

## W13-01

### IMAGINATIVE DEATH EXPERIENCE IN HYPOCHONDRIASIS

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Patients with health-anxiety are very often unable to describe concrete consequences of their putative somatic diseases. They block their thoughts due to anxiety attended this thoughts. The health-anxious patients try not to think about illness at all, by attempting to control their thoughts or by distraction. Our method is based on therapeutic dialogue, using Socratic questioning, and inductive methods which force patient to think beyond actual blocks.

In second step, patients are asked to think out all other possibilities of newly discovered future. They are forced to imagine the worse consequences of all dread situations. Dialogue is led through one's serious illness status, with its somatic, psychological and social consequences, and the dying experience to the moment of death, which has to be described with all related emotions and details. Further, we ask patients to fantasize and constellate possible "after death experiences". In the next session the patient brings a written conception of the redoubtable situation previously discussed. Than we work with this text as in imaginative exposure therapy.

This method seems to be quite effective and not too time-consuming. Several patients with health-anxiety underwent this exposure in our therapeutical groups. All of these patients profited from this therapy, as confirmed by follow-up data.

Participants will learn:

- conceptualization of health anxiety with the patient;
- Socratic questioning with the hypochondriacal patient;
- how to apply the exposure to the imaginative death experience.

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