

Worksheet

Professional Version | US English

Therapy Blueprint For Panic



Description

A therapy blueprint is a CBT tool which summarizes the work a therapist and patient have completed together. Patients can be encouraged to think of it as ‘the first session of the rest of your life’. Therapy blueprints are one way to help clients reflect on what they have learned during therapy. They act as a way of promoting resilience by reinforcing what has been learned. Therapy blueprints also act as a form of relapse prevention – by making new knowledge more accessible, clients are more able to cope effectively with future setbacks.

The structure of a good therapy blueprint mirrors the process of therapy itself. Suggested areas for exploration include:

- **Assessment.** What were the problems? How did they develop?
- **Formulation.** What kept the problems going? Why did they not get better naturally? Were there any strategies with unintended consequences?
- **Treatment.** What new knowledge and skills did you develop? What techniques were practiced?
- **Reflection on progress.** What can you do now? Looking back (past goals), looking forward (current goals).
- **Relapse prevention.** What obstacles and setbacks can you foresee? How will you cope? What helpful strategies might you implement?

Another helpful way of conceptualizing the therapy blueprint is to think of how it represents the past (the problems, what maintained them), the present (the therapy itself, new knowledge learned and skills developed), and the future (goals, plans, and strategies to manage setbacks). Therapists will find it helpful to introduce the therapy blueprint prior to the final session, and as early as the client is willing.

The *Therapy Blueprint For Panic* is a relapse prevention worksheet tailored for clients who are completing a course of therapy for panic attacks or panic disorder. It encourages a particular focus on client’s responses to unwanted body sensations.

Instructions

Suggested Introduction



A therapy blueprint is a helpful way to look back over therapy, reflect on what you have learned, and think about what has been important to you. We want to catch it now while it's fresh in your mind. People often find that a therapy blueprint is a helpful reminder, once therapy is over, of things that they know are helpful for them. It's also a helpful way for us to reflect on what skills it might be important for you to keep practicing, to plan for triggers and things that might be difficult for you, and for us to set some goals for the future.

References

Wells, A. (1997). *Cognitive therapy of anxiety disorders: A practice manual and conceptual guide*. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Therapy Blueprint For Panic

A therapy blueprint is a space for you to reflect on how your difficulties developed, what kept them going, and what you learned during therapy. It can help you to plan how you are going to maintain the gains that you have made, review what warning signs you might need to remain aware of, and remember what you might find helpful should it feel like your difficulties are ever beginning to return.

The problems

What situations would make you panic?

What were you most worried about?

What kept them going?

Why did the panic not get better on its own?

What coping strategies were you using?

Consider: avoidance, safety-seeking behaviors, unhelpful beliefs.

Knowledge and skills

How has therapy helped you to deal with your panic? What have you learned about panic that has been helpful?

What strategies or techniques did you learn? (e.g. challenging my thinking, facing my fears, testing my beliefs)

Describe any behavioral experiments that you conducted: What beliefs did you test? What did you discover?

What exposure exercises did you practice and what did you learn?

Therapy Blueprint For Panic

How I think about my body sensations now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Body sensation

What body sensations used to concern you the most?

How I interpreted them *then*

Before therapy, what did you think body sensations like this meant?

How I interpret them *now*

How do you interpret this kind of body sensation now?

How I think differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger strong feelings. Compare your thinking patterns before therapy and now: How did you interpret these situations then? What do these events mean to you now?

Situation

What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?

How I thought *then*

Before therapy, what kind of thoughts did you have in response to situations like this?

How I think *now*

How do you interpret this kind of event now?

How I do things differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Situation

What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?

How I responded *then*

Before therapy, how did you react when situations like this occurred?

How I respond *now*

What do you do if this kind of event happens now?

Therapy Blueprint For Panic

How far I have come & my goals for the future

What have you achieved so far?

How are you going to build on your achievements?

Setbacks and obstacles

What could cause a setback and how would you deal with it?

What obstacles do you anticipate might be challenging?

What would you do if you had another panic attack?

Message to my future self

If you could send a message to your future self (something you would not want to forget) what would it be?

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The problems

What situations would make you panic?

What were you most worried about?

I would panic whenever I had to do anything which made my heart beat faster (e.g. exercise, climbing stairs, being too hot).

I worried I was going to have a heart attack and die, and I would think about how my parents would cope if I died.

What kept them going?

Why did the panic not get better on its own?

What coping strategies were you using?

Consider: avoidance, safety-seeking behaviors, unhelpful beliefs.

I was avoiding exerting myself in any way.

I was misinterpreting my heart racing as meaning that I would die.

I was always on the lookout for signs of danger, and I was checking my heart too much.

Knowledge and skills

How has therapy helped you to deal with your panic? What have you learned about panic that has been helpful?

What strategies or techniques did you learn? (e.g. challenging my thinking, facing my fears, testing my beliefs)

Describe any behavioral experiments that you conducted: What beliefs did you test? What did you discover?

What exposure exercises did you practice and what did you learn?

We researched the **real** symptoms of a heart attack (pain in the arm etc).

I now know that my heart is fine - medical tests showed it was fine, and the behavioral experiments that I did to stress it didn't make me have a heart attack.

I learned that I have control over it - I can bring on all of the body sensations of my panic using the interoceptive exposure exercises, but they all pass with time.

I learned that I was misinterpreting my heart racing as a heart attack.

Therapy Blueprint For Panic

How I think about my body sensations now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Body sensation	How I interpreted them <i>then</i>	How I interpret them <i>now</i>
What body sensations used to concern you the most?	Before therapy, what did you think body sensations like this meant?	How do you interpret this kind of body sensation now?
my heart beating quickly.	I'm having a heart attack.	It's just the result of exertion - my body is not at rest. It's a good thing! my heart will be healthier if I am active.

How I think differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger strong feelings. Compare your thinking patterns before therapy and now: How did you interpret these situations then? What do these events mean to you now?

Situation	How I thought <i>then</i>	How I think <i>now</i>
What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	Before therapy, what kind of thoughts did you have in response to situations like this?	How do you interpret this kind of event now?
Climbing stairs.	I'm having a heart attack - I'm going to die and I need to get to a hospital.	Exercise is good for me - my heart is beating to support me.
Being too hot.	Why is my heart racing? I need to get out.	my heart beats faster in lots of situations - when I'm hot, when I worry - I'm not having a heart attack.

How I do things differently now

Consider some typical situations which used to trigger you and compare your reactions / responses before therapy and now.

Situation	How I responded <i>then</i>	How I respond <i>now</i>
What situations used to trigger a strong response in you?	Before therapy, how did you react when situations like this occurred?	What do you do if this kind of event happens now?
See stairs.	Take the elevator.	Take the stairs.
Doctor tells me to exercise.	Avoid any exercise, avoid doing too much.	I have started exercise classes.
Anywhere / anytime.	Check heart rate on my smart watch. Check my pulse.	Focus on what is important to me Focus outside of myself.

Therapy Blueprint For Panic

How far I have come & my goals for the future

What have you achieved so far?

How are you going to build on your achievements?

I have learned to feel more confident in my ability to cope.

I now live a more satisfying life - I worry less and I exercise properly.

I'm planning to do a fun run soon.

Setbacks and obstacles

What could cause a setback and how would you deal with it?

What obstacles do you anticipate might be challenging?

What would you do if you had another panic attack?

If I had a panic attack out of the blue and started to do my old behaviors.

I would need to:

- remind myself of what I have learned (look at these notes).
- overcome the avoidance.
- let go of my safety behaviors.
- get professional help if I start to really struggle.

Message to my future self

If you could send a message to your future self (something you would not want to forget) what would it be?

You've been really brave to face your fears.

Hearts can beat faster for lots of different reasons - even just thinking about something anxiety provoking - this does **not** mean that you are having a heart attack.

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