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How to use the Therapy Wheel:

For children experiencing fear:

Have the child get into a comfortable position and take three slow deep breaths into the wheel. You may need to have them say out loud “I am safe.” Adding visual cues such as having them think about a safe place may also help. Have them blow into the wheel again three times. When a child is able to take deep breaths, their muscles begin to relax and they automatically begin to feel less afraid.

For children experiencing separation anxiety:

1. Stand near the child and have them take a deep breath while they are thinking about separating.
2. Remind them they are safe and you will come back after school/meeting.
3. They can choose to blow into the wheel any time they feel scared or afraid.
4. You may choose to then stand further away from the child and have them blow into the Therapy Wheel again. They may benefit from stating, “my Mom or Dad will be back for me” or “I am safe.”

Test Anxiety:

A person experiencing anxiety around tests may blow into the therapy wheel when they begin getting anxious about the upcoming test. If allowed, the student may benefit from having it in school to blow into if they feel anxious during the test (particularly during long state exams). Have the student repeat in their mind “I am calm and I will do my best.”



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Ways for therapists to use this in their practice:

This can also be used by therapists with mindfulness activities:

1. Have the client sit in a comfortable place
2. Take three deep breaths into the Therapy Wheel
3. Relax, focus on just the sounds that you hear at this moment
4. Now take a deep breath
5. Relax and focus on what you smell at this moment
6. Now take a deep breath
7. Relax and become aware of what you are feeling, the clothes against your skin, the pressure of the furniture against you
8. Now take a deep breath
9. Open up your eyes and become aware of what you see in the space you are in.

Systemic Desensitization and use of the “Therapy Wheel”

For a person to work through a phobia or an obsession/compulsion, they need to experience exposure to the feared experience.

For example:

Fear of spiders (arachnophobia):

First have the person imagine the fear, then have them practice relaxing themselves by taking three deep breaths into the Therapy Wheel. They may need to become mindful of where they are such as reminding themselves that they are not near a spider and they are in a calm place. Once the person has been able to take deep breaths and relax, the therapist may expose them to a cartoon picture of the spider. Once the person is exposed to the picture, they can then practice relaxing by blowing into the wheel slowly three times. The next step would be for the therapist to expose them to an actual picture of the feared experience or spider, have the client look at the picture and then practice relaxing themselves. The next step would be for the therapist to show the client a video of a spider. The therapist can then walk the client through relaxation and calm. The final step may be to go to a pet store that sells spiders and have the client practice calming themselves.

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## Working with obsessive compulsive behaviors

1. Have the child describe the behavior they would like to stop. (eg. touching a door knob 5 times)
2. Have them then breath into the wheel slowly and deeply 3 times.
3. Have them describe the thought they are having around the compulsive behavior.
4. Come up with a replacement thought such as "I am safe."
5. Then practice this with exposure to the item that triggers the child's OCD behavior and have the child breath into the wheel and state the replacement thought a few times.
6. Practice with the child not acting out the compulsive behavior but replacing it with positive cognitions and relaxing using the the therapy wheel.