Perfectionism Group Session 5 (probably need 2-5 sessions to complete). This is the meat of the group.

1. Assessment
2. Review thought record homework
3. Practice challenging perfectionistic thought on board
4. Doing vs avoiding doing wksht
5. ID specific perfectionism behavior want to change
6. Explain behavioral experiments
7. ID what behavioral experiment you want to test
8. Homework: behavioral experiment

Note: In an outpatient setting instead of just picking one behavioral experiment to try you may want to build a hierarchy, explain subjective units of distress, and work through the hierarchy. In a PHP setting you may only be able to try one behavioral experiment (the idea is to at least have patients understand what a behavioral experiment is and why it is important). I have attached materials for both.

I have also attached a list of mistake practice that participants can use as behavioral experiments.

The SUDS Scale

|_____|

0	25	50	75	100
No anxiety Complete calm “relaxing on vacation”	A little “edge” Not bothersome “Ready to go” Anxiety is noticeable	Anxiety bothers you Starts to interfere You would like to reduce the anxiety	Anxiety really bothers you You think about leaving Very interfering	The most anxiety you’ve ever felt or could imagine feeling

You can use any number between 0 and 100.

The anchors above are descriptions to give you a sense of the scale.

Intentional Mistake Practice List

1. Trip in front of someone.
2. Pay for something with the incorrect amount of money.
3. Drop something (for example, a fork, a coin, your glasses) in front of others.
4. Order something that isn't on the menu.
5. Greet someone by the wrong name.
6. Ask for directions to a store, department, etc., in which you are already located.
7. Have your hand tremble when paying for something.
8. Take more than the allowed number of items allowed to try on in a clothing store.
9. Underestimate the size of your feet to the shoe salesperson.
10. Have some part of your clothing appear inappropriate such as a label showing, shirt-tail out, mismatched socks, uncoordinated clothes.
11. Ask for an item that obviously is not carried by the store you are in.
12. Ask an obvious customer for information as if he or she worked at the store.
13. Ask for information or directions and then request that the answer be repeated.
14. Ask a question of someone and either stutter or speak with an unusual accent or tone.
15. Attempt to purchase something without having your cash or credit card with you.
16. Purchase something at Wal-Mart and attempt to pay with your Target card.
17. Approach and almost enter the wrong restroom in a public place.
18. Hum or sing so loud that others can hear you.

19. Order an item and change your mind at least twice.
20. Greet or say something to someone across the room at a volume that is noticed by the other people there.
21. Enter a door inappropriately (push when you are supposed to pull or vice versa), push on a door that is locked, try to open the hinged side of a door, etc.
22. Buy something that you would ordinarily be embarrassed to purchase.
23. Walk against the flow of traffic, stop suddenly, or in some other way bring attention to your self by how you are walking through the mall.
24. Have yourself paged on a public address system.
25. Bump into something.
26. Tell a store clerk that you've lost something and ask if it's been found.

Exposure Hierarchy

Instructions: In the first column list about 10 situations related to your phobic object or situation, ranging in difficulty from extremely difficult to only mildly difficult. In the second column, rate the extent to which each of these situations would trigger anxiety or fear (0 = no anxiety or fear, 100 = maximum anxiety or fear). List the items in order of difficulty, with the most difficult items listed near the top, and the least difficult items listed near the bottom.

Situations	Anxiety (0–100)

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Perfectionism in Perspective

Module 5

Reducing My Perfectionism Behaviours

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Introduction

In the last module you thought about the pros and cons of remaining a perfectionist and the advantages and disadvantages of loosening up your perfectionist standards. You identified an area of your life where you wish to start challenging your perfectionism, and chose a specific goal to work on throughout these modules. You were given some coping tips and asked to identify possible obstacles to your staying on track. Reducing your perfectionism behaviours is an important next step. In this module we will introduce some strategies for reducing perfectionism behaviours and we will encourage you to conduct some experiments to test out your beliefs and fears. The next module will focus more on your perfectionistic thinking styles.

Perfectionism Behaviours

As we have seen, in an attempt to meet unrelenting high standards, perfectionists tend to engage in a number of perfectionism behaviours (e.g., repeatedly checking work for mistakes). Just as thoughts influence our feelings and our behaviours, behaviours also often serve to maintain perfectionistic beliefs. Perfectionism behaviours keep you from learning whether or not your perfectionistic beliefs are true. For example, a person who has difficulty delegating tasks to colleagues may hold the belief that this is necessary to maintain their high standards in the work place. By continuing to *not* delegate work, the perfectionist is unable to test our whether their beliefs are accurate. One way to test the accuracy of perfectionistic beliefs is to see what happens when you behave differently. For example, you might delegate a task to a colleague and see whether it is completed to an adequate standard.

Perfectionism behaviours can be divided into two categories - the things you *do* as a result of your perfectionism and the things you *avoid doing* as a result of your perfectionism.

Perfectionism behaviours – *Doing*

Most perfectionists engage in actions aimed at reaching the unrelenting standards they have set for themselves, and perhaps others. They are so concerned about reaching these high standards that they engage in behaviours that they see as necessary but that would often seem excessive to other people. Examples include: excessive checking, excessive organising and list making, and correcting others.

What perfectionism behaviours of the '*doing*' kind do you engage in?

Perfectionism Behaviours – *Avoiding doing*

Many perfectionists also attempt to meet their unrelenting standards and avoid 'failure' by *avoiding doing* tasks. Although this may not seem like perfectionism, it is really the other side of the same coin as engaging in actions aimed at meeting your unrelenting standards. When perfectionists fear that they will not be able to reach their high standards, they may be too afraid of failure to try. Some may procrastinate by putting off a task, often indefinitely, while others will wait to the last minute before doing a task. Some perfectionists will not even attempt to do a task if they think they won't be able to do to it to an adequate standard.

What perfectionism behaviours of the '*avoiding doing*' kind do you engage in?

Working towards Goals

We have some strategies to prepare you for changing your perfectionism behaviours successfully. To remind you: we have suggested that you work on one goal area and one specific goal at a time. This is not a race! You have probably been a perfectionist for many years, so it is worth taking a deep breath and following the steps we outline, to prepare yourself for working on your goal. We know it will be tempting for some perfectionists to jump straight into achieving their goals and 'doing it perfectly', and others who might be tempted to procrastinate because they fear 'failure'. So we have devised some steps to take, to make it more likely that you will achieve your goal and feel good about yourself.

Look back to Page 6 of the previous module, and write in the specific goal you set yourself:

My Plan

Perfectionism behaviour I will be working on:	
Specific goal towards reducing this perfectionism behaviour:	
Time frame:	

Building stepladders

It is important that you start with a relatively easy task. Remember, loosening up your unrelenting standards involves becoming 'less perfect' and this might be quite difficult for you. It might help if you first tackle a task that you feel is manageable and then later you can build up to a harder task. For example, someone who feels compelled to scrub the kitchen counters several times a day with bleach might start with only using bleach once a day, and build up to only using bleach once a week.

You need to break down each goal into small steps, like steps on a ladder leading towards your main goal. The number of steps depends on how stressful a particular goal is. A high-challenge goal will need more steps than a medium-challenge goal. Below is an example of building a stepladder. Overleaf is some space for you to complete the steps for your own goal listed above.

Peter had chosen to reduce his checking, although he was worried that he would miss something serious. He decided to do this in steps, giving him the chance, for a few weeks, to correct anything he had missed after his first check.

Stepladder for Goal (Peter's Example)

GOAL: *I will aim to check my work only once*

	STEP
1	*Check my work twice - and then once again when I've completed the whole job - for two weeks*
2	*Check my work only once - and then once again when I've completed the whole job - for two weeks*
3	*Check my work only once*

Remember, your stepladder might have more or fewer steps depending on how difficult the challenge is. You can also include more 'in-between' steps if you think the jump between one step and the next is too big. You can break goals into smaller steps by changing WHO is there, WHAT you do, WHEN you do it, WHERE you do it, and HOW long you do it for.

Stepladder for My Goal

GOAL:

	STEP

Completing a Step on the Stepladder

So, you've selected a goal that you want to work on first and identified some steps that will help you achieve that goal. Where do you go from here? Let's have a look at how you can prepare for reducing your perfectionism behaviours – even *before* you take the first step. Make an appointment with yourself to take the first step. By setting a date, time, and place you are making a commitment to yourself to begin the process of change. Here are a few points that will help you to complete each step successfully:

Expect some anxiety. Remember that you'll probably experience some anxiety - at any step. That's why it's important to start small and work your way up. This gives you the chance to adapt to that level of anxiety, so that you aren't overwhelmed by higher levels of distress. After all, the only way to get used to those feelings and your fears is by facing them.

Persist. It might be tempting to resort to your perfectionism behaviours if you feel uncomfortable. Keep going until the anxiety reduces so you can see that, as scary as the feelings are, they are not dangerous and they do subside. If you give in just as the level of anxiety reaches its highest point, it may be more difficult to accomplish the same step the next time. On each attempt, you should 'keep on keeping on'.

Use your skills. It may seem that there is a lot to remember. Use the coping tips from Module 4.

Climbing the Stepladder

OK, so now that you have some tips on how to get through one step, how do you keep moving upwards? Here are some guidelines for how t continue to climb each step to reach your goal.

One step at a time. Climbing a stepladder is not about taking a giant leap. You begin with the least difficult step and work your way up. With each step your anxiety may get higher, but you also get used to the anxiety at each step. Your aim at each step is to complete that step alone.

Over and over again. Do a step frequently and repeatedly, and try to do each in close succession to make sure you are comfortable with the situation before you move onto the next step. It might take 3 or 4

times. If you only enter a situation once, you might convince yourself that it was luck or a fluke. If you can, repeat them in a short period of time so that you can get used to the situation more quickly and become comfortable. This helps to build up the evidence for when you are disputing any unhelpful thoughts (see Module 6).

Use your skills. That's right – use your skills again! Work through any unhelpful thoughts about the situation after you have completed or repeated a step. Allow yourself to unwind with a relaxation session.

Acknowledge the steps you've made. When you are comfortable with a particular step, recognise your successes and acknowledge the steps that you've made so far.

Stepbacks. Some days you might think might you've taken a 'stepback' because the behavioural experiment didn't go as well as you'd hoped. That's why it's important to do a step over and over until you are comfortable with it.

Troubleshooting stepbacks. If you think that a situation hasn't gone as well as you hoped, or you've taken a step backwards, there are a number of things you can do:

- Use a Thought Diary as a way of challenging any unhelpful thoughts might arise (see Module 6).
- Set a time and date to try the step again (remember – over and over).
- If you have tried it a few times and you still find it too distressing, you may find it useful to create an 'in-between' step, by planning another step that is slightly less distressing.
- You may find it helpful to go back and repeat the previous step. If it has been a while since you've completed a behavioural experiment, or if you weren't completely comfortable with the previous step, you may need extra experiments to make sure you are ready for the next step. You might think of these as 'refreshers' in the same way that people take 'refresher courses' to bring them up to speed.

Behavioural Experiments

Now that you've decided on a reasonable goal and you've planned the steps you'll take to reach that goal, it is time to experiment with new behaviours. **Behavioural Experiments** help loosen the grip of your perfectionism and help you reach your goal by allowing you to test out your perfectionistic beliefs to see how accurate they are. This is like a scientist doing an experiment, and you are going to be the scientist. You will be asked to change your perfectionism behaviours in order to test out how accurate your thoughts and expectations really are.

It may be that you need to experiment by tackling tasks that you have been *avoiding doing* (e.g., procrastination) or it may be that you need to experiment with <u>not</u> *doing* your perfectionism behaviours (e.g., checking).

It might seem unusual to be asked to reduce a behaviour when you have a long-standing belief that this behaviour helps you reach your high standards or to be asked to start doing something when you are afraid that you will not be able to do it 'perfectly'. Behavioural experiments give you the chance to test out whether your beliefs are accurate by experimenting with changing your perfectionism behaviours. This is important if you are going to interrupt the vicious cycle of perfectionism.

Here are some typical perfectionism behaviours and some beliefs or predictions that might go with them. In the last column we suggest how we might test out the belief, using a Behavioural Experiment.

Belief/prediction	Perfectionism Behaviour	Behavioural Experiment
If I don't leave so early I'd arrive late and it would be terrible and they'd think badly of me	Arriving early to appointments (by leaving 30 minutes before I need to)	Leave only 15 minutes before I need to and see if I get arrive on time
If I delegate the tasks to the secretary, she might get the pages of the report in the wrong order	Staying late to do the photocopying because I don't trust the secretary	Delegate the photocopying, the day before I need the report, so I can look it over and see if the pages are in the right order
I believe that any weight gain will ruin my day	Never weighing myself	Weigh myself once a day and make a note of this. At the end of the day make a note of my mood, on a 1-10 score. See if there's any connection.
If they don't say they like my cooking, it means they hate it	Needing everyone to compliment my meal	Ask them not to give me any compliments, and then ask them to rate the meal on a scale of 1-10.
I might choose a restaurant that is terrible	Finding it so hard to choose a restaurant that I never get out	Write a short-list of possible restaurants and stick a pin in one. Try it to see if I like it.
I will fail on any 'healthy eating plan' because there's always a party or a dinner and I'll overeat	Delaying starting a 'healthy eating plan'	Develop a healthy eating plan which allows for exceptions such as parties

Guidelines

Here are some guidelines on how to complete a Behavioural Experiment. Overleaf you will find examples of a 'Doing' Behavioural Experiment and an 'Avoiding' Behavioural Experiment (Peter's). On Page 9 there is a blank Behavioural Experiment sheet for you to practise on.

You will first be asked to **Identify Your Belief.** First you need to choose an unhelpful belief or thought that you are willing to test. Make a prediction; ask yourself: "What will happen if my belief is true?" and rate the strength of this belief between 0 and 100%.

You will then be ready to **Conduct the Experiment** to test out the belief. How will you test the accuracy of your prediction? You will need to plan an experiment, thinking of the specific things you will do to test your prediction. Carry out the experiment and record what happened. Describe what actually happened. Rate your distress before, during and after carrying out the experiment (0-10).

The last step is to **Develop a Balanced Belief**. Reflect on your experiment. Compare your prediction with what actually happened and think about what you have learned. As a result, develop a more balanced belief, which is more helpful than your old fear.

It is important to note that not everything we think is inaccurate, or has no grain of truth to it. However, we often blindly believe our attitudes, thoughts, and expectations even when they are unhelpful to us. We rarely step back to question our predictions or test them out. This is a habit that is important to break. However, should your predictions be partially supported, which may happen at times, it will be important to ask yourself some questions about this. Ask yourself: *Is there another explanation for what happened? What else was happening at that time? Are there other ways of viewing what happened? What could I learn from the experience to improve or change things in the future?*

Now, it's time for you to do an experiment. Look at the examples on the next two pages to help you plan an experiment, and use the worksheet on Page 9 to test your perfectionistic beliefs in order to see how accurate your predictions really are. You can use this blank worksheet to carry out several Behavioural Experiments. You can do an experiment on each of the steps you identified on Page 4.

Behavioural Experiment
(Peter's example of 'Doing')

Step 1: Identify a belief/prediction

Write down a perfectionistic belief to be tested. What do you **do** or **avoid doing** as a result of this belief? Ask yourself, "what do I expect will happen if my belief is true?"

If I don't check my work three times I believe I might miss something serious

How much do I believe it will happen, from 0 to 100? *90%*

Step 2: Testing the belief

Where, when and how will I test my prediction? This will involve reducing your perfectionism behaviour (**doing** something you've been avoiding or **not doing** something you've been doing).

I'll start by checking my work twice after each task and then once at the end of the day.

Rate level of distress BEFORE carrying out the experiment, from 1-10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 X 9 10

Step 3: Carry out the experiment

Rate level of distress DURING the experiment, from 1-10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 X 9 10

Step 4: Evaluate the results

What actually happened?

It was hard to stop checking more than twice and I got anxious that I was missing something but after checking at the end of the whole job I never found I'd missed anything serious

How much did my prediction come true (0-100%)? *15%*

Rate level of distress AFTER carrying out the experiment, from 1-10

1 2 X 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 5: Conclusions

What did I learn from this experiment? What do the results say about my original prediction? As a result of this experiment, what belief or thought would be more accurate and helpful?

I was really surprised that I was able to do it. It helped that I didn't miss anything those first two weeks - that helped me move on to the next step, which is to check only once after each task, then once after the job is finished. At this point I can say that I only need to check twice - and that's an improvement!

Behavioural Experiment
(Peter's example of 'Avoiding Doing')

Step 1: Identify a belief/prediction

Write down a perfectionistic belief to be tested. What do you **do** or **avoid doing** as a result of this belief? Ask yourself "what do I expect will happen if my belief is true?"

If I start my paperwork, I will feel overwhelmed and I will find out that I owe a huge amount of tax.

How much do I believe it will happen, from 0 to 100? *90%*

Step 2: Testing the belief

Where, when and how will I test my prediction? This will involve reducing your perfectionism behaviour (**doing** something you've been avoiding or **not doing** something you've been doing).

I will spend four hours each Saturday morning for the next 4 weeks, clearing the backlog of my paperwork

Rate level of distress BEFORE carrying out the experiment, from 1-10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (X)

Step 3: Carry out the experiment

Rate level of distress DURING the experiment, from 1-10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (X)

Step 4: Evaluate the results

What actually happened?

I spent a whole month doing my paperwork and I got it organised and filed and I only owe a small amount of taxes

How much did my prediction come true (0-100%)? *10%*

Rate level of distress AFTER carrying out the experiment, from 1-10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (X)

Step 5: Conclusions

What did I learn from this experiment? What do the results say about my original prediction? As a result of this experiment, what belief or thought would be more accurate and helpful?

I am so relieved. Now my paperwork is in order and I've done my taxes. It's hard to imagine why I procrastinated so long.

My Behavioural Experiment

Step 1: Identify a belief/prediction

Write down a perfectionistic belief to be tested. What do you **do** or **avoid doing** as a result of this belief. Ask yourself "what do I expect will happen if my belief is true?"
How much do I believe it will happen, from 0 to 100?

Step 2: Testing the belief

Where, when and how will I test my prediction? This will involve reducing your perfectionism behaviour (**doing** something you've been avoiding or **not doing** something you've been doing).
Rate level of distress BEFORE carrying out the experiment, from 1-10 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 3: Carry out the experiment

Rate level of distress DURING the experiment, from 1-10 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 4: Evaluate the results

What actually happened?
How much did my prediction come true (0-100%)?
Rate level of distress AFTER carrying out the experiment, from 1-10 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 5: Conclusions

What did I learn from this experiment? What do the results say about my original prediction? As a result of this experiment, what belief or thought would be more accurate and helpful?

Rolling the dice: Learning to relax and be spontaneous

Earlier we mentioned that one of the problems with being a perfectionist is the inability to relax and unwind. Perfectionists often say they have difficulty doing things spontaneously as they have their whole day planned out in advance, trying to fit everything in. Some perfectionists might say that there is no time for relaxation or that they don't need to relax. It is important to remember that if we don't allow our bodies to recover from stress through relaxation then our physical health is compromised as well as our relationships with other people. It is now time to learn how to relax and to be just a little bit more spontaneous. Think of this as a different kind of Behavioural Experiment. Have fun!

Materials you will need

1 dice

Steps to relaxation ("rolling the dice")

1. List 6 activities below that might give you a sense of relaxation or pleasure. Try to think of activities that you do not usually allow yourself to do (e.g., catch up with a friend for a drink after work, tint your eyelashes, treat yourself to something nice, go to a football game, watch a sunset) and that are reasonable in terms of their cost and time-frame (e.g., going on an overseas trip might be costly and hard to achieve in a small time frame but planning a holiday might be manageable and enjoyable).

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____
   4. _____
   5. _____
   6. _____

2. Pick a day over the next week to try out one of these activities. Allow enough time to complete the activity in a relaxed manner. I plan to relax on: _____ *(day)* at: _____*(time)*

3. Now roll the dice. You will get a number between 1 and 6.
   What number did you roll? _____
   What activity did you write next to that number in Step 2? _____

4. On your relaxation day (see Step 2) the final step is to do the activity listed in Step 3.

   A word of warning: You might be tempted to roll the dice again or to change your planned relaxation day. You might even give yourself permission to do these things (*e.g., I am too busy today, that activity is a waste of time, I'll do it later*). These types of thoughts will get in the way of you overcoming your perfectionism. It is important that you stick to the plan and have a really good go at learning to relax and engage in activities that are not achievement-based.

5. Final review: How did you go with this task? What difficulties did you have? What positives did you notice during this task? How could you include more relaxation and activities that are not focused on achievement in your day-to-day activities?

_____
_____
_____
_____

A final note: Most people tell us that this is a fun way to learn to relax but it does take practise. You will get the most benefit from this exercise if you repeat it several times. Try doing it once a week or once a fortnight. You may wish to add new activities into your activities list. Most importantly, remember that relaxation is a very difficult task for a perfectionist so congratulate yourself for any attempts you make!

Join us in the next module where we help you challenge your perfectionistic thinking.

Module Summary

- Perfectionism behaviours are behaviours that people engage in with the goal of maintaining their unrelenting high standards
- Perfectionism behaviours play a role in maintaining perfectionism because they stop you from learning whether or not your perfectionstic beliefs are accurate
- Perfectionism behaviours can be divided into two categories - the things you *do* as a result of your perfectionism and the things you *avoid doing* as a result of your perfectionism.
- It is important to choose a specific goal to work on when planning how to reduce your perfectionism behaviours. Planning goals involves breaking the goal into smaller, more achievable steps.
- Behavioural Experiments can be used to test whether your perfectionistic beliefs are accurate.
- Behavioural experiments involve selecting a perfectionist belief to challenge, identifying the perfectionism behaviour you engage in (or avoid doing) as a result of this belief, and conducting an experiment to see what happens if you behave differently, even though this may be anxiety-provoking.
- Another way to reduce perfectionism is to focus on less achievement-oriented tasks, such as experimenting with relaxation and engaging in pleasurable activities.

What I Have Learned in this Module

Think about what you have learned in this module and any useful bits of information, tips or strategies that you want to remember. Write them down below so you can refer to them later.

Think about how you might use the information you have just learned. Write down some ways in which you could make use of this information.

Coming Up...

In Module 6 (Challenging My Perfectionistic Thinking) we will be showing you ways of changing the perfectionistic thoughts that keep your perfectionism going.

About this Module

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BACKGROUND

The concepts and strategies in this module have been developed from evidence-based psychological treatment, primarily Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). CBT for perfectionism is based on the approach that perfectionism is the result of problematic cognitions (thoughts) and behaviours.

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perfectionism behaviours

A hallmark of perfectionism is the tendency to judge your self worth largely on your ability to achieve high standards. To meet their unrelenting high standards, perfectionists tend to engage in a number of perfectionism behaviours (e.g., repeatedly checking work for mistakes), which may serve to maintain perfectionistic beliefs.

Perfectionism Behaviours

Perfectionism behaviours can be divided into two categories - the things you ***actively do*** as a result of your perfectionism and the things you ***avoid doing*** as a result of your perfectionism.

Perfectionism Active Behaviours

Most perfectionists engage in actions aimed at reaching the unrelenting standards they have set for themselves, and perhaps others. They are so concerned about reaching these high standards that they engage in behaviours that they see as necessary but that often seem excessive to other people. Examples include:

- ◊ Excessive checking,
- ◊ Excessive organising,
- ◊ List making,
- ◊ Correcting others.

Perfectionism Avoidance Behaviours

Many perfectionists also attempt to meet their unrelenting standards and avoid 'failure' by *avoiding doing* tasks. Although this may not seem like perfectionism, it is really the other side of the same coin as engaging in actions aimed at meeting your unrelenting standards. When perfectionists fear that they will not be able to reach their high standards, they may be too afraid of failure to try. Some may procrastinate by putting off a task, often indefinitely, while others will wait to the last minute before doing a task. Other examples include:

- ◊ Giving up too soon,
- ◊ Indecisiveness,
- ◊ Avoiding tasks you fear you are unable to do adequately.

How these Behaviours maintain Perfectionism

Perfectionism behaviours keep you from learning whether or not your perfectionistic beliefs are true. For example, a person who has difficulty delegating tasks to colleagues may hold the belief that this is necessary to maintain their high standards in the work place. By continuing to *not* delegate work, the perfectionist is unable to test our whether their beliefs are accurate.

Perfectionism Behaviours can also be problematic in that: they are often time consuming; they are sometimes done at the expense of other important activities; they can impair relationships; and sometimes can actually interfere with attempts to meet the standard set.

Reducing Perfectionism Behaviours*

One way to test the accuracy of perfectionistic beliefs is to see what happens when you behave differently.

Stepladders Towards Change

- ◊ Choose a specific goal behaviour to change,
- ◊ Break the goal down into small steps by changing <u>who</u> is there, <u>what</u> you do, <u>when</u> you do it, <u>where</u> you do it, and <u>how</u> long you do it for.
- ◊ Complete each step, one at a time, beginning with the least difficult and working your way up.
- ◊ Do a step frequently and repeatedly, to make sure you are comfortable with it before you move on.

Behavioural Experiments

Behavioural Experiments help loosen the grip of your perfectionism and test out the accuracy of your perfectionistic beliefs by seeing what happens when you change your perfectionism behaviours.

We encourage you to try reducing your perfectionism behaviours. You may be pleasantly surprised at how much more time you have, and how little it affects your performance!

*For more detailed information regarding the use of these techniques see Perfectionism in Perspective Module 5.

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