



PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

Sacha's case

Description. After moving during the summer, Sacha has to start at a new school. This change causes all kinds of anxiety-provoking situations for him... Sacha often worries about what the other students at his new school think about him. Being more introverted, he hates being in situations where he might be laughed at, and tries his best not to attract attention.



SCENARIO 1

Part one. This morning, Sacha's teacher asks all the students to tell the class what they did on their summer vacation. Sacha's heart starts racing and his palms get sweaty as his mind begins to spin: "Oh no, please, not that! I don't know what to say... the others will laugh at me." His stomach starts to ache. It's a disaster. Sacha quickly goes to see his teacher and asks to go to the bathroom immediately.

Part two. At lunch today, Sacha goes to the cafeteria but doesn't see his new friend, Nolan. Sacha doesn't know where to sit and is afraid to ask anyone, for fear of looking ridiculous and being rejected. He feels anxiety welling up inside him. He hides out in the library and skips lunch.

Part three. Later in the day, Alexia invites the entire class to her house for a party that night. Sacha doesn't want to go because he's worried about who he'll hang around with and that he won't know what to say or do. He's made up his mind: He's staying comfortably at home.

Part four. When he's back home, Sacha checks his social media and realizes that *everyone* in his class is going to be at Alexia's party, except him! His anxiety surges. He begins to worry that he will miss out on a great night if he doesn't go and that he will be excluded from the group afterwards. But the idea of going terrifies him. He doesn't know what to do anymore. Sacha feels awful and very stuck.

SCENARIO 2

Part one. In school this morning, Sacha's teacher asks all the students to tell the class what they did on their summer vacation. Sacha's heart starts racing and his palms get sweaty: "Oh no, please, anything but that! I don't know what to say... the others will laugh at me." His stomach starts to ache. Sacha takes a moment to pause internally. He gets some perspective on the situation by telling himself that the worst that can happen is he might trip over his words. When it's his turn, Sacha talks about his move over the summer, with a hint of nervous excitement. The other students ask questions and take an interest in his story. Sacha's anxiety dissipates, giving way to a feeling of pride. Sacha feels much better.

Part two. At lunch today, Sacha goes to the cafeteria but doesn't see his new friend, Nolan. Sacha doesn't know where to sit and is afraid to ask anyone, for fear of looking ridiculous and being rejected. He feels anxiety welling up inside him. Sacha takes a deep breath. He tells himself that he is entitled to take his place, just like everyone else! Sacha gathers his courage and decides to sit alone at a table. Luca quickly sits beside him, and they spend their lunch break getting to know each other better. Sacha is glad he dared to do it.

Part three. Later in the day, Alexia invites all her classmates to a party at her house that same night. Sacha doesn't want to go because he's worried about who he'll hang around with and that he won't know what to say or do. He decides to talk to his friend Nolan about it anyway. His friend suggests that they go to the party together. Even though *the idea* of going to the party still makes him a little anxious, Sacha is reassured to know that he won't be going alone.

Part four. When he's back home, Sacha checks his social media and realizes that *everyone* in his class is going to be at Alexia's party. Phew, that's a lot of people! His anxiety surges. Sacha questions his decision to go... At the same time, he sees it as an opportunity to build a new network of friends. He decides to honour his commitment and go with Nolan, as planned. His initial nervousness quickly gives way to laughter when Alexia's mother drops the cake on the floor! Sacha now feels empowered, freer and more confident.



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My level of intolerance

Here are the five main types of intolerances. For each intolerance, try to identify how much it sounds like you.

Intolerance to uncertainty: "I struggle to function in new, ambiguous and unpredictable situations."

That doesn't sound like me much or at all				That somewhat sounds like me			That very much sounds like me		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Perfectionism: "I'm not satisfied unless everything is perfect."

That doesn't sound like me much or at all				That somewhat sounds like me			That very much sounds like me		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Excessive responsibility: "I feel guilty all the time."

That doesn't sound like me much or at all				That somewhat sounds like me			That very much sounds like me		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Fear of being judged by others: "I often feel that others are judging me."

That doesn't sound like me much or at all				That somewhat sounds like me			That very much sounds like me		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Intolerance to psychological and physical discomfort: "Something is wrong inside my body!"

That doesn't sound like me much or at all				That somewhat sounds like me			That very much sounds like me		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



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Strategies for exposure to intolerances

Intolerance to uncertainty

Gradually try out new activities that are not too anxiety-provoking. Accept that you can't control and anticipate everything. Put the actual risks of the situation into perspective by questioning your thoughts and perceptions (e.g., am I sure of what I'm thinking or perceiving? Is the situation really "serious" or just "unpleasant"?). Set aside time to plan and anticipate what might happen, but do so in moderation and without seeking too much certainty, etc.



Perfectionism

Set more realistic goals. Add moments of enjoyment to your routine. Strive for balance in different areas of life (family, friendships, studies, leisure, etc.). Focus on the process, efforts, and progress rather than on the results. See mistakes as opportunities to learn. Downplay the seriousness of the situation, etc.

Excessive responsibility

Refocus on yourself and your needs. Express your boundaries, learn to say "no." Accept to delegate things to others (e.g., recognize that others are capable of accomplishing things without you). Question your real responsibility in the situation (e.g., am I responsible for other people's emotions and reactions, their choices, their happiness? What do I have control over in this situation?). Let go of what is not in your control. Take your fair share of responsibility (no more, no less), etc.





Fear of being judged by others

Use positive self-talk (e.g., I am worthy of respect, I am as worthy as anyone else, I can do it, I have everything I need to succeed, I am not lacking anything, I have accomplished similar tasks in the past, etc.). Appreciate your differences, see them as assets. Challenge perceptions and fears (e.g., maybe others are looking at me because they're interested in me, maybe they are talking about me positively, maybe they aren't even looking at me!). Gradually expose yourself to situations involving multiple people. Try to take your place in your own way, etc.

Intolerance to psychological and physical discomfort

Remember that in anxiety-provoking situations, emotions and physical sensations are normal, even if they are sometimes intense or unpleasant. Remember that they are not dangerous. Put the meaning of symptoms into perspective (e.g., remember that physical sensations in stressful or anxious situations are often not a sign of serious illness, but rather a sign that informs us about what we are experiencing internally). Try to expose yourself to physical sensations in natural everyday contexts (e.g., playing a sport and feeling your heart beat fast).

