

Safety Behaviours and Avoidance in Anxiety

Everybody who endures Anxiety exhibits Safety and Avoidance Behaviours.

Some Psychologist get right into what is a Safety Behaviours or an Avoidance strategy. At Starry Night, we think it can get over complicated and suggest you simply think of them as the things that you do to give yourself the best chance of avoiding or escaping the symptoms of anxiety when they might happen.

For example:

- Sitting close to the door in a full waiting room -so you can get out quick if you need to.
- Going to the shops with someone else “in-case” you get overwhelmed.
- Never going “too” far away from a bathroom.
- Rule based eating and exercise.
- Checking yourself in windows.
- Saying no to offers to go out.
- Saying yes, when you really don’t want to.
- Not answering phone calls, opening mail.
- Not handing in an assignment.

Etc, etc.... there are unlimited ways to make yourself artificially safe – from real threats, but also from experiencing the “symptoms” of anxiety.

In the box below, note your own safety and avoidance behaviours that you know you do. You will get help from your Psychologist to identify more – likely unconscious ones.

Your job over time, is to remove them and reduce them bit by bit, so that you allow your mind and body to recalibrate its Flight or Fight response to normal levels. That is, you become accustomed to ordinary living.

Note your Safety and Avoidance Behaviours Here