Handout 17.1 (PATIENT VERSION)

Example of a functional analysis grid for a patient with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

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Situation:	*Symptom(s):*	*Emotion(s):*	*Thought(s)*	*Reaction:*	*Target function(s):*	*Short-term:*	*Long-term:*	*Life interference:*
Riding the bus to work.	*Abdominal pain, urgency.*	*Fear, anxiety, shame.*	*I'm going to have an accident.*	*Got out of the bus immediately and went to the first bathroom I could find.*	*Symptom relief. Avoid shame.*	*Worked for symptom and shame.*	*Still have symptom. Still experience shame.*	*I have stopped using the bus. I feel guilty to be using my car all the time as I consider myself environmentally responsible. In addition, it is quite costly.*
Had coffee plans with my friend.	*None.*	*Fear, anxiety.*	*What if there is no bathroom available? What if my IBS flares up while I'm with my friend?*	*Cancelled date last minute.*	*Wanted my anxiety to go away.*	*The anxiety reduced but felt guilty for lying to my friend.*	*I still have the same anxiety every time I have a planned outing with friends.*	*I have reduced the number of outings with friends significantly. I only go out when it is a place near my home. I do not feel spontaneous anymore. I feel like a bad friend for not socialising more.*
Going to the gym.	*Abdominal pain.*	*Anger, frustration.*	*I'm tired of being in pain! What if exercising makes it worse?*	*Stopped going to the gym.*	*Symptom relief. Avoid anger.*	*Did not work for pain. Felt less frustrated but still angry.*	*Still have pain on a regular basis. Feel angry at myself now.*	*Overall, I feel less fit. I've put on weight, and I'm worried how much more impact this is going to have on my general health.*

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Helpful questions to guide functional analysis:

1. Could you tell me of a situation in which symptoms, emotions, or thoughts about your (GI condition) have been particularly difficult?
2. What sort of things did you do to try to cope with this experience (e.g., physical/emotional/cognitive)?
3. When you were doing those things, what were you hoping to achieve? What was the function of your reaction?
4. Were you trying to somehow control, eliminate, avoid, or change this experience?
5. How well did it work in the short-term? How well did it work in the long-term? Do you still have these experiences?
6. How has this reaction to your experience interfered with other aspects of your life?

See below an empty functional analysis grid.

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This handout was written by Associate Professor Nuno Ferreira based upon his chapter entitled "Emerging approaches – Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) approaches to gastrointestinal conditions" (Chapter 17) from Knowles, S.R., Keefer, L., & Mikocka-Walus, A. (2019). Psychogastroenterology with Adults: A Handbook for Mental Health Professionals. Oxon, UK: Routledge Press.

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