

The following is adapted from *The Imp of the Mind: Exploring the Silent Epidemic of Obsessive Bad Thoughts* by Lee Baer

TABLE 9
ACTUAL TASKS USED IN IN VIVO EXPOSURE THERAPY FOR
BAD THOUGHTS⁶

Thoughts about harming children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer to baby-sit alone for a child • offer to bathe or diaper a child • obtain information on abortion services • do not check trash or toilet (when afraid child was placed there) • do reading on history of abortion (e.g., <i>Roe vs. Wade</i> case) • walk by an abortion clinic • read newspaper article on parent who physically abused her child • locate phone number for abortion services
Religious obsessions (about devil worship)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write the words "Satan" and "Devil" • role-play membership in satanic cult • read about devil-worship rites • search Internet for information on satanic cults
Obsessions about becoming homosexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walk around gay neighborhood • read autobiography of gay person • attend gay rights rally • look at nude or semi-nude pictures of same sex in catalogs or magazines such as <i>Playboy</i> • use open dressing room in gym or clothing store • look at nude portraits in museums and art books
Obsessions about incest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make flattering comment to male relative ("You look good in that sweater") • give male relative a hug or kiss • have underwear touch objects father had touched
Sexual obsessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit facing other people • eat a "dirty" food (i.e., penis-shaped: banana, zucchini, cucumber) • write "sexual" words (e.g., <i>come, get into, swallowing</i>) • go to a location where there are children (mall arcade, food court) to confront sexual fears about children • listen to audiotape with intrusive sexual and violent obsessions (can increase difficulty by listening at a church or around children)