



## **Anxiety Challenge List**



## **Exposure & Shame-Attacking Exercises**

Your printable toolkit to practice courage, build confidence, and overcome anxiety — one small step at a time.

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### **What's the Difference?**

#### **Exposure Challenges**

Designed to help you face *anxious avoidance*. These are for fears like speaking up, rejection, or doing something uncomfortable. You're practicing *doing the hard thing anyway* — calmly, gradually, and on purpose.

*Use exposure when you're avoiding something that makes you feel nervous, panicked, or "what if I fail?"*

#### **Shame-Attacking Exercises**

These help you get over *fear of judgment, embarrassment, or "looking weird."* You're doing something a little silly or awkward on purpose to prove that being judged isn't dangerous.

*Use shame-attacking when you're scared of looking foolish, awkward, or not enough.*

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### **Quick-Start Instructions**

- Choose **one** small fear or shame-based worry at a time.
  - Use the worksheet section to plan it out.
  - Take action, reflect, repeat — keep momentum going.
  - Track progress and celebrate wins (even awkward ones!)
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## Exposure Challenges

*Face real-life fears in small, doable ways — intentionally.*

Pick one that resonates with your personal anxiety triggers and try it this week:

- ✓ Speak up once in a group conversation — even if your voice shakes.
  - ✓ Make a small request you'd normally avoid (e.g. "Can I sit here?" or "Could you explain that again?").
  - ✓ Tell someone how you honestly feel — kindly and clearly.
  - ✓ Ask for help with something simple, like directions or an opinion.
  - ✓ Post a photo or story on social media without overthinking it.
  - ✓ Say "no" to something without explaining why.
  - ✓ Start a conversation with someone you usually just smile at.
  - ✓ Share an idea or comment in a meeting or class.
  - ✓ Say "I don't know" when you don't — and own it.
  - ✓ Go somewhere alone where you'd normally want company (like a café or movie).
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## Shame-Attacking Exercises

*Playfully challenge your fear of looking weird, wrong, or not enough.*

Choose something silly-but-safe that feels a little embarrassing — and go do it on purpose:

- Wear mismatched socks or a shirt inside out.
- Sing or hum a song softly while walking down the street.
- Ask a stranger a ridiculous question like “Excuse me, do you know where unicorns hang out around here?”
- Wave enthusiastically at someone random (bonus if they wave back).
- Ask someone to take a photo of you — even if there’s no “special occasion.”
- Ask for a “loyal customer discount” in a place you've never been before.
- Compliment yourself loudly in a mirror in a public restroom (“Dang, I’m doing great today!”).
- Read out loud from a random book in a quiet café for 15 seconds.
- Walk into a store and say “Just browsing for treasure, thank you!”
- Carry a small stuffed animal or odd object and talk to it briefly like it’s your assistant.

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## Quick Tips for Success

- Don’t wait to feel fearless — start small and let the courage grow.
  - If it feels mildly embarrassing or awkward, it’s probably working.
  - Laugh at yourself — that’s part of the power.
  - Journal or reflect after each challenge: *What did I learn? What surprised me?*
  - Celebrate every win — even just trying counts
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