

Scheduling Time For Your Obsessive Thoughts

There are quite a few techniques to help people who have obsessive thoughts and worries, and most people try several different techniques to find the ones that work best. Whichever techniques you try, make sure that you give them a chance, and try each for at least 14 successive days.

Some people find it helpful to schedule a specific time to think about their obsessive thoughts, rather than having these thoughts occur throughout the day and interrupt their regular activities. Whenever you start to have an obsessive thought, say to yourself “I’m going to think about this later,” and then continue your normal activities.

Then, at the allotted time, set a timer for 15 minutes and let your thoughts go without censoring them. In recent years, there has been a good deal of research on the value of accepting unpleasant thoughts or feelings rather than trying to avoid them, and then go on with your life in the direction that you choose (this is called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy or ACT).

During the scheduled time for your distressing reoccurring thoughts, just be aware of them without fighting them. Observe them without judgment. ***Please note that although this may sound easy to do, it takes practice and guidance. If you have having extremely distressful thoughts, it is recommended that you practice this technique with a trained therapist.***

When scheduling your *Thought Time*, try and pick the same 15 minute period each day, and try to sandwich it in between activities that take your full attention. Doing this will make it easier to stop your obsessive thinking because something else will require you attention.

Thought Time

Make copies of this form and use one for each session.

Date: _____

Write down the thoughts that you have “rescheduled.”

Start Time: _____

Stop Time: _____

After you complete your scheduled *Thought Time*, rate how successful you were at controlling your worries on a one to seven scale.

1=Not Successful

7=Very Successful

How successful were you at “re-scheduling” your thoughts?

1 2 3 5 6 7

How successful were you at observing and accepting your thoughts without judgment?

1 2 3 5 6 7

How successful were you at going about your normal activities after your *Thought Time* session?

1 2 3 5 6 7