

Facing the things you avoid

There are 5 steps to this activity:

1. Make a list of things that you often avoid as a result of the trauma(s) you've experienced.
For example, "driving at night".
2. Give each situation a difficulty score out of 10. If a situation causes you no distress, rate it 0. If it causes you extreme distress, rate it 10.
3. Try to put the situations in order, from least to most distress. You'll find an example below of someone experiencing PTSD after a car accident.
4. Confront the easiest item on your list – the one that is least distressing.
5. Move on to the next situation.

For example:

Situation	Difficulty score (0 = no distress, 10 = extreme distress)
Driving to work	9
Watching a film or TV programme that shows a car crash	5
Getting into the car	2
Talking about the car accident	6

Although reducing avoidance might be difficult at first, if you keep going you will find it easier. The more you confront the things you're avoiding, the more your quality of life and confidence will improve.

Situation	Difficulty score (0 = no anxiety, 10 = extreme anxiety)