

Understanding Exposure and Response Prevention



ERP means meeting a feared trigger by choice while reducing the response that keeps the fear cycle going.

Exposure

Planned contact with a thought, image, object, feeling or situation that activates fear.

Response prevention

Choosing not to perform a usual compulsion, escape, check, reassurance request or other ritual - often gradually.

The learning goal

To discover that uncertainty and discomfort can be tolerated, urges change over time, and feared outcomes may be less likely or more manageable than predicted.

Important boundaries

ERP should be collaborative, graded and relevant to the person. It is not flooding, humiliation, coercion, or exposure to genuine danger.

A quiet space to reflect

Trigger I want to work on:

Usual response or ritual:

A smaller response I could reduce:

What I predict:

What I actually learn:

Use this resource at your own pace. Exposure work should never involve genuine danger or ignore medical, sensory or accessibility needs. Seek qualified support if fear is significantly restricting daily life.