

Nailbiting, Trichotillomania (Hair-Pulling) & The “Stopping” Habits

Are They Bad Habits?

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders?

Mental Diseases?

To me, unless there really is chemical imbalance, as some people claim ...

... then they are all shades along a continuum of extremes - from mild habit to full-on OCD.

Does it really matter, with regards treatment?

The more of a **habit** it seems, the more I will use
Solution Focused Approaches

The more **OCD**, the more I will tend towards
Analytical

For this presentation I want to focus more on the Habit end of the scale ...

... and cover OCD as a separate topic.

How Do You Tell The Difference
Between Habit & OCD?

I tend to look at the underlying
emotional components in play.

The more that emotions seem to
be driving the behaviour, the
more “OCD” it is in my mind, but
I don't really like labels.

Nail-Biting

Not just nails - can be Skin Picking
& Skin Biting around the Nails

Skin-Picking

Can be anywhere really - though
face and hands seems most
common

Trichotillomania

Most common version of this that people are aware of is “hair-pulling”
(ie pulling ones own hair out - usually in singles, but can be clumps)

Trichotillomania contd

But can include pulling of ...

Eyebrows
Eyelashes
Beards
& Facial Hair

I think of Nailbiting, “Trich” & Skin Pulling as the “Stopping” habits because people usually say ...

“I want to Stop [x]”

[Note: Smoking is a “stopping” habit, but is usually much more associated with a person’s identity e.g. “I am a smoker” etc, so I tend to treat it slightly differently.]

But ...Identity does play a part
in all of these so I do take it into
account as we shall see in a
moment ...

Treatment

There are many scripts around
and you will find some great ideas
and phrases to use ... BUT ...

Treatment

... I usually create bespoke treatments based on the information the client presents and I am able to gather in the interview...

Treatment Overview

In the interview phase I like to
know ...

1. Exactly **what** it is they **do** in
their behaviour?

Where, how do they do it, what
are the details?

2. **When** do they do it?

What are the triggers?

Bored? Stressed? Indecisive?

[Look out for feelings and emotions, which will help you decide what to do later]

3. **What** does it **give** them?

How does it **benefit** them in some way?

[Again, look out for feelings and emotions,
which will help you decide what to do later]

4. **Why** is it they want to **stop**?

(ie What don't they like about it, what is their “Don't Want”?)

[Feelings and emotions again ...]

5. **Why** do they want to stop **now**?

(ie What is their immediate
tangible motivation/perceived
benefit)

6. What do they **want** instead?

(ie what is their “Do Want”)

*[Most people will not have thought of this -
**their answers will form extremely
useful, bespoke suggestions]***

7. What will be their NEW feeling
when free of it?

*[There needs to positive
emotional benefit]*

If we put all this together, we now have enough information to create negative aversions, positive suggestions or dip into some emotional analysis if needed be.

Summary

Instead of doing [old habit] ...

I am now going to do [new
behaviour] ...

Which will have the effect of
[physical outcome]

Which will make me feel [Feeling]

Example Summary

Instead of biting my nails

I am now going to **let them grow**

So they become **long, strong**

and healthy

Which will make *me* feel **strong,**

confident and in control.

Current Behaviour/Negatives

New Behaviour/Positives

Example 1: Nail Biting

Current Behaviour/Negatives

Biting Nails

Picking Skin

Biting Skin

Feeling edge of nails for rough bits

Put hands/fingers in their mouth

Have hands close to each other

New Behaviour/Positives

Leave hands alone

Allow hands to be still

Hands Stay Away From Your Mouth

If feel a rough bit, use the correct tools ... or
allow it to be there until you can (file).

Keeps hands apart.

When sitting still ... focus on keeping hands
still

Think as if there is nail varnish that is drying ...

Become really aware ...

Treat them as if precious and to be taken care
of ...

“I am someone who takes care of my nails”

“Allows them to grow”

“Uses the correct tools”

Example 2: Hair Pulling

Current Behaviour/Negatives

Feeling around for a hair to pull
stroke eye lashes
Fiddle with face

New Behaviour/Positives

Allow hands to stay away from head
Allow hands to relax

leave eye lashes alone
allow hands to move away from face

“It’s as if your hands are moving in slow motion
... you spot it ... and allow hands to return to
where they were”

“It’s OK to leave your hair alone”
It’s OK for it to grow.

“It’s OK for you to feel good and look good now”

Any Questions?