

## Social Anxiety Graded Exposure List

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One of the core elements of social anxiety disorder is avoidance of social situations that produce worry or fear<sup>1</sup>. However, by not exposing yourself to these situations you limit your ability to disconfirm your worry and fears, which ultimately makes them even stronger. Graded exposure activities are designed to help you identify small, incremental steps you can take to engage in anxiety inducing social situations. Over time, these activities will help increase your confidence and reduce the amount of anxiety you experience in social situations.

To conduct your own graded exposure activity, begin by first completing the Social Situation Fear Hierarchy worksheet. Then, select one of the goals you identified on your fear hierarchy. Write this goal and the amount of distress you might experience in the social situation represented by this goal using a scale of 0 to 100 in the space provided on the table labeled **Fear Ladder**. Next, identify small steps you can take toward achieving your goal, writing each step in the column labeled **Steps** starting with number 1 in order from least to most distressing. Be sure to rate the amount of anticipated distress you might experience with each action in the column labeled **Distress**. Use the example below as a guide if necessary.

### Example Fear Ladder

<b>Goal:</b> To be able to meet new people at social gatherings.	<b>Distress:</b> 70
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<b>Steps</b>	<b>Distress</b>
8. Give someone new my phone number or social media information	70
7. Make small talk with a stranger at a party	65
6. Say "hi" to a stranger at a party	50
5. Go to a party and ask a friend to introduce me to someone	45
4. Go to a party with a friend	40
3. Call a friend I haven't spoken to in a while	35
2. Say "hi" to a stranger in passing	25
1. Make small talk with a cashier	15

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<sup>1</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>

## Fear Ladder

In the space below, write a goal that reflects how you would like to feel, think, and/or behave in a social situation in which you typically experience anxiety, along with the amount of distress you might feel in the situation using a scale of 0 to 100. Next, identify small steps you can take toward achieving your goal, writing each step in the column labeled **Steps** in order from least to most distressing. Be sure to rate the amount of anticipated distress you might experience with each action in the column labeled **Distress**.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>Distress:</b>
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<b>Steps</b>	<b>Distress</b>
10.	
9.	
8.	
7.	
6.	
5.	
4.	
3.	
2.	
1.	