Behavioral experiment record

An Everyday Insight tool
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Side one, the plan. Fill this in before the experiment, ideally with your therapist.

Name _____ Date _____

1 The belief to test

Write it as a prediction. If I do or stop doing something, then this specific thing will happen.

How much do you believe it right now, 0 to 100?

A more balanced alternative, if part of you suspects a different outcome. Optional.

2 The situation

What you will do, where, with whom, and when. The best test you are willing to try now, not the scariest.

3 What you expect to see

The worst you think will happen if you go in without your usual precautions, as something you could see, hear, or count.

How would you know it came true? Feeling awful does not count.

How likely does it feel right now, 0 to 100?

4 Safety behaviors to leave out

The precautions that feel helpful and stop you from finding out. Which will you drop this time?

Where your attention will go

Outward, on faces, what people do, the room. Not your body or how you sound.

What could get in the way

The likely snag, including the urge to back out, and what you will do about it.

Expected distress, optional

Only if the belief is about anxiety itself, or this is a ladder rung.

0 to 100

0 to 24, calm. 25 to 49, mild. 50 to 64, moderate. 65 to 84, high. 85 to 100, extreme.

5 Do it, and watch

Drop the safety behaviors, keep your attention outward, and stay until the prediction has actually been tested, rather than leaving when the urge to escape peaks. Then turn the page.

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Side two, the review. Fill this in as soon after the experiment as you can, while the facts are fresh.

6 What actually happened

Facts first. What did you do, and what did other people actually do or say? Write what a camera would have recorded.

Did the prediction come true?

☐ No, it did not happen ☐ Partly, or not as badly ☐ Yes, it happened

If it happened, was it as bad as you expected? How did people actually react, and for how long did it matter?

How likely does the prediction feel now? ____

How much do you believe the original belief now? ____

Actual distress, if tracked ____

7 What it tells you

Go beyond "it did not happen this time." What does the outcome say about the belief in general? About how other people react? About how well you can cope?

A line to keep

One sentence to reread the next time the worry shows up.

The next step

Listen for the "yes, but." That doubt is the next experiment. Repeat this one to rule out luck, scale it up, or test the new doubt directly.

A single experiment rarely settles a belief held for years. What changes beliefs is a series of experiments, done regularly, with the learning written down and reread.

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