

Conquering Avoidant Tendencies

Avoiding certain situations and triggers is one way to escape from distressing thoughts and feelings related to trauma.

However, avoidance is a short-term solution, and often takes its toll on our daily lives.

Identifying avoidant tendencies is the first step to conquering them, by allowing us to identify our fears and gradually face them.

Use this *Conquering Avoidant Tendencies* worksheet to create a plan for overcoming avoidance.

Instructions

This exercise involves rating the distress you associate with things that you avoid.

Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Use a scale of 1-10, where:

1 = Least Distressing, and

10 = Most Distressing

What do you attempt to avoid?

List the things that cause you distress, and which you try not to expose yourself to. These may be external, e.g. situations, places, or people, or internal, e.g., thoughts, feelings, mental images.

Rank the things that cause you distress.

Using your responses to the previous question, rewrite the list in descending order below, starting with the things that cause you the most distress.

Identifying Action Steps

Taking with the lowest ranked item from your list above, consider how you might begin confronting this trigger. E.g. Taking the elevator up and down to the roof → Riding the elevator once a day for two floors.

Identifying Coping Mechanisms

For the action you've identified, consider what coping strategies you can employ during your exposure to the trigger. E.g. Deep breathing, positive visualization, distraction.

