

Table 9.1.
Contrasting Mindsets in ERP and Reality Sensing

Category	Typical ERP Mindset	Reality Sensing Mindset
Core Premise	"I must learn to live with uncertainty and tolerate distress."	"Obsessional doubt is based in imagination and has no relevance to reality."
Approach to Doubt	"Doubt is expected and something to adapt to rather than eliminate."	"Doubt is an illusion created by faulty reasoning—once reasoning is corrected, doubt is not only dismissed but prevented from arising at all."
Intent behind Actions	"I will resist compulsions and endure distress to weaken OCD over time."	"I act from clarity, not to test, endure, or tolerate doubt."
Mechanism for Change	Fear confrontation, exposure, and habituation through tolerating anxiety.	Correcting faulty reasoning so that anxiety naturally fades, making exposure unnecessary.
Relationship to Anxiety	Anxiety is expected and treated as a necessary part of recovery.	Anxiety is a sign of obsessional reasoning creeping in. When reasoning is corrected, anxiety fades naturally.
Fear Confrontation	You must expose yourself to feared situations, even if they feel terrifying, to prove they are safe.	You do not need to confront fears when you recognize the doubt is false from the start.
Success Measurement	"I can endure uncertainty and anxiety without compulsions."	"I naturally engage with life, free from obsessional doubt."
Compulsions	Compulsions are resisted, but doubt may still persist indefinitely.	Compulsions become irrelevant because the reasoning behind doubt is corrected.
Focus on Reasoning Errors	Focuses on learning to live with doubt rather than eliminating the reasoning errors that generate it.	Addresses and corrects the faulty reasoning that generates obsessional doubt, preventing it from arising in the first place.
Behavioral Engagement	You expose yourself to feared situations and resist compulsions while tolerating discomfort.	You act naturally from clarity, without testing, exposure, or intentionally engaging with doubt.
Handling Triggers	Triggers are deliberately sought out to build distress tolerance.	Triggers are irrelevant because obsessional doubt is dismissed before it takes hold.
Daily Life Engagement	Daily activities may still be guided by avoiding distress or engaging with exposure exercises.	Daily life is approached naturally, without consideration of OCD, as if it were never an issue.
End Goal	"I will always have doubts, but I can learn to tolerate them without compulsions."	"Doubt no longer arises because it was never real to begin with."