



Facing up to avoidance

If we avoid difficult situations we might act against our values. Face up to avoidance to prove you can cope.

One way to control our emotions is to avoid situations that trigger unpleasant feelings. Over time, this becomes a pretty powerful habit. Avoiding situations that make us uncomfortable might be helpful in the short term. But repeatedly avoiding these situations can take us away from things and people that are important to us.

Avoidance gives us immediate relief from uncomfortable feelings, but can mean we end up acting against our values or missing out on achieving our goals. Regulating emotions involves being able to do the things that are important to us, even if we feel uncomfortable.

Unfortunately, avoidance means our mind becomes convinced we can't cope with unpleasant feelings. Our minds are like that – they need evidence that they can deal with difficult situations. A behavioral experiment is a way to gather some evidence to convince your mind that you can cope!

You don't expect to feel comfortable! But YOU WILL BE OK.

5 COPING THOUGHTS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR BEHAVIOURAL EXPERIMENT

Before you plan your experiment, it can be helpful to think up some coping thoughts. Here are some examples.



I'll be OK.



If I just do this, then it will be over soon.



I can handle this; I've survived worse before.



I'm in control; I can do this.



Not everything in life is what you want it to be; I can deal with this.



Write your own coping thought:



Picking your own coping thoughts can be helpful when planning to face a situation you have been avoiding.



PLAN YOUR EXPERIMENT

Plan and carry out a behavioural experiment to help you face up to a situation you have been avoiding. The goal is to test out whether you can cope and be OK. Use your coping thoughts to get through it.



PLAN

1. Write down the situation you are going to face.

2. What might happen? What will you do?

3. What is your back-up plan if that doesn't work?



OBSERVE

4. What did you notice? What happened?



REFLECT

5. What did you learn?



PRACTICE & REFLECT

During the next week, plan to conduct your experiment. Choose which day you are going to do it and put a tick in the calendar. Use some of the coping thoughts to get yourself ready.

MON



TUE



WED



THUR



FRI



SAT



SUN

