

Fatigue that Sticky Brain! 20/20/20 Tool

Anxiety may trigger worry loops that become obsessive. Obsessions are those unwanted, intrusive and unpleasant thoughts, images, or ideas that you find difficult to manage, control or eliminate. Common Obsessions: (thoughts you can't get out of your head) are:

- Perfectionism: appearance, surroundings or objects must be in perfect order
- Fear of conflict, making someone mad, disappointing others, or not being good enough
- Fear of contamination: germs, bacteria, illness causing elements
- Fear of mistakes, imperfection, failure, rejection, missing out
- Worry something bad is going to happen to you or to someone you love
- Worry about being abandoned, fired, divorced, cheated on, fooled or taken advantage of
- Fear of your own or your loved ones' illness, injury, accident or death

Obsessions are also referred to as “the doubting disease” because even though you intellectually know that the distressing thought is not likely, ..but..... “what if..... it isn't” ??!!!!

There is no way to reassure your brain out of obsessive thoughts. Obsessive thoughts mean that your brain is stuck. Hence the term “sticky brain.” The only way to get your brain “unstuck” is to fatigue it. The 20/20/20 tool is a way to saturate your brain to the point of exhaustion. Rather than fight and resist the thought, you delve into it— intentionally and purposefully overloading your brain. Your exhausted brain releases the doubting/sticky thought.

Instructions: To complete this tool, you need one full hour of uninterrupted time.



You will spend 20 minutes writing about your fear/worry...write down (or type) every detail leading up to your worst conclusion. Really let yourself dig deep into this thought—all the insights and ugliness, including embarrassment, shame, and loss. Spending 20 minutes means you will uncover deeper fears. What may start out as a worry loop about what other's think may transform into a deep fear of conflict, rejection, or fear of your own anger, or of some hidden part of yourself or fear of death itself.



Now 20 minutes reading aloud into a recorder, exactly what you wrote. Using your phone or some other recording device, read aloud as many times over as needed to fill the 20 minutes. You may cry, vent, rage...whatever emotions come up as you read and record your written words aloud. Video recording also works, your preference.



Finally, spend 20 minutes listening to your recording. Once this third step is complete, you will feel relief. Your brain will no longer attach the same level of fear, sadness or distress to those thoughts. Thoughts that once obsessed you, now fatigue you. You can practice your 20/20/20 once or twice a day for as many days as you need to. Most people find relief after one or two practices for each issue—and some repeat the tool again whenever the sticky brain returns.