

FINDING A STRATEGY TO MINIMIZE MY FEAR

The exercise will help you develop four different ways to minimize your fear. After developing the four ways, you will then choose the one that you feel would be best for you and try it for the following week when encountering your fear.

1. Develop fully each of the following methods for resolving your fear:

- A. *Exaggeration*: Start with identifying your fear; then imagine it as big, scary, ugly, and so on. Use as many descriptive words as possible. _____

Application: By imagining the worst that can happen in the worst possible way, the things you face don't seem so big or terrible.

- B. *Thought restructuring*: Record the three most common thoughts you have regarding your fear. After completing that, work with your therapist to restructure your fear-producing thoughts.

Thought 1: _____

Restructured: _____

Thought 2: _____

Restructured: _____

Thought 3: _____

Restructured: _____

Application: How you think about something effects your feelings. By changing your thoughts and perceptions, you change your feelings.

- C. *Therapist in your pocket:* Ask your therapist to provide you with three statements that will offer reassurance when you are encountering your phobia. Record them and then either commit them to memory or write them on a card to keep in your pocket at all times.

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____

Application: Reassuring and encouraging statements from people you respect and trust can help you cope with difficult or scary situations.

- D. *Distraction:* Create a favorite daydream to use to distract yourself when facing or thinking about the situation or thing you fear. Then choose an object to use as a distraction at other times.

Daydream: _____

Object (e.g., Rubik's Cube, Game Boy): _____

Application: When distracted, you forget your worries, fears, and troubles.

2. Choosing an approach to my fear:

- A. Identify which of the three approaches you feel would be most effective in helping you resolve your fear. _____

- B. Explain briefly the choice you made and why you feel it would be effective. _____

3. Now make a commitment to use the approach that you chose when you encounter the fear over the next week. Evaluate how effective it was in dealing with the fear on three occasions.

- A. _____

- B. _____

- C. _____
