The Uncertainty Practice Plan

Learning to make room for not knowing everything

Checking, seeking reassurance or avoiding can bring quick relief from not knowing, but the relief rarely lasts, and the urge to be certain often grows stronger. This plan helps you practise tolerating uncertainty in small, manageable steps, rather than trying to remove it.

PRACTISING, A STRETCH AT A TIME
from everyday uncertainties to more personal ones



YOUR HEADLIGHTS
You don't need to see the whole road to keep moving, only the next stretch.

01 My plan

one situation at a time; start where it feels manageable

NOTICE
Where certainty pulls

1 What situation makes uncertainty difficult for me?

2 What do I feel compelled to resolve?

3 What checking, avoidance or reassurance-seeking follows?

☐ checking ☐ searching online ☐ asking for reassurance ☐ re-reading ☐ avoiding ☐ over-planning

PLAN
A small stretch of road

4 What uncertainty could I safely practise allowing?

5 What would a small first step look like?
when, where, and for how long

PRACTISE
Meeting the urge

6 What urge might arise?
to check, ask, search, fix or avoid

7 How could I respond without automatically acting on it?
"I notice the urge to check. I can wait."

Discomfort before _____ /10

REVIEW
What the road showed me

8 What did I learn from the experience?
what happened, how the discomfort changed, and how I coped

Discomfort afterwards _____ /10 · Next stretch I could try: _____

Keep it safe and sensible
Choose practice that suits you. It should never involve ignoring medical concerns, genuine responsibilities or necessary safety measures. Some uncertainty is best resolved, and that's fine.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SUGGESTS
Difficulty tolerating uncertainty is closely linked to worry and generalised anxiety (Dugas et al., 1998), and is now seen as a common thread across many anxiety-related difficulties (Carleton, 2016). Practising gradual, planned contact with uncertainty is one way to build tolerance for it.

SOURCES

Carleton, R. N. (2016). Into the unknown: A review and synthesis of contemporary models involving uncertainty. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 39, 30–43.

Dugas, M. J., Gagnon, F., Ladouceur, R., & Freeston, M. H. (1998). Generalized anxiety disorder: A preliminary test of a conceptual model. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 36(2), 215–226.

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