

# Exposure/Facing Up Skills

**What:** Teach skills to face up to fears and learn they can handle untrue or unhelpful fears or worries.

**Why?** Avoidance of feared activities lessens anxiety temporarily, but is not effective long-term and keeps anxiety going. Avoiding feared activities can get in the way of living life and accomplishing goals.

**How** to teach these skills...

**Tell about it:** Give an analogy to explain (overly sensitive fear/worry alarm).

## **Do: Create a Fear Ladder. Activity steps toward overcoming**

**unrealistic fears. Choose 1 unrealistic fear to start** Face one low-level activity (but not TOO low) in session and/or for first weekly practice. Stay in the situation (activity or thought) until the anxiety comes down (take ratings). If anxiety is low/comes down, keep taking steps UP the ladder right away!

## Client Practices It!

**(In Session Experiment: show exposure works) PRAISE EFFORT.**

**FEEDBACK/ENCOURAGEMENT TO REALLY DO IT.**

**CLIENT RATES FEELINGS OF FEAR BEFORE AND AFTER (0-10, OTHER METHOD)**

**Discuss and Assign Weekly Practice. What step will you practice this week?**

**When would be a good time to try it? What might get in the way (problem solve!) If you feel less afraid on this activity, what would be the next step? What can you do if it is harder than you thought it would be? Rate your feelings before and after and report back.**

**Points to Remember:**

- Make sure that the situation is really safe; if necessary have a back-up safety plan.
- If the activity is too hard, take a step BACK (move to easier activity). Do not back down from exposure entirely.
- Need help getting more rungs on the ladder (easier OR harder?): Ask: "What would make this activity easier?" "What would make this activity harder?"