

## If-then Planning Worksheet

The *if-then planning worksheet* is a powerful tool for visualizing how to handle all that could go wrong in a future situation and reducing cognitive distortion and *catastrophizing*.

If-then planning, also known as *implementation intentions*, helps people take, or regain, control under challenging situations (Hirsch, Bieleke, Schüler, & Wolff, 2020).

Whether at work, education, or in family situations, increasing a sense of control can reduce anxiety before and during a difficult situation.

The following example captures what might go wrong (if) and coping mechanisms (then):

<b>Imagined Scenario</b>	<b>I am attending a job interview next week</b>
If...	<i>I am panicking before the beginning of the interview.</i>
Then...	<i>I will take a moment, breathe slowly and deeply, and regain my sense of control. I will remind myself that I am prepared for the interview and have a wealth of useful experience. I have been successful, in my existing and previous roles.</i>
If...	<i>I am unable to answer a question, and I stumble to give a good answer.</i>
Then...	<i>I will ask the interviewer to repeat or reframe the question until I am comfortable with its meaning. I will be honest about my experience and provide examples of my ability to learn new skills when needed.</i>

Complete a new copy for each scenario the client faces.

Break the situation down into a series of if-then statements that reflect what might go wrong and their concerns. By defining a response, the client will visualize all that may happen and confirm their coping ability.

Imagined Scenario	
If...	
Then...	
If...	
Then...	
If...	
Then...	
If...	
Then...	
If...	
Then...	
If...	
Then...	

## References

- Hirsch, A., Bieleke, M., Schüler, J., & Wolff, W. (2020). *Implicit theories about athletic ability modulate the effects of if-then planning on performance in a standardized endurance task.*