



Graded Exposure Workbook

Graded exposure is a cognitive behaviour therapy method used to help extinguish fears and anxieties through incremental exposures to the sources of those fears and anxieties, which this workbook will help you achieve. The graded exposure workbook has been split into three main worksheets: Fears and Anxieties; End Goal; and Progress.

Fears and Anxieties

This worksheet is designed to list the fears and causes of your anxiety that affect your quality of life. It also has a section for your safety behaviours because they can help in the short term but hinder long term progress. The idea is to stop engaging in your safety behaviours as you tackle your fears/anxieties.

Stage 1 – Write all your anxiety triggers and fears in the first column you'd like to work on, in any order they come to you.

Stage 2 – In the second column, rank them in order with 1 being the worst sliding up to 10 (the least bad one in the list).

Stage 3 – List all the safety behaviours you engage in to help soothe your feelings of fear and anxiety.

Stage 4 – Once you've filled in this worksheet, move on to the 'End Goal' worksheet.

| Things you fear or trigger your anxiety | Rank (1-10) | Safety behaviours |
|---|-------------|--|
| Going shopping on my own | 10 | Doing my shopping with my partner, going when I think it's least busy, using the self-checkout |
| Doing a presentation at work | 1 | Biting nails, doing the presentation sitting down, avoid eye contact, constantly checking notes beforehand, don't ask if there are any questions |

End Goal

This section uses the 'Fears and Anxieties' worksheet by getting you to pick a fearful situation, breaking it down and combining it with your safety behaviours to create several smaller steps to complete. Once completed, you can then go to the next fear/anxiety ranked in your Fears and Anxieties list.

One of the essential parts of achieving your goal of extinguishing your fears and anxieties is knowing when you've achieved each step you've set yourself.

Stage 1 – In the top box (end goal), write down the goal you're hoping to achieve based on your fear and anxiety triggers.

Stage 2 – Write down all the steps you can take to reach that goal, starting with the easiest and smallest step you think you'll be able to do, then create subsequent steps with increasing fear and anxiety invoking situations and behaviours.

Stage 3 – Once you've completed writing down your steps, think about how you'll know you've completed each step so you know when you're ready to move onto the next step. Remember to keep them realistic and something you're comfortable with.

Stage 4 – Move on to the 'Progress' worksheet.

| |
|--|
| GOAL To be able to go to the supermarket on my own |
|--|

| Steps | How will you know you've completed this step? | Achieved |
|--|---|----------|
| Go to the local shop on my own | When my heartbeat no longer races at the thought of going to the local shop | ✓ |
| Going to the local shops when I know it'll be busy | When I don't give it a second thought about what time it is when I go to the shop | |

Progress

Lastly, this worksheet takes your steps from the 'End Goals' worksheet and allows you to track your progress and tick off your achieved steps on the 'End Goals' worksheet once you believe you can move on to the next step.

Stage 1 – Transfer one of your steps to the progress worksheet.

Stage 2 – When you attempt the step you transferred to this worksheet, write down when you did the task in the Time/date column and write down how long you were able to do it. Improvements in duration are a good sign of progress, and in some cases, the day and time can be equally important, for example, being on a train during rush hour.

Stage 3 – Use the comments section to note down how the experience made you feel, which will help you notice a change in yourself and allow you to make adjustments to increase your outcome success further.

Stage 4 – If you don't feel you're ready to move on to the next step in from the 'End Goal' worksheet, then repeat the same step as many times as need, noting down the time/date, duration, and any comments.

Stage 5 – If you feel you've mastered this step, then tick achieved in the last column on the 'End Goal' worksheet and transfer the next step to the 'Progress' worksheet and go through the 'Progress' worksheet stages again.

Stage 6 – Go through this process until you've completed all your steps from the 'End Goal' worksheet and have ticked them all achieved. Then return to the 'Fears and Anxieties' worksheet and pick the next ranked fear and anxiety, starting again at stage 1 of the 'End Goal' worksheet and work and go through the process again.

| Time/date | Step | Duration | Comments |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------|--|
| 11/09/2020 11.15 | Went to the local shop | 5 minutes | My heart was racing, but I managed to walk around the shop on my own even though my mind and body were screaming for me to leave |
| 13/09/2020 11.27 | Went to the local shop | 9 minutes | My heart was still racing, but I was able to check out a couple of items |

