My Intrusive Thoughts Map

A thought is not a wish, a plan or a fact. Look at it instead of fighting it.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 The thought, image or urge

Write it in plain words. When does it come? Rate the distress 0 to 10

The intrusive thought	When it comes	Distress 0 to 10
e.g. image of pushing someone		

2 Which theme is closest?

Most people report thoughts like these. Tick one or more

- ☐ Harm
- ☐ Accidents
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Religion or morals
- ☐ Contamination
- ☐ Doubt
- ☐ Relationships
- ☐ Other

3 My intrusive thoughts cycle

Fill in each box for one thought

The thought (as it pops up)

The meaning I give it. Belief when anxious __% and when calm __%

What I do next (push away, check, ask, avoid)

How I feel (anxiety, guilt, disgust, shame)

4 Thought-action fusion check

Answer as you would for a friend with the same thought

Does having this thought make me as bad as doing it? _____

Does thinking it make it more likely to happen? _____

5 What I do with the thought: weekly tally

One ordinary week. A mark for each time

Habit	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Pushing it away								
Replacing it with a good thought								
Checking								
Asking for reassurance								
Mental reviewing								
Avoiding								

A fairer view of this thought: _____

What I would tell a friend with the same thought: _____

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My Intrusive Thoughts Practice Plan

Let the thought come and go. Drop one neutralizing habit at a time.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 My noticing phrase

Name it, let it stay, go back to what you were doing

When the thought comes I will say: _____

Then I will go back to: _____

2 My step down ladder

One habit at a time. Reduce, repeat until it feels manageable, then step down again

Step	Neutralizing, checking or avoidance habit	From (per day)	To (per day)	Dates done
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

3 My prediction log

Before: what I fear if I let the thought be. After: what actually happened

Step	If I do not neutralize, I predict	Belief before %	What actually happened	Belief after %

4 My weekly review

Look at the tally and the log, then choose the next step

What changed this week: _____

My next step: _____

For therapists and clients

1. Not a test or a diagnosis. Almost everyone has intrusive thoughts; the goal is not zero thoughts.
2. Pushing thoughts away, replacing, checking and reassurance bring short relief and keep the fear alive.
3. If thoughts and rituals take over an hour a day, ask about OCD and CBT with exposure and response prevention.
4. Repugnant thoughts are not intentions. Thoughts you want to act on need help right away.

In the US, call 911 in an emergency. Call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) any time.

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