

Session 04

Expectations and demands

Material/wall

Illustration SMART-Model

individual route

Goal of the day

Developing awareness of inner expectations, perceiving own automatic thinking (performance/productivity thinking), recognising connection between too high demands and negative thinking, recognising own behavioural patterns in how to deal with failure, awareness of present moment, recognising one's own options and boundaries, make SMART goals.

Exercises

5-4-3-2-1, Warm-up, SMART bouldering, The tree

Alternative exercise: Clothes peg transport

Starting phase

00:00	Mindfulness exercise	5-4-3-2-1
00:10	Checking in	<i>How am I today?</i>
00:30	Topic: Expectations and demands	Expectations that are too high, and comparisons above one's own level are often the cause for failure, because these expectations cannot be met – following from this are: self-degradation, negative feelings, avoidance of future attempts, feeling helpless, realistic goals and appropriate expectations however lead to higher probability of success and positive effects on self-esteem. SMART-Model: Goals should be specific, measurable, atttractive, realistic, and time-bound.

Active phase

00:35	Warm-up	Warm-up in the group, group ritual optional
00:45	Bouldering exercise	SMART bouldering in groups of two Task: Search a route that is challenging for you. Try to formulate a goal using the SMART-criteria. Consider learned techniques when trying to plan how to solve the boulder-problem (precise stepping, turning in, fall training). Observe yourselves: How are you in relation to your expectations and demands?

Final phase

01:35	Final round	<i>What are you taking with you today? What experiences have you made in relation to demands and expectations?</i>
01:50	Relaxation exercise	The tree

5-4-3-2-1

Therapist version

Description

This exercise is performed in a sitting position.

Find a comfortable, upright seating position. Direct your attention to what is around you.

Name (out loud or in thoughts) what you are perceiving in this moment:

5x : I see...!	→	5x : I hear...!	→	5x : I feel...!
4x : I see...!	→	4x : I hear...!	→	4x : I feel...!
3x : I see...!	→	3x : I hear...!	→	3x : I feel...!
2x : I see...!	→	2x : I hear...!	→	2x : I feel...!

Lastly

1x : I see...!	→	1x : I hear...!	→	1x : I feel...!
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Tips

It's okay to name the same perceptions/sensations over and over again!

If, for example, sounds disturb you during the phase of seeing, simply switch to hearing and integrate the sounds into your perception in this way.

If you get confused with the sequence of the exercise, this is a sign that you are doing well and relaxing particularly quickly. You can then either linger in that state or "guess" where you were and continue.

During the exercise, if you notice your eyes wanting to close, let them close! You can then either describe the specific perceptions of the closed eyes or just listen and feel.

For some, it enhances the positive effect of the exercise if they speak the perceptions aloud while hearing their own voice.

Topic - Session 04

Expectations and demands

Background information

Too high expectations and goals are often a reason for not succeeding or failure, because these expectations cannot be met. Further the pressure to perform highly can lead to feeling tense, stressed, and having uncomfortable feelings – which can have negative outcomes on a person's self confidence, sense of self-efficacy, and therefore their ability to perform. This can result in self depreciating thinking ("I am a loser") and negative feelings (annoyance, anger, feeling like a failure, disappointment). Future trials are avoided, as the chance to succeed is level as very low, and one's own expectations cannot be met either ("I am not going to make it anyway"). This may lead to feeling helpless and can trigger depression.

The goal of this session is to observe this connection and to develop strategies to counteract this negative cycle of thoughts. Possible strategies could be: mindfulness and acceptance (perceiving the present moment and the options one has, being open to the present moment), positive self instructions ("I am just going to take a little bit more time for this route. That is okay") instead of "I have to make in x minutes, otherwise I am a failure", becoming aware of negative bias (black and white thinking "If I don't manage to finish this route right away, then I may as well not try it at all"), dividing bigger tasks/goals into smaller goals (breaking down steps), coming up with realistic goals and appropriate expectations (for example using the [SMART-criteria](#)). This may increase the possibility for success, which in turn may foster enhanced self-efficacy, confidence and mood.

Key questions

Do you know what it feels like to have overly high expectations and demands on you? Do you encounter this 'pressure to perform/be productive' in your everyday life? Who creates that pressure?

Are your expectations always tailored to your possibilities? Where in everyday life are you expecting too much from yourself?

Do you compare yourself with others? (To others who feel are superior to you?) How do you judge yourself usually in this comparison? (devaluing of one's own performance) What does this "competitive thinking" lead to? How can it be prevented?

What do demands that are too high lead to? How do you feel about these?

How do you feel, when you are standing in front of a difficult boulder? What is going through your head? Do you feel like not trying a route at all, because it seems out of reach?

Where in your everyday life do you tend to give up quickly, when the goal seems too far away? How could you deal better with this kind of situations?

Learning goals

To recognise negative emotions and experience of failure as a result of too high expectations on oneself.

Accepting one's own situation, and being able to act effectively along one's own possibilities ("The situation is what it is. I do whatever is helpful in this moment to reach my goals.")

Taking back expectations and demands and being open in the moment: letting go of performance pressure.

Setting goals along [SMART-criteria](#): Breaking down bigger tasks in smaller, achievable steps.

SMART goals

S - Specific

Goals should be specific, clear, and positively phrased (e.g. NOT "I do not want to fall down", RATHER "I want to overcome this challenging part of this route").

M - Measurable

The goal should be measurable, and progress should be recognisable.

A - Attractive

The goal should be attractive to the person and have positive connotations for the person.

R - Realistic

It should be manageable to achieve the goal with one's own skills and means, while considering circumstances and the environment.

T - Time bound

The goal should have a clear time frame.

Warm-up and cool-down

Individual exercise

Description

Participants are inducted to warm-up before starting to boulder and cool-down at the end.

The warm-up consists of 3 parts:

1. Cardio warm-up: starjumps, jumping jacks
2. Mobilisation: open and close fists (with arms outstretched or at an angle), wrist turns, move arms to side and flip palms up and down, move head to each side, circle arms back and forth, cat-cow pose on all fours, stretch sideways, stretch hands down to the toes while standing, twist and stretch ankles.
3. Warm-up climb: climb 3-4 easy routes below your own level to warm-up.

Cool down consists of stretches to all muscle groups that were used.

Material/wall

Free room or space on mats

Key questions

Which exercise did you like last time? How did it go?

Variations

Due to time constraints and depending on the content of the lesson, the warm-up climb may be omitted.

Tips

Increasingly involve participants to encourage initiative.

SMART bouldering

Individual exercise

Description

Participants are instructed to choose a route, which they have not yet mastered, and divide it into segments, which can be completed one by one. For this purpose, an individual route in the current level of difficulty, which is a challenge, is suitable. The therapist accompanies the participants and develops partial goals with the help of the SMART criteria (specific, measurable, attractive, realistic, terminable). Experiences from the exercise can be transferred to other problems; the main focus here is on problem-solving strategies.

Material/wall

Individual routes in the current level of difficulty, which are challenging

Therapeutical themes

Expectations/demands, body sensation, centre of gravity, problem-solving, self-efficacy, being able to know one's own strengths/skills, dealing with success/failure

Key Questions

How do you feel when you are standing in front of a challenging boulder? Do you know the feeling of not trying it out at all, because it seems unachievable? How do you deal with your expectations/demands?

Tips

The choice of route is the key! Technically challenging routes are best, as faster progress can be made here than with pure strength or endurance routes.

Goals can also be formulated with no connection to the routes in particular, e.g. "I want to boulder in a busier area of the hall where I can be seen by others".

The tree

Therapist version

Additional tips

This exercise is done while standing. Leave enough time between paragraphs and read slowly in a meditative voice.

Description

Stand comfortably, with both feet firmly and securely on the floor. Now close your eyes and spread your arms.

Imagine that roots start growing slowly from your feet into the ground. They connect you firmly to the ground. You stand like a strong and steady tree, on a meadow.

It is a windy day and you feel the wind blowing through your branches. Let the wind blow through your branches and move your arms to it. The wind is now getting stronger and stronger and you start to move your upper body, your trunk, into the direction of the wind.

Your feet, the roots, are meanwhile firmly anchored in the ground. (indicate different wind directions-> the wind comes from the front, from the right side,...).

Now feel how the wind gradually decreases and your branches are moved only occasionally and slightly, until they are finally completely still again.

Now focus your attention on your roots. All the energy you take up from the ground with your roots flows through your trunk, through your entire body, down to the last little branch, your fingertips. Really fill up with life energy and strength! Gather this flow of energy.

When you are ready, say goodbye to your tree existence and become yourself again. You consciously breathe in and out deeply, stretch your arms and legs and are back in the here and now.