



## BEING FOOLED BY YOUR DISORDER

1. It is not uncommon to hear different reasons why people have been unable to do their homework tasks, carry out their experiments, focus on their therapy or drop a particular safety seeking behaviour. On some occasions these reasons are absolutely valid. However, sometimes we can be FOOLED or BULLIED such that treatment is undermined in many different ways.

Obviously, this can stop you getting the best out of your therapy, meaning that you do not progress as you would like.

Different ways in which anxiety can bully you:

1. **AVOIDANCE:** This is the most obvious one – when bully gives us a reason not to do an experiment. Examples for avoidance:
  - a. Will do it tomorrow
  - b. Its raining don't want to go out
  - c. Ran out of time
  - d. Wasn't clear what the therapist wanted me to do
2. **BLAMING:** Bully can distract you from treatment by finding faults with the therapist, therapy, environment etc.
  - a. My therapist is too tough/soft.
  - b. I am not able to sleep because of noise so I can't concentrate in therapy.
3. **BARGAINING:** Bully can try and undermine experiments by 'bargaining' about how you do them – i.e.
  - a. leave things so that you can 'undo' behavioural experiments,
  - b. only going half way,
  - c. doing pre-rituals or safety behaviours – so even though you may be doing the experiment, you have bargained with the bully that you are not going to do it 100%, which can really devalue the treatment.
4. Can you give examples of the things you have said to yourself or done to; avoid, blame or bargain with the bully.

5. These are some of the more obvious examples where the disorder can bully you into avoiding experiments. But there are other more subtle ways to be fooled.
  - a. Anxiety bully makes one create arguments with others to detract from challenging the bully.
  - b. Anxiety bully distracts from treatment by finding small faults with therapist, family members, your environment, etc.
  - c. Breaking down in front of loved ones knowing they will buckle and eventually take part in your rituals/avoidance.
  - d. Anxiety bully makes one say what therapist and family want to hear whilst hiding avoidance/lack of progress.
  - e. You concentrate on the very small success you have had and ignore the big problems.
  
6. What can you do to stand up to the anxiety bully?

How to best equip yourself – know the enemy, predict its moves etc.