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## **Additional CBT Techniques for Anxiety**

If you're struggling with thoughts and feel just plain stuck, you should know that there are many additional Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques you can use

One such technique is a Cost Benefit Analysis.

Let me explain this technique by way of example.

Let's say that you work in a physically large office that has many employees. Your anxiety is so bad that you extremely fear going to work in this office because you are scared that if you have a panic attack at the office all of these people will see you and think you are crazy. The end result is that you have been missing a lot of work lately.

#1 The first step of the Cost-Benefit Analysis is identifying the distortion(s). You can click on the link below to obtain a list of the cognitive distortions.

Consulting the list you'll likely have seen that the following cognitive distortions are present: Fortune Telling and Mind Reading. The reason Fortune Telling is present is because on some level you believe that you will have a panic attack at work (if you didn't you wouldn't have the thought) so you are predicting the future.

The reason Mind Reading is present is because you believe having a panic attack at work will result in your colleagues thinking you are crazy (you are reading their mind in a sense because you are saying to yourself "if I have a panic attack then they'll think I'm crazy").

#2 The next step is clearly isolating what belief is driving your behaviour so you can perform a Cost-Benefit Analysis on it. Well clearly the belief is: "If I have a panic attack at work then everyone will think I'm crazy therefore I want to avoid going to work."

#3 Next we need to actually perform the Cost-Benefit Analysis.

Here what you are going to do is write down the pros and cons of this belief (in other words, the advantages and disadvantages), so let's generate some right now.

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Some pros are:

1. If I avoid going to work then I don't have to worry about having a panic attack there.
2. If I avoid going to work then I don't have to worry about what people will think of me.

Some cons are:

1. If I avoid going to work then eventually I may lose my job and will not have a source of income.
2. I'll miss out on the social interactions possible at work.
3. It restricts my freedom if I don't allow myself to go places.
4. It's much harder to meet people because work is a place to do that.
5. It's a frustrating feeling that I'm unable to go to work because of this fear.
6. If I don't stand up to this fear can I ever work through it?
7. Won't this fear always have control of my life?
8. Won't I miss many opportunities because of this fear?

It is obvious that there are far more many disadvantages in maintaining such a belief.

#4 The last step therefore is coming up with a healthier, more realistic, thought.

The healthier more realistic thought could be something like: "While I might get nervous at work, the world will not come to an end. Most people are much more concerned about themselves than watching my every move. I could be incredibly nervous and people won't likely even really notice. I don't need to let this fear stop me from doing what's in my best interest, and clearly going work is."

I'm not suggesting that the Cost-Benefit Analysis is applicable to all your thoughts but it is one more technique you can use. We will discuss many more in future by the way.

Now you have a new technique you can utilize over the weekend and into next week. In combination with the many techniques you can utilize to control your anxiety and panic and many more holistic things – discussed throughout the Panic Attack Recovery Newsletter – I think by now you have many tools at your fingertips.

Do take care,

Matthew Wagner

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