



ERP Worksheet

ERP works for discomfort, fear, uncertainty, and imperfection. Use this worksheet to guide you through the exercises (imaginal & in vivo).

Trigger: (the thought, feeling, or situation that happened):

Intrusive thought(s): (what thoughts are going through your head now):

What compulsions have you done/want to do (refer to your Compulsions Tracker):

Exposure & response prevention requires that you **expose** yourself to the uncomfortable thoughts/feelings/situations without doing anything about it (compulsions). When you don't do compulsions (**response prevention**), you're forced to accept uncertainty & discomfort (exposure). Consistency gives you less discomfort with it over time! You can go a step further and purposely move closer to the discomfort with exposure exercises to rewire your brain even faster!

Imaginal Exposure Exercise

Turn your intrusive thought into an exposure. You can “lean in” imaginally partially with “___ **may happen/is true**”; even more with “___ **will probably happen/is true**”; or best, lean in all the way with “___ **will happen/is true.**”

Example: Your intrusive thought is “**what if I never feel the way I want to?**” Your exposure statement will be one of the following:

- I may never feel the way I want to; or
- I probably won’t ever feel the way I want to: or
- I will never feel the way I want to.

Write your imaginal exposure statement here:

Rate your level of discomfort - note “discomfort” can be mental, emotional or physical (1-10, with 1 being the lowest): _____



Reminder:

- The purpose of exposure is not to get rid of the discomfort, it's to *expose* yourself to it. If you do it to neutralize, it then becomes a compulsion and won't work. Shift your focus - "nope, I'm leaning in. I CAN do hard things!"

Use the space below to **write your exposure statement over and over until your discomfort drops to ZERO**. Use the back or additional paper, if needed.



Options: you can say the statement out loud (get out of your head) over and over, write it down, or record it & listen on repeat until discomfort reaches ZERO.



In-Vivo Exposure Exercise

You can also turn **triggers** into exposures (instead of avoiding them, a compulsion, which will reinforce the brain's anxiety response & make OCD worse).

Write your trigger here:

**OR...What am I avoiding due to discomfort that I need to expose myself to?
What could I do to challenge myself that would cause discomfort?**

Example In Vivo Exposures:

- Do the exposure exercise, even if you're not sure you're doing it right
- Allow that uncomfortable feeling/sensation/thought to be there w/o doing anything about it.
- Be physically affectionate w/ your partner, even when it makes you anxious
- Take a shower without doing any of your rituals or safety behaviors (compulsions)
- Go to the park and be around kids even though they trigger you
- Talk about your pregnancy even though you're afraid
- Cook and eat the food without checking dates or "doneness"
- Put the knives in the counter or sleep with one next to your bed
- Go to the event, even if it may cause discomfort or be imperfect
- Listen to that song without analyzing it
- Talk about the subject, even if you're unsure how the conversation will go
- Go on the date, even though you're nervous
- Watch that video or read that social media post anyway



Reminders:

- There needs to be discomfort, although it could be (low) a 2 out of 10.
- It's going to feel uncomfortable, that's when you'll get the benefits.
- Exposure only works when coupled with **response prevention** (not doing compulsions), whether mental, physical, or behavioral.
- Consistency!!! Expose yourself for as long as you can so you can get used to the discomfort (should drop in half, preferably).
- **Important!!!** Don't do exposure to get rid of the discomfort, otherwise it becomes the compulsion. Do it to truly expose yourself the uncertainty.

These are other triggers I can work on exposing myself to: