

What is anxiety? Anxiety is a normal, helpful feeling that everyone has. It is our body's natural alarm system, showing up when we feel in danger, or when we think something bad might happen. Anxiety causes [changes throughout our body](#), which are designed to alert us that there is a problem and help us survive danger and perform our best.



How does anxiety show up in your body?

When is anxiety a problem? Anxiety is a problem when it stops us from doing things we need or want to do, or when we get too upset about normal situations. You can check out [this inventory](#) for the most common ways anxiety can become a problem.

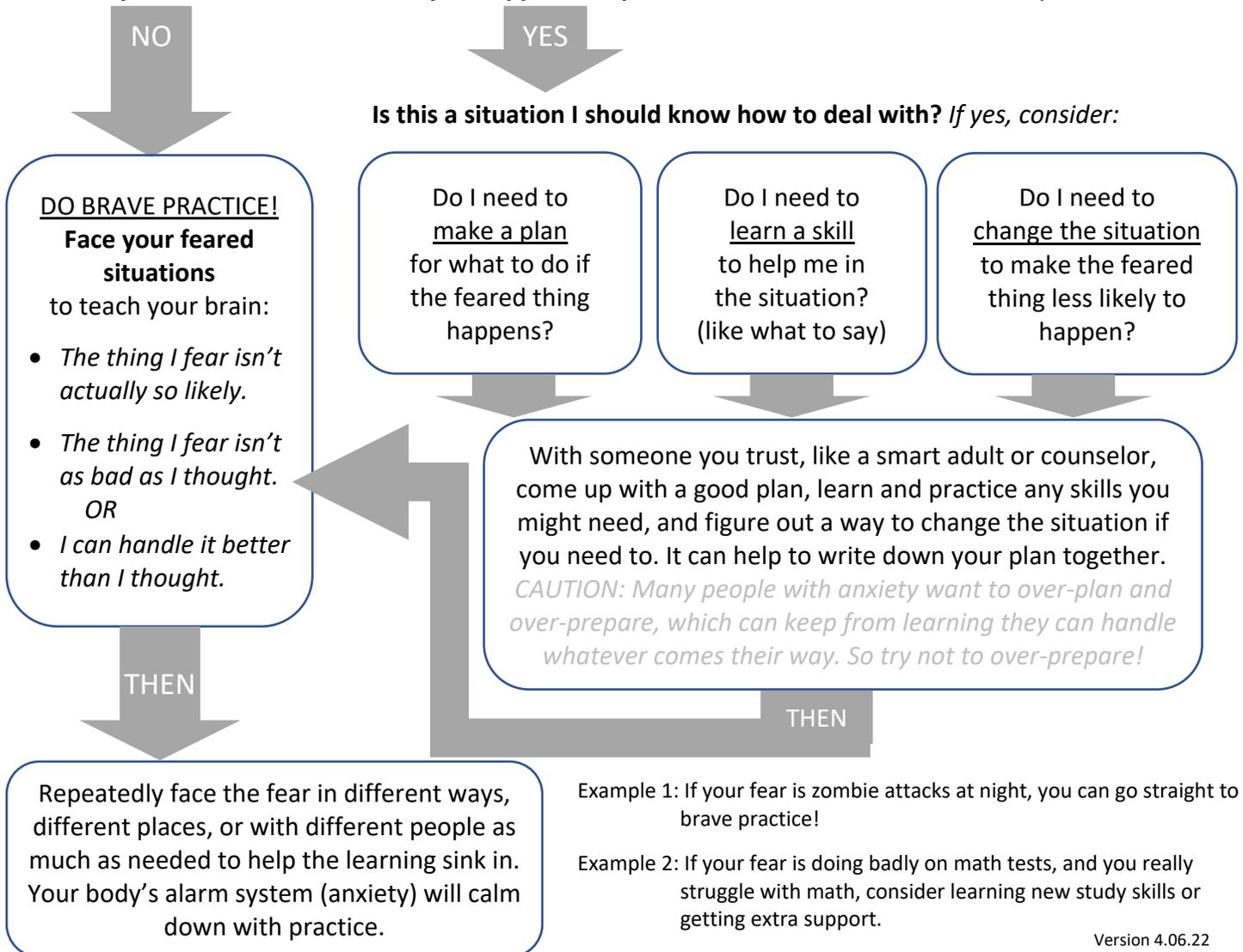
What important things does anxiety stop you from doing?

What should I do when my anxiety is getting in the way? First, try to remember that anxiety is not dangerous and can boost your performance in a good way. Use the questions and paths below to see what else can help.

What is a situation where anxiety gets in the way for you? Write it here: _____

What do you fear will happen in that situation? Write your fears here: _____

Are my fears realistic? Is this likely to happen in my life? Follow the arrow that matches your answer.



Ready for Brave Practice? Pick one of your fears and try to come up with a variety of ways you could face safe situations that bring up this fear. Some easy, some medium, some hard. (*Here are [child](#) and [teen](#) examples.*)

Easy situations:

Medium situations:

Hard situations:

Next, do BRAVE PRACTICE and face some of these feared situations! You can start with the easy things, or you can go right to harder things to get faster progress. (Of course we don't face fears when the situation is really dangerous. We only face fears when the situation we fear involves safe or normal risks.)

When you face your feared situations, it helps to follow these steps:

1

Make a prediction. What is your anxious brain telling you?

These bad things are likely to happen->

It would be really bad in these ways->

I couldn't handle it. I will not be able to ->

2

Face the fear! You can expect to feel scared...but that is OK!

In fact, feeling scared is an important part of re-training your brain's alarm system to not react so strongly in the future.

3

Test out your predictions. Try to stay in the situation until your anxiety settles down or you start to see that your fears were not accurate. Try NOT to run away from the situation when you are still super anxious, or that could make your fear grow.

For lots of kids and teens, this is very hard work. Facing fears is usually the last thing we want to do, and that is why anxiety can be hard to overcome...but it really works!

REWARDS are a great way to help kids and teens face their fear. Facing fears **a little every day** is the quickest way to overcome anxiety problems. See if your parents or other caregivers will agree to a reward plan for daily practice. Special privileges, treats, or points toward earning a bigger prize are some ways to help youth follow through with daily practice when it is hard.



Jot down any ideas you have about a rewards plan that could work for your family:

You can find lots more helpful ideas, and worksheets for planning and recording your brave practices, in the full FAST-Anxiety workbook. Click [here for kids](#) and [here for teens](#).