Session 5 Agenda

Exposure Practice

Session Objectives:
• Continued practice building hierarchies
• Learn how to get the most out of exposure practice
• Prepare to practice exposures for homework

Materials Needed:
• Feeling Faces Chart
• Relaxation Resource Guide
• Sample Exposure Hierarchies
• Avoidance Hierarchy Worksheet
• Helpful Hints for Getting through Exposure Handout
• Video equipment
• Facing My Fears Worksheet

Session Overview:
1. Check-in sheet and coping skill practice
2. Homework review and session preview
3. Exposure helpful hints
4. Developing my exposure plan
5. Wrap-up and homework assignment

Warm-up:
(5 min) Welcome back!

Homework Check and Agenda Preview:
(10 min) Homework review/check: encourage group members to share what they came up with for their hierarchies. Let them know we will talk more about these today. Be sure to highlight the importance of being very specific about the fear that makes a given situation difficult. Feel free to reference additional examples from the Sample Exposure Hierarchies worksheet as needed.

Preview agenda for the day:
“Last week we discussed how facing our fears one step at a time can help us approach things we need or want to do, but avoid because of fear. This week we’re going to get a little more practice with building fear hierarchies and we’ll discuss guidelines and helpful tips for getting the most out of exposure.”
Exposure Guidelines and Best Practice:
(10 min) Provide additional information about how to create and complete exposure challenges. Use the Helpful Hints for Getting Through Exposure handout to guide this discussion. At each “hint,” check in with group members about their reactions or how this would fit in with their identified fear or fear hierarchy.

Exposure Video:
(10 min) Watch the Facing My Fears video as a group. Afterwards, have the group identify the different “helpful hints” for exposure that they saw modeled.
“What steps did Ali take to face his social anxiety?
What do you think his hardest step was, his easiest step?
Which exposures seemed to work well?
What does Ali do well?
Anything we might encourage him to do differently?
If you had social anxiety would you use these steps or develop a different hierarchy to face your social anxiety?
What steps might he have added, what steps might he have omitted?
How can you apply Ali’s exposure tasks to facing your own fears?
How can you apply this to facing your own fears?”

My Exposure Plan and Homework
(17 min) Have group members use their Avoidance Hierarchy to complete the Facing My Fears worksheet. Have group members pick an exposure or two to try over the next week. Encourage them to think about barriers to completing their exposure, and to problem solve solutions to barriers ahead of time. Have them identify rewards for completing their assigned exposure and record their exposure practice for homework using the Facing My Fears Worksheet.
Session 5 Leader Reflection

Exposure Practice

- reviewed the cycle of avoidance
- reviewed the drawbacks of avoidance in daily life
- introduced guidelines for good exposure practice, emphasizing that we have to feel anxious for the exposure to be effective
- demonstrated effective exposure in group (through role play or video), during which I emphasized the importance of: eliciting anxiety, focusing on the anxiety (mindful), not distracting or using relaxation, repetitive and frequent practice, varying contexts
- described how mindfulness can augment exposure
- assigned out-of-session practice to encourage independent use of exposure

Group Skills

- spent 20-30 minutes preparing for group, reviewing activities, becoming familiar with content, resources to share, videos, activities, etc.
- used materials from the TRAILS website, including videos or worksheets, while working with group members
- protected time for group and stayed focused throughout (did not multi-task)
- set an agenda at the beginning of group
- kept the group on task related to content and did not go into unrelated topics
- encouraged group member participation, particularly among those who are generally quiet
- actively participated in skill practice (e.g. coping skills, sharing of feelings, etc.)
- created a warm, inviting, safe space for the group
- provided examples that were relevant to the group