Understanding agoraphobia

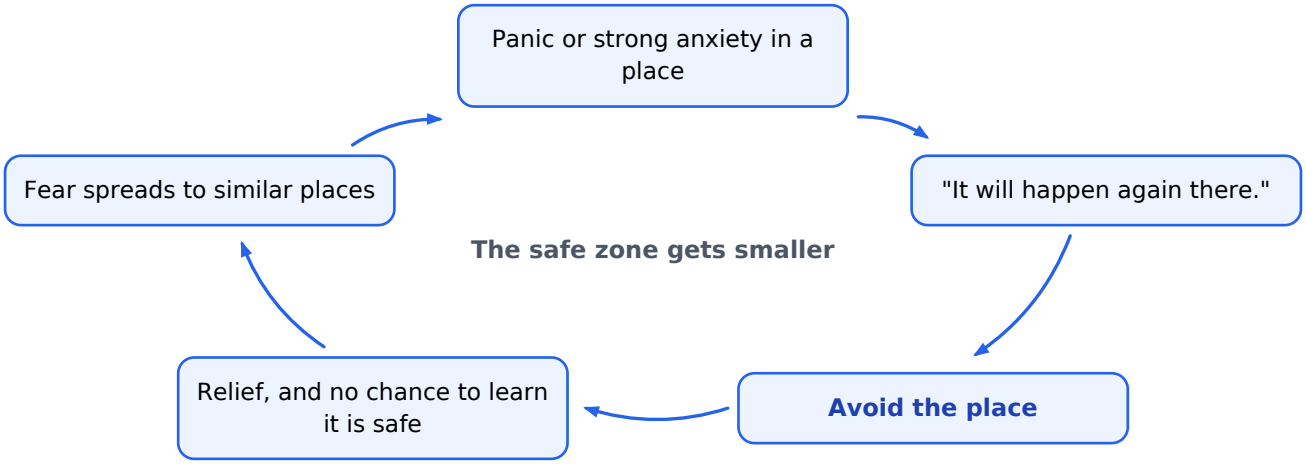
Fear and avoidance of places that would be hard to leave if you panicked.

Agoraphobia is not simply a fear of open spaces. It is a fear of being somewhere that would be hard to leave, or where help might not come, if you panicked or felt unwell. To stay safe, people start to avoid.

Commonly avoided

- [ ] Public transport
- [ ] Shops, supermarkets, queues
- [ ] Crowds, cinemas, restaurants
- [ ] Driving, motorways, bridges, tunnels
- [ ] Open spaces, car parks
- [ ] Being far from home
- [ ] Being at home alone
- [ ] Lifts and other enclosed spaces

How it grows



Some people can still do things with a trusted companion, with a "lucky" object, or at quiet times. These are safety behaviours. They help in the short term and keep the fear in place.

How it is treated

Agoraphobia is treated by going back, step by step, into the places you have been avoiding and staying long enough to learn what really happens. We build a ladder together. You set the pace.

Part of this work can happen outside the therapy room. If it would help, and once we have a good foundation, we can do some sessions out in the places that are hard for you.

The aim
To be able to go where you want, whether or not you feel anxious. Feeling no anxiety is not the target.

My notes and questions

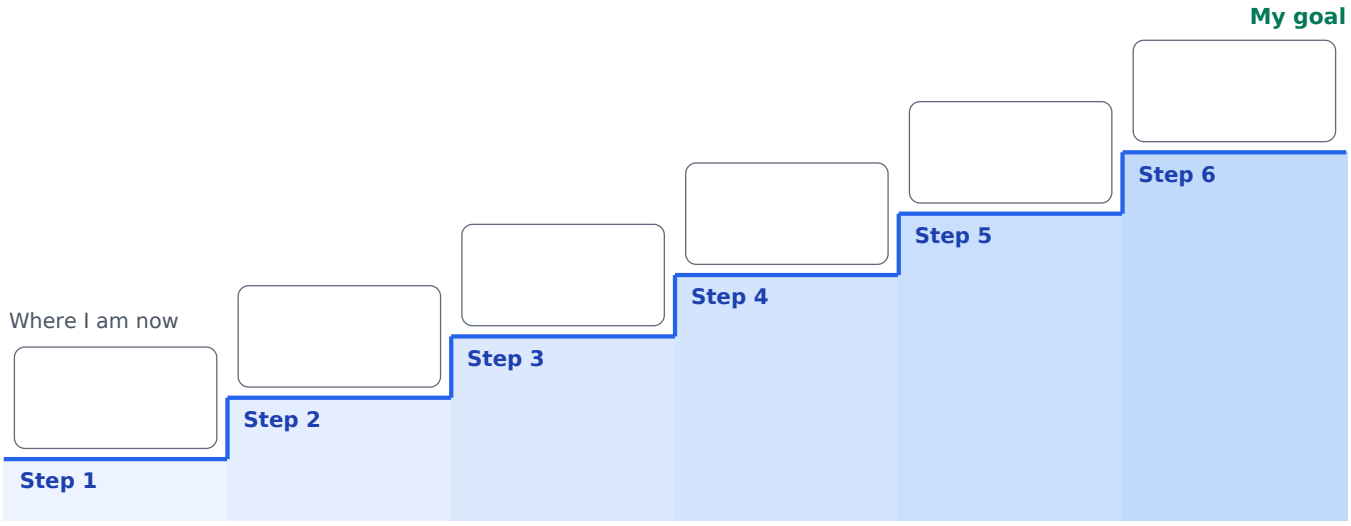
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Going out again: my step plan

A ladder of steps back into the places you have been avoiding, with a weekly record.

Name _____ Date _____

Where I want to be able to go, or what I want to be able to do



Make each step a bit harder than the last. You can change one thing at a time: how far, how long, how busy, and whether someone is with you.

Date	Step	What I predicted	Anxiety at peak (0 to 100)	What happened

Practise each step several times before moving up. Stay until you have found out what you needed to know.

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