Avoidance after trauma

How avoiding reminders keeps trauma symptoms going, with a list of what you avoid.

Name _____ Date _____

After trauma, it is natural to steer clear of anything that brings it back. In the short term this protects you. In the long term it teaches your brain that the reminders themselves are dangerous, and it shrinks your life.

Avoiding outside things

- Places, routes, people
- Activities, objects, clothes
- News, films, conversations
- Dates and times

Avoiding inside things

- Memories and images
- Feelings
- Body sensations
- Thinking or talking about what happened

What I avoid	What I fear would happen	What avoiding it costs me

Things I do to keep the memory away

☐ Keeping busy ☐ Drinking ☐ Never being alone ☐ Never being still ☐ Staying online

One reminder I would like to be able to face again, and why it matters

Facing reminders is done gradually and with support. This list is a starting point for planning, not a to-do list for tomorrow.

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com
This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.