
EXERCISE: COSTS OF ANXIETY MANAGEMENT

1. Interpersonal costs

Summarize the effects of struggling with your WAFs on your relationships. Have friendships changed or been lost? Have family members been alienated? Do they avoid you, or do you avoid them? Have you lost a marriage or romantic relationship due to worry, anxiety, or fear? Or have you missed out on new social bonds because of fear, dread, or an unwillingness to trust because of past trauma? Are you unable to engage in your roles as a spouse, partner, or parent because of those pesky WAFs?

2. Career costs

Summarize the effects of struggling with anxiety on your career. Have you ever quit or been fired from a job because of attempts to get a handle on your anxiety and fear? This includes being late, being less productive, missing days of work, being unable to travel, avoiding tasks where WAFs might show up, skipping out on business and social interactions with colleagues and customers, or procrastination. Has a boss or have coworkers commented on your poor performance because of your anxiety management efforts? Have those efforts affected your school career (relationships with teachers, administrators)? Have they resulted in unemployment or being on disability or welfare?

3. Health costs

Describe the effects of managing your worry, anxiety, and fear on your health. Do you tend to get sick often? Do you have difficulties falling asleep and staying asleep? Do you sometimes ruminate and stew over anxiety and worry to the point of feeling sick or keyed up? Do you avoid taking care of your health because of your WAFs (e.g., avoid going to the doctor, having tests done, visiting a dentist)? Do you avoid exercise because it might bring on your WAFs? Have you spent quite a bit of time in the doctor's office or emergency room for your WAFs?

4. Energy costs

Outline how managing your anxiety has affected your energy. Do those efforts sometimes exhaust you? Have you put time and energy into disappointing efforts at WAF control? Are you often engaged in mental planning and fact finding in an effort to ward off

or minimize your WAFs? Do you waste mental energy on worry, stress, fretting over distractions, checking, and negative thinking? Have you experienced difficulties with memory or concentration? Are you constantly reliving painful moments from your past, or feeling trapped in the doom and gloom your mind feeds you about the future? Do you spend needless time checking or performing rituals to feel more comfortable or to ward off catastrophe? Have your attempts to manage anxiety left you feeling discouraged, fatigued, frustrated, or worn out?

5. Emotional costs

What have efforts to get a handle on anxiety cost you emotionally? Do you feel sad or depressed about your WAFs? Have you tended to be on edge, perhaps exploding in anger in times of stress? Do you carry regrets and guilt because of what you have done or failed to do as a result of your WAFs? How do regrets about your WAF episodes affect you emotionally? Do you feel depressed or hopeless when your efforts to control anxiety aren't working? Do you feel as though life is passing you by?

6. Financial costs

How much money have you spent on managing your WAFs? Consider money you've spent on psychotherapy for your WAFs and related difficulties (e.g., depression, anger, alcoholism). How about the cost of medications, doctor's visits, anxiety books, audio or video recordings, or seminars? See if you can come up with a reasonable estimate of these monetary costs. You can include costs due to disability, lost wages, expenses related to missing important and enjoyable events (e.g., concerts, plane trips, dinners out), and missed work because of your WAFs too.

7. Costs to freedom

How have your efforts to control WAFs limited your ability to do what you enjoy and want to do? Can you drive near and far, with or without others? Can you shop, take a train or plane, or go for a walk in your neighborhood, the park, a mall, or a forest? Do the WAFs keep you from trying new foods, new activities, new forms of recreation, experiencing your dreams, and doing what you care about? Is your day arranged around avoiding feeling anxious, panicky, or afraid?
