



# Week 12: Behavioral Experiments II

## *Facing Avoidance*

**Avoidance feeds anxiety.** When we avoid something scary, we feel better briefly (relief), but our brain learns "That was dangerous! Good thing I avoided it." This makes the anxiety stronger next time.

To break this, we use a **Fear Ladder** (Exposure Hierarchy). We face fears gradually, step by step.

### Build Your Fear Ladder

Pick one fear (e.g., "Social Situations"). List steps from easiest to hardest. Rate the anxiety (0-100) for each.

**10** Giving a toast at a wedding

Anxiety: 95

**9** Going to a party where I don't know anyone

Anxiety: 85

**8** (Write your step here...)

Anxiety:   

...    ...

Anxiety:   

**3** Asking a stranger for the time

Anxiety: 40

**2** Making eye contact with a cashier

Anxiety: 30

**1** Imagining saying "hello" to someone

Anxiety: 15

## Homework

Start at Step 1 or 2. Do it repeatedly until your anxiety drops by half. Then move up to the next step.