

Scrupulosity

Modalities Used: CBT, ERP

Objective

To help clients identify religious/moral obsessions and begin resisting compulsive mental review or confession.

Introduction

- Scrupulosity is OCD focused on morality or religious 'rightness.'
- Today we'll explore how guilt and fear play into compulsions like confessing, praying, or seeking moral certainty.

Psychoeducation

Obsessions may include fear of sinning, offending God, or being morally bad.

Compulsions might be repeating prayers, excessive confession, avoiding 'impure' content, or analyzing intentions.

ERP focuses on sitting with guilt or uncertainty while resisting rituals.

Skill Building

List religious or moral thoughts that feel intrusive or distressing.

Try delaying a compulsion (e.g., don't confess or re-pray) and sit with the guilt.

Write down the anxiety level every minute for 5 minutes.

Reflection & Discussion

- What makes scrupulosity different from regular belief or practice?
- What's difficult about tolerating guilt?
- How can you tell if an action is driven by fear vs. faith?

Homework (Choose one)

- Track moral/religious intrusive thoughts and compulsions for one day.

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- Choose one ritual to skip or delay.
- Write about what makes you feel 'bad' or 'unworthy' and notice OCD's role in that.

Scrupulosity Worksheet

Use this worksheet to process your experience and apply ERP-based skills.

Prompt Sections:

Describe a recent moral or religious intrusive thought:

What compulsion did you feel the urge to perform?

What ERP strategy did you use instead?

How did your anxiety shift over time?

Reflection Questions:

- What's the difference between values and compulsions in this situation?
- What would it feel like to trust your intent instead of reviewing it?
- What helps you notice when OCD is in the driver's seat?