

Module 7: inflated responsibility

- ▶ In many people with OCD, there is an inflated sense of responsibility, even for negative events beyond one's influence.
- ▶ People with OCD often have "double standards": They often hold themselves to higher moral standards than others. They are much stricter with themselves than with others

Aim: Critically question your standards of judgement

- ▶ Do the same standards apply to others as to yourself?
- ▶ If not, why do you, of all people, need to be judged particularly harshly?
Why do you have more responsibility than others?
- ▶ Be a friend to yourself! Try saying to yourself what you would tell a good friend in a similar situation

Exercise 1:

Questioning standards of judgement. Find out if you set a higher bar for yourself than for others. Imagine the following mishap, then answer the questions and note your answers in the table.

Example

„Mishap“	Pickpocket stole my wallet
What I tell myself/think about myself:	"Terrible. I'm so stupid, that's so careless of me."
What I would say to a good friend:	"It's not so bad, it can happen to anyone."

Own example:

„Mishap“	
What I tell myself/think about myself:	
What I would say to a good friend:	

You may be hard on yourself and uncompassionate, but comfort your friend and give good reasons why the mishap is forgivable.

In the case of future, actual or alleged misconduct, try saying to yourself something you would say to a good friend in a similar situation.

Attribution

- ▶ People with an inflated sense of responsibility look for the causes predominantly within themselves and get stuck on these causes, which makes them ruminate about their own (alleged) misconduct and unable to consider additional causes
- ▶ Events rarely have only one cause. Usually, several factors are involved in the occurrence of events or situations
- ▶ These include unexpected external circumstances or coincidences. Other people also often play an important role (i.e., may also be responsible)

Aim: Consciously take a different approach!

- ▶ Using a pie chart, consider how much is due to other possible causes, such as other people, external situations, or chance. Fill in your share only after that. This helps put your role and responsibility in this situation into perspective

Exercise 2:

- ▶ Pick a typical example from your experiences regarding your OCD
- ▶ Start with circumstances/coincidences and others! Not with yourself. Identify as many contributing factors as possible

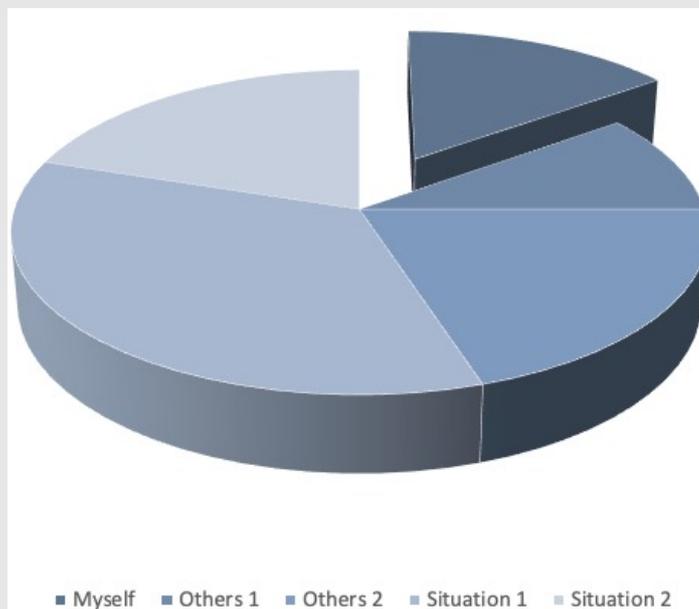
Fill in "pie pieces" below: Measure the size depending on how influential the share of circumstances/coincidences, others and yourself is in the occurrence of a certain (feared) event

Possible causes:

Circumstances/
coincidences:

Others:

Myself:



Accurate responsibility

Adequate responsibility does not mean no longer looking for responsibility in yourself, but to do so accurately and fairly

- ▶ Those who attribute too much responsibility to themselves become anxious, overcautious and begin to avoid situations. This contributes to OCD symptoms
- ▶ Learn to delegate responsibility and do not absorb others' share of responsibility

Exercise 3:

Consider a balanced explanation for how the example selected in Exercise 2 could have occurred:

Notes

Space for unanswered questions or problems that have come up or experiences that you would like to talk about in the next session:

Other notes:
