

Planning and conducting behavioural experiments

Planning behavioural experiments

An ability to devise behavioural experiments which can directly test the validity of client's beliefs or assumptions about themselves or the world, which help clients construct and/or test new, more adaptive beliefs, and which can be carried out in the session or as homework

An ability to ensure that the form, timing and content of behavioural experiments are congruent with their intended aim

An ability to plan experiments which are likely to have positive outcomes

An ability to ensure that experiments are planned collaboratively, so as to ensure that any reservations held by the client are fully accounted for

Conducting behavioural experiments

An ability to ensure that the aim of the experiment is clear to, and understood by, the client, and that the client is aware of the cognitions being targeted by the experiment

An ability to help the client anticipate any possible problems, along with ways of overcoming these

An ability to help the client anticipate their likely reactions should the experiment confirm their fears

Reviewing behavioural experiments

An ability to help the client assess their reactions to the experiment by recording the outcome and the learning which has occurred

An ability to review the outcome of experiments (whether positive or negative) with the client in order to help them identify its impact on their thinking or behaviour, and the meaning the outcome of the experiment has for them
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On the basis of review of the learning which has taken place, an ability to help the client build on this learning by identifying further behavioural experiments

Source:

Bennett-Levy, J., Butler, G., Fennell, M., Hackmann, A., Mueller, M., and Westbrook, D. (2004) *Oxford guide to behavioural experiments in cognitive therapy* Oxford: OUP