

ADDRESSING YOUR FEARS

“Every time your fear is invited up, every time you recognize it and smile at it, your fear will lose some of its strength.” Thich Nhat Hanh

One of the main ways in which we maintain emotional problems is by rescuing ourselves from our imagined catastrophes. These disasters are products of our worried mind, rather than real or probable events. We fall into safety behaviors such as avoidance or setting the goal lower. Another coping mechanism is thought suppression but that only intensifies our focus on the very thing or thought we are trying to suppress. The biggest key to overcoming fears and anxiety avoidance behaviors is to do a little of what you fear without engaging in your safety behaviors. Small graduated steps can build your confidence and lessen the strength of your anxiety or fear.

Use the grid below to work on the areas that you have anxiety or fear around.

DO

What
WILL
happen if you
DO (.....)

What
WON'T
happen if you
DO (.....)

DON'T

What
WILL
happen if you
DON'T do (.....)

What
WON'T
happen if you
DON'T do (.....)

ACTION PLAN FOR SMALL STEPS

1. In the **Box 1** write down your anxiety or fear.
2. In **Box 2 and 3** write down steps you can take towards exposing yourself to your feared situation. This may feel uncomfortable, but remember this is small steps.
3. In **Box 4** write down the positive outcomes and emotions you felt, and how you may feel differently about yourself having taken the courage to step out of your comfort zone.

The Fear or Anxiety I am going to overcome.

Step 1

Step 2

What did I experience, how do I feel different, what can I do next time to stretch myself further?