
MAKING USE OF THE THOUGHT- STOPPING TECHNIQUE

Obsessive thoughts that recur on a frequent and regular basis can be very frustrating and interfere with normal functioning. You can become preoccupied with these thoughts and therefore unable to focus on other issues. These recurring thoughts can also produce considerable anxiety and they often are connected to worries that a harmful or embarrassing event will occur. A simple, but effective technique for coping with obsessive thoughts and reducing their ability to raise anxiety is the “thought-stopping” technique. This exercise guides you through the implementation of this technique and assesses its effectiveness.

1. List any obsessive thoughts that recur regularly and interfere with your normal functioning.

2. Rate the degree of interference of the obsessive thought on your normal routine.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Strong and Frequent				No Interference

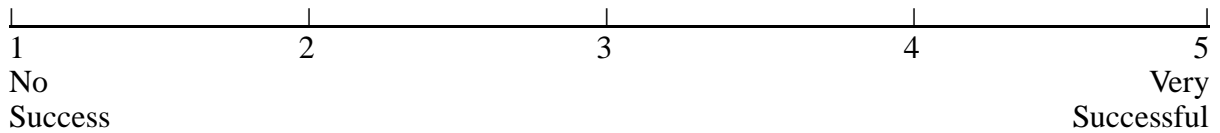
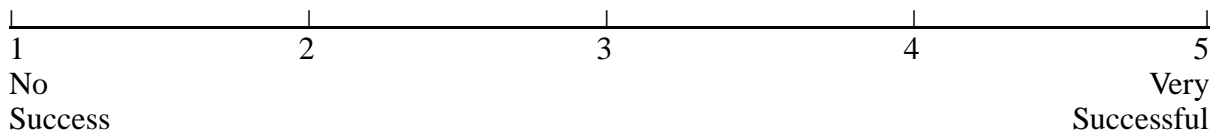
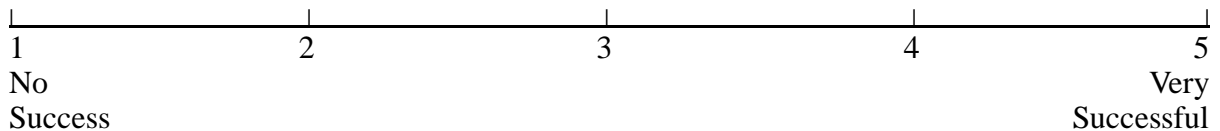
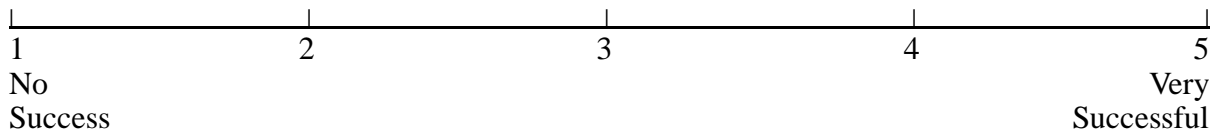
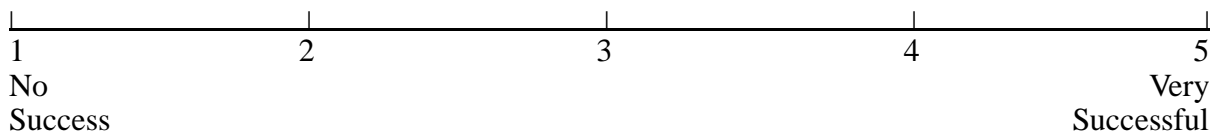
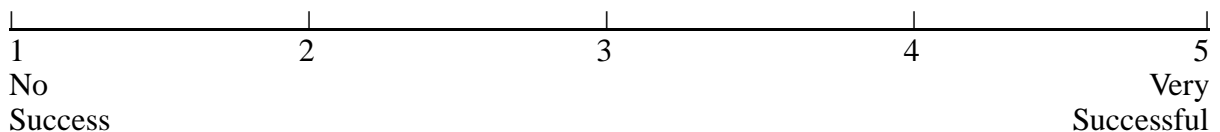
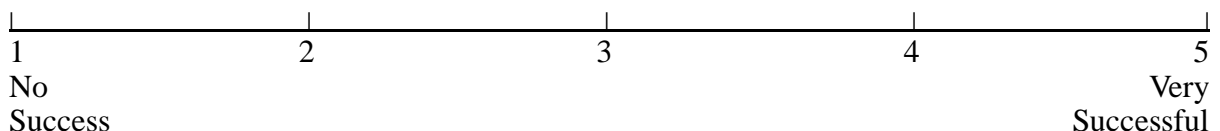
3. List three positive, calming scenes that you could place in your mind to replace the obsessive thought (e.g., sunning yourself all alone on a warm beach, fishing on a quiet lake as the sun sets).

Scene 1:

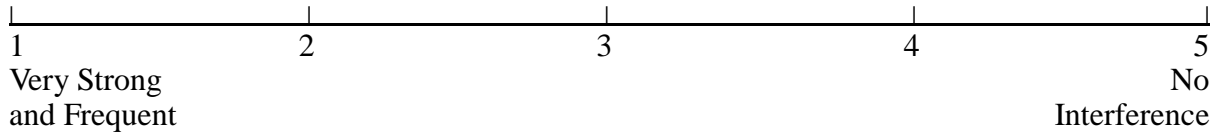
Scene 2:

Scene 3:

4. Over the next week, each time that the obsessive thought occurs, shout “STOP!” to yourself in your head without making a sound. Picture a large red traffic sign, and then begin to think about one of the calming scenes from the previous question, while breathing deeply and relaxing your muscle tension. Rate on a daily basis the degree of your success at implementing this technique to stop and replace the obsessive thought.

Day 1:**Day 2:****Day 3:****Day 4:****Day 5:****Day 6:****Day 7:**

5. Rate again the degree of interference of the obsessive thought on your normal routine after implementing this technique for a week.



6. Describe any anxiety reduction that has occurred as a result of implementing this assignment with its calming scenes and relaxing muscle tension. Then rate the degree of anxiety reduction you have experienced.

