

Worksheet 10.10: Refusal to eat with the family using the ABC model to create a menu of options

A common problem for families is that Edi refuses to eat with anyone else. Everyone feels more inclined to try something different if they do not feel backed into a corner. Learning that there are choices is a step on the change ladder. This is when a detailed focus approach is useful to be able to pick apart what the different choices to move forward might be.

Read *SBC*, Chapter 12, pp. 185–91.

In pairs or as a group think of a scenario in which Edi has refused to eat with the family or use this scenario. Use the ABC approach to model to explore the possible antecedents and consequences and to come up with a menu of options with Edi. A hierarchy grid might be useful.

Scenario

Abigail is 28 and has had to give up her flat and move back home because of concerns about her health. She has purge-type anorexia and is very ashamed of everything to do with her illness. She avoids all family mealtimes, insisting it is simply too stressful to have anyone watching her. Thus far her parents have turned a blind eye, but now feel it is time to encourage Abigail to address this issue.

Table 10.9 Blank functional analysis table for Abigail

Antecedents	Behaviour	Consequences
	Abigail refuses to eat with the family	

Menu of options

Table 10.10 Anxiety hierarchy around Edi eating a meal with the family

Goal: To eat a meal with the family	Expected anxiety	Actual anxiety
Menu of options:		
Eating a meal with the family	99	
Sit with the family and talk to them whilst they eat breakfast, with no expectation of Edi eating or drinking anything	50	

An Anxiety Hierarchy Grid can be used (*SBC* p193 & 241) to rank the behaviours and/or to break a goal down into SMART baby steps:

It is not uncommon for the sufferer to refuse point blank to eat with the family. Completing the ABC chart helps the rest of the family to empathise with the challenges Abigail is facing when it comes to family mealtimes and that their previous reactions might not have been helpful. Ensure the atmosphere is calm and warm and come up with some ideas to gently nudge Abigail to spend more time with them. The ultimate goal will be for Abigail to join them for family meals. The family acknowledges that it will take time for Abigail to build her confidence and that small baby steps are more likely to be successful. Working with Edi to create a hierarchy grid can be extremely useful.