

Imaginal exposure homework: Guidelines and monitoring sheet

The more you go through the imaginal exposure process, the quicker your distress will drop. Your therapist will encourage you to practice imaginal exposure at home by listening to a tape recording of a session of imaginal exposure. While this may cause some distress at first, listening to the imaginal exposure tape will help ensure that you will get the maximum benefit from your treatment.

Following the step-by-step guide to imaginal exposure homework, you will find a monitoring sheet designed for you to record your experience of home based imaginal exposure. Complete one line for each practice session.

Step 1: Preparation:

- Identify how much time you will need to complete the exercise as discussed with your therapist.
- Do not listen to the tape just before you plan to go to bed.
- Choose a private place with no interruptions (take the phone off the hook, let others know you are not to be disturbed) for that period of time.
- If other people are at home, you can use a walkman or earphones in order to maintain your privacy.
- Plan a task or activity for yourself after you have completed the exposure work.
- Remember this exercise has a beginning, middle and end.
- Note down your SUDS level on a piece of paper as described below.

Step 2: Confront the memory and come back safely:

- Clear your mind as much as you can of other thoughts and preoccupations. Focus on the task at hand.
- Listen to the tape in the same manner that you did during the imaginal exposure part of the session.
- Always listen to the tape of the last session.
- Listen to the tape with your eyes closed so you can maximize your focus on what is being said on the tape.
- Imagine as though you were experiencing the traumatic event now, including details of what is happening, what you see, hear, smell, touch, or taste. Focus also on what you are feeling and thinking.
- Note your SUDS level just before you begin to listen to the tape. After you have finished listening to the tape, note your peak SUDS and your SUDS at the end.
- Don't stop the tape in the middle; continue with the memory through to the end.
- If you do not have a tape, replay the event in your mind as if it were happening right now; continue with the memory through to the end.

Step 3: Process the memory by writing down some or all of:

- Did you learn any thing new from revisiting your traumatic memory?
- Are you now thinking differently about any aspects?
- What feelings or thoughts are going through your mind right now?
- What parts of the memory are still too upsetting to remember or accept?

Step 4: Put away the tape and equipment. Do your planned activity

Name: _____

Imaginal exposure monitoring – homework

Date	Length of exposure (mins)	Incident	SUDS			Comments
			Pre	Peak	Post	