Existential therapy session note

Client | Date | Session no.

1. Brief context

What the client came with, key events.

2. Key themes and affect

Themes, feelings and body reactions named in the session.

3. Givens of existence and anxiety

Which given came up and how the client meets it.

4. Meaning, values and purpose

What gives the client's life meaning, in their words, and where it thins out.

5. Freedom, choice and responsibility

Where the client owns a choice and where it reads as "I have no choice".

6. The four worlds and being-in-the-world

Physical, social, personal, spiritual: what is alive or strained. Empty if nothing came up.

7. Agreements and homework

Tasks and observations until the next session.

8. Risks

Only signals that came up. Empty if none.

9. Speech and thinking features

Anything notable in the form of speech. Usually empty.

10. Plan for the next session

What to return to.

Existential therapy session note: filled example

Client Anna, 34 (fictional) | Date 11/12 | Session no. 4

1. Brief context

Came in after a conflict with her manager, has slept badly for a week.

2. Key themes and affect

Anxiety → "my chest tightens before planning meetings".

3. Givens of existence and anxiety

No guarantees → "however much I check, I'm never sure", the anxiety wakes her up rather than numbs her.

4. Meaning, values and purpose

Doing the work well → the meaning has narrowed to "don't make a mistake".

5. Freedom, choice and responsibility

"I have to check, there's no other way" → the choice to stop is not yet her own.

6. The four worlds and being-in-the-world

Social world → her manager's look decides "what kind of person I am", the body has not slept for a week.

7. Agreements and homework

Notice the moment of choice → before each check, ask: what is this for?

8. Risks

None mentioned.

9. Speech and thinking features

None noted.

10. Plan for the next session

Explore what "good work" means to her when nothing is guaranteed.