

Response Prevention Planning: Health Anxiety

Exposure area/core fear: Fear of a catastrophic event (dying)

Goal of Exposures: To have fun without as much worry/rumination

Value(s) to connect with: Adventure, travel, nature, and fun

Hierarchy:

Exposure	SUDs
Stay in a hotel without checking sheets	10
Spend day in the sun without layers to prevent sun exposure	9
Go to the community pool and use a public shower	8
Sit on a public toilet	7
Drink or eat after someone	6
Eat at a new restaurant	3
Hug a friend	1

Response Prevention Plan Examples

Exposure example: Drink after a friend when spending the day together on a hike, and hug when saying goodbye

Anticipated compulsive urges: To ask friend if they are sick (reassurance), check your body for symptoms of the flu/cold/COVID, go to the doctor to get COVID test

Stimulus Control:

- Turn up music on drive home and sing when having urge to seek reassurance
- Put phone or computer in another room when having urge to set up doctor's appointment

Pick battles:

- Pick compulsive urge to challenge. For example, notice urge to body check and reassurance seek, and practice skills to interrupt reassurance seeking behaviors or ask friend to respond with uncertainty and limit time spent checking for symptoms or doing a body scan for symptoms

Postponing:

- Sit with the urge to call the doctor for 5 minutes without engagement, consider use of an incompatible behavior (such as calling a friend) and check-in with yourself. See if you can go another 5 minutes

Opposite Action:

- If your urge tells you to reassurance seek, intentionally lean into the uncertainty by saying "I don't know"
- If your urge tells you to check for symptoms of illness, check something else, like if your toes are touching

Label mental ritual and abandon:

- Label the urge to check and lean into uncertainty by saying "maybe I do have COVID"

Undo it:

- If you check for COVID symptoms undo it by coughing
- If you ask for reassurance from your friend, undo it by asking your friend to tell you that she is sick and that she probably got you sick

Written plan example:

I will go on a hike with my friend, spend time in the sun, and drink after her. I will take the exposure further by hugging her when we are saying goodbye. I will notice my urges and rate the intensity of my urges, and practice delaying. I will delay setting up a doctor's appointment for 24 hours and check-in with myself to see if I am having COVID symptoms.

Response Prevention Plan

Core fear: _____

Goals of exposures: _____

Value(s) to connect with: _____

Your Hierarchy:

Exposure	SUDs

Your written plan:

