

Reducing Rescues

This week's session focuses on your progress in reducing rescues. You are participating in this group because you are hoping to see change in your child. However, it's important to not solely focus on specific changes in your child's behavior as the only metric for success. Remember, the fact that you *successfully changed your own behavior* is a significant sign of progress, no matter how your child is responding. Reducing rescues means that you have already accomplished three very important things:

1. You have shown yourself and your child that you can make a plan and stick with it.
 2. You have clearly communicated to your child that you are confident in their ability to withstand anxiety.
 3. By reducing rescues, you have guided your child to find alternative ways to cope with anxiety.
- So the next time you notice a thought like, "It's not helping," remind yourself of the progress that you have already made. The fact that you have begun to change the status quo is an accomplishment.

Rewarding behavior change

Consider an appropriate reward system to acknowledge your child's progress. Choose rewards that can be provided easily, often, and realistically.

- Choose rewards that are easy for you to keep track, and for you to provide the reward immediately/as soon as possible
- Consider rewards that are appropriate to be given daily (or even multiple times/day, depending on your family's plan)
- Choose rewards that you'll be able to follow through with (a trip to your family's favorite theme park is likely not a realistic daily reward)

Tips for success:

- Reward your child for coping with the anxiety, even if it's hard for them (and even if they are not happy about, or in agreement with, the plan).
- Remember, some children may respond more quickly to the plan, while others need more time to adjust to these big changes.
- Reinforce/rewards actions taken vs actions *not* taken (e.g., sleeping in your own bed vs *not* sleeping in parent's bed)
- Rewards are used to start (promote) behavior. Rewards are not used to stop behavior.

Continued on next page

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Home Practice

- Draft your second announcement and plan!
- Tell your child the announcement.
- Start the plan you created today.
- Chart rescues, including progress, challenges, and your child's reactions.