the benefit, should I let go of the worry?

3. Accepting life: refer to hand out on Acceptance and commitment to change".

Practice mindfulness, be in the present moment

Let go of control of unlikely events, and others.

Commit to take responsibility in managing emotion.

Change how we perceive the problem and beliefs: it helps to improve problem orientation

	Common examples for poor problem orientation/belief	How to improve	How it help	Key skills
1	Expectation on life. Do not want to have problem. Feel annoyed or frustrated if problem comes again	Alternate thoughts: “everyone has problem no matter how intelligent, sociable, good looking or skillful they are.” Accept: problem is part of our life. It will come, go away and come back again. Focus on problem solving.	Able to see the problem as a normal part of life and deal with them more efficiently.	Thought change Acceptance Problem solving
2	Seeing anxiety or emotion as abnormal, or a threat	Accept emotion and anxiety is part of the reaction towards the stress/problem	Free you from fighting with abnormal thinking. Put you in a better position to solve problem effectively.	Acceptance Take action
	Seeing problem as a threat	Change the black and white thinking. Crisis can lead to an opportunity to change.	Allow yourself to see the problem in different angles.	Acceptance Problem solving
3	Intolerant of uncertainty. Need to be in control, need to get answer quickly and completely.	Reality: some problems are complex and require more time and effort to solve.	Accept the reality, and focus what can be done in the present moment	Acceptance Worry prevention and worry exposure.
4	Need to be perfect	Accept imperfect		
5	Judge yourself as incompetent or deficient, losing control.	Gain distance from your thoughts and reality. Having problem is not equal to you are not capable.	Free yourself from overly judging yourself	Accepting self Self-affirmation statements

Problem Solving with New Skills

Because avoidance has been a frequent way of coping for persons with GAD, they often haven't developed problem solving skills to the degree that they are truly capable. Often their **worries have been “well-practiced but unelaborated”**, meaning that they have worried about a problem often, but not usually in a way that leads to thinking their way through to a solution. (It's those old bugaboos of catastrophic thinking and jumping to conclusions coming into play.)

However, through the past several weeks of learning some new skills and practicing exposure, **you have been building up a greater capacity for “distress tolerance.”** Now, with some practice, you will become much better at problem solving even under stressful situations. Here are a few steps to keep in mind. Remember our repeated theme that **it's better to write things down until you have developed the skill to the point that you can do it “skillfully” in stressful moments.**

	Problem solving skills	Strategies	Notes
1	Identify the problem. Define the problem and set goal. Make it clear and concise	Ask: What is happening that disturbs me? Who is involved in the problem? How the problem affecting me? What are my goals that I want to achieve?	
2	Generation of alternative solutions	List down all possible solutions For each solution, list the pros and cons.	
3	Decision making	Look at the pros and cons of all possible solution. Select a solution that bring about a desirable outcome for you and for others in both the short and long term.	
4	Solution and implementation and evaluation	Access the workability, return to decision making stages and select another solution if needed. (in a month, 3 months, etc.)	

Remember: Decision making is based on the information you know at the present time. No one solution is perfect! You just choose the “best” solution at the present moment. You might regret in the future because you get more information in the future.

Acceptance and Commitment to change

“Acceptance is a simple recognition of the truth that this is the way things are in this moment.”
John Kirkwood (image in the power point)

What is acceptance? (from the book: The worry cure, Chapter 5)

- Seeing things as they really are, not as you think they are.
- Receiving what is here in the present and seeing reality transparently, not through the distorted lens of your worries.
- Being aware of what is real right now, not what could happen.

Radical acceptance (excerpt from DBT training manual by Marsha M. Linehan, PhD)

- Radical means all the way, complete and total.
- Look at reality and seeing it for what it is, the way it is, not what you demand to be.
- Not accepting reality does not mean it is not existing.
- Recognize that there is a reality that you are going to live with. It has limitation and uncertainty).
- It is accepting in your mind, your heart and your body.
- It's when you stop fighting reality, stop throwing tantrums because reality is not the way you want it, and let go of bitterness.
- Everything has a cause (including events and situations that cause you pain and suffering).
- Life can be worth living even with painful events in it.
- Acceptance language: For example: broke up. Instead of saying “I will be alone forever, no one will love me.” Change it to acceptance language “It is the situation. I don't like it. That's where I have to start from.”
- It becomes an end of the old one, and a new life to start with.

Why accepts reality?

- Rejecting reality does not change reality.
- Changing reality requires first accepting reality.
- Pain can't be avoided; it is nature's way of signaling that something is wrong.
- Rejecting reality turns pain into suffering.
- Refusing to accept reality can keep you stuck in unhappiness, bitterness, anger, sadness, shame, or other painful emotions.
- Acceptance may lead to sadness, but deep calmness usually follows.
- The path out of hell is through misery. By refusing to accept the misery that is part of climbing out of hell, you fall back into hell.

How to accept?

- Practice mindfulness – concrete and no judgement
- Gaining distance from my thoughts. Tell myself “thought is not equal to reality. I am simply having a thought.”
- Describe what is in front of me.
- Suspend judgement
- Take myself out of it.

Accepting limitation, and uncertainty

- Limitation on what I can do and what I can control
- Know that there is something I can never know.
- Unknow is not equal to danger.
- Focus on actual facts that I do know.
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Commitment to change

- Identify what I really value and want
- Choose to do the things to make myself feel good – take action
- Do what have to get done. Not to avoid or over doing somethings that are not helpful.
- Worry is not a commitment to change. Instead it is a struggle against accepting what you don't like, a protest against reality, and a refusal to accept uncertainty and limitation.

Responsibility and control

What are my responsibilities in general? Whom should I be responsible for?

What is under my control? What can I do for things that are under my control?

What is not under my control? What can I do for things that are not under my control?



Image in the slide

When you release expectations, you are free to enjoy things for what they are instead of what you think they should be. Mandy Hale

It takes a lot more courage to let something go than it does to hang on to it, trying to make it better.

Letting go doesn't mean ignoring a situation.

Letting go means accepting what it is, exactly as it is, without fear, resistance, or a struggle for control.

Homework

Problem solving

Practice acceptance and letting go of control.

Continue practice relaxation, mindfulness, etc.