**Addendum**

**Adaptation of the Treatment for Problematic Perfectionism**

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Adaptation of this manual for the treatment of problematic perfectionism should be relatively straightforward as problematic perfectionism fits well within an OCD conceptualization. There are a few issues specific to working with perfectionism that deserve special attention.

**Identifying Treatment Targets**

When identifying the treatment targets, it is important to consider both the obvious behavioral targets and the possible private psychological targets. For example, a list of target behaviors in problematic perfectionism might include improving productivity, decreasing procrastination, decreasing avoidance, improving school or work attendance, improving task completion, decreasing task completion time (efficiency), and social engagement or involvement. Some individuals struggling with problematic perfectionism may be behaviorally functional, but experiencing significant psychological distress in the form of worry, physical anxiety, rumination, and constant negative evaluation of the self and other. While their functional behaviors may not change significantly as a result of the treatment, the overall psychological wellbeing has the potential to improve and it is important to identify this as a target in working with the individual in treatment.

**Functionalism and Perfectionism**

There is a clear distinction in the perfectionism literature between positive (adaptive) and negative (maladaptive) perfectionism. This is important to note for two reasons. First, when doing treatment for problematic perfectionism, you may not expect the adaptive components of an individual’s perfectionism to change. These are typically things like standards and expectations. Certainly, sometimes an individual will adjust their standards, but there it is still important to them to be a good student, employee, parent, etc. What you may see, if the treatment goes well, is an improvement in the maladaptive components of the perfectionism. This often include an improved behavioral and psychological flexibility, a willingness to experience mistakes or failure, and improved acceptance of people, situations, or experiences, just as they are. Second, because perfectionism can be adaptive, it can be a tricky problem to be aware of. Individuals who struggle with this problem will engage an experience with reasonable expectations and goals, only to have it shift in function, mid-experience, to something problematic and paralyzing. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) can be especially helpful in helping the individual understand this shift in function because of the philosophical basis in functional contextualism. Understanding the functional nature of this problem can help an individual be more aware of it and take steps to implement the intervention

**The Importance of an Experiential Approach**

Individuals with problematic perfectionism are often highly intellectual. The nature of the problem often leads to overthinking, constant doubting and evaluation, and rigid clinging to verbal rules and systems. This can impair the ability to engage any learning experience, including participating in psychotherapy. This is why ACT has the potential to work well with this issues, because the focus of the treatment undermines these verbal processes. Good ACT treatment places an emphasis on experiential learning. It is especially important when working with perfectionism to utilize experiential therapy techniques wherever possible as the verbal rigidity with perfectionism can be a significant barrier.

**Accessing the Treatment**

Finally, because of the intense rigidity of the verbal system, even accessing the treatment can be impaired by perfectionism. Be aware of the possibility of an individual being perfectionistic about practicing treatment suggestions or having unreasonable standards for the treatment experience. This is similar to the awareness you need with OCD that a treatment exercise can become a compulsive ritual that reinforces the disorder. If identified, this presents an opportunity to practice the skills you are providing in another context, one that is more immediate and more conducive to experiential work in the session.