

Worksheet for Therapists

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

# The Loaded Die: Anxiety and Control

---

This worksheet guides therapists in applying the metaphor of the loaded die in therapy sessions. The metaphor helps clients to understand the nature of anxiety and the futility of control. Take your time to familiarize yourself with the prompts and consider how to integrate them into your therapeutic approach.

## Step 1: Introducing the Metaphor

---

Explain the metaphor of the loaded die to your client, relating it to their experience with anxiety. Emphasize that anxiety can often feel like a rigged game in which their efforts at control seem ineffective. Encourage them to reflect on the metaphor and how it resonates with their personal struggles. You might say:

“Anxiety can often feel like a rigged game, in which your efforts to control it seem ineffective. Imagine you’re at a craps table in a casino, and you’re playing with a loaded die. You keep losing, not realizing that the game is rigged against you. The losses pile up, and it feels frustrating. But here’s the thing: it’s not your fault. The game is rigged.”

---

## 1 ACT

Try writing it down in your own words to make it feel more natural and comfortable for you:

Describe your strategy to introduce the metaphor; if necessary, break it down into smaller steps. What will be the most challenging thing about using this with your client(s)? What will be the easiest part?

## Step 2: Facilitating Insight

---

- Explore the client's perceptions of self-blame related to their struggles with anxiety. Discuss how understanding the rigged nature of the game can alleviate this self-blame.
- Guide the client in recognizing the futility of their previous attempts to control anxiety. Help them to understand that these efforts were part of the rigged game rather than a reflection of personal failings.
- Encourage the client to express their emotions and thoughts as they imagine themselves holding the dice again, despite knowing that the game is rigged.
- Explore the underlying motivations and patterns contributing to their willingness to engage in unhelpful behaviors.

---

## 2 ACT

### **Step 3: Breaking the Cycle**

---

- Help the client to identify alternative choices and behaviors that can lead to a healthier relationship with anxiety.
- Discuss the importance of recognizing when they are picking up the dice, and the value of setting them down again.
- Support the client in developing coping strategies to resist the urge to engage in anxiety-provoking thoughts and behaviors. Explore techniques such as mindfulness, acceptance, and self-compassion to promote disengagement from the rigged game.
- Collaborate with the client to create personalized reminders or cues to help them remember to step away from the “craps table” and make different choices.

### **Step 4: Embracing a New Approach**

---

- Guide the client to reflect on how recognizing the rigged game of anxiety changes their perspective on finding a solution. Explore their thoughts on adopting a more adaptive and flexible approach to managing anxiety.
- Discuss alternative therapeutic techniques that empower the client to respond differently to anxiety, such as breathing exercises or the body scan.
- Assist the client to integrate the metaphor and its implications into daily life. Help them develop an action plan for applying this new understanding and approach outside of therapy sessions.

## Final Reflections

---

Write down your ideas and reflections on this metaphor and how to apply it.

**Remember:** As a therapist, incorporating the metaphor of the loaded die into your sessions can help clients to gain insights into their struggles with anxiety and empower them to make more effective choices. Remember to adapt the prompts and exercises to each client's needs and the therapeutic approach. Foster a supportive and nonjudgmental environment to facilitate their journey toward managing anxiety more skillfully.