“Yasmina”

Behavioral Conceptualization and Treatment Plan

Jonathan Abramowitz, PhD
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Assessment of OCD Symptoms

• Y-BOCS, DOCS

• Functional assessment
  – External triggers
  – Internal triggers (thoughts, images, doubts, physiological)
  – Avoidance & rituals
  – Cognitive links between triggers and rituals/avoidance
Conceptualization

- Obsessional triggers and uncertainty give rise to excessive fear/anxiety
- Avoidance and rituals reduce distress in the short-term...
- But they maintain obsessional fear in the long run by preventing the natural extinction of anxiety and the correction of beliefs such as “I can’t tolerate anxiety/uncertainty”
Treatment Plan

• Education and treatment planning
• Exposure and response prevention
  – Hierarchy based on Yasmina’s feared situations
  – Goal: To extinguish conditioned pathological fear by forming new non-threat associations that inhibit prior fear learning in multiple contexts
  – Bring partner on board
Possible Exposure Hierarchy Items

• Walk through dog park
• Step in dog poop
• Toilet paper with own bowel
• Own underwear
• Floors with brown stains
• Intercourse with Joe
How Does ERP Work?

• Yasmina learns…
  – Feared consequences less likely
  – Anxiety & uncertainty are tolerable and don’t have to get in the way of life
  – Anxiety doesn’t even stay forever (and even if it did…)
  – I don’t need rituals because I can “get through” obsessional fear
Exposure and Response Prevention is…

• the best form of cognitive therapy

• the ultimate form of acceptance