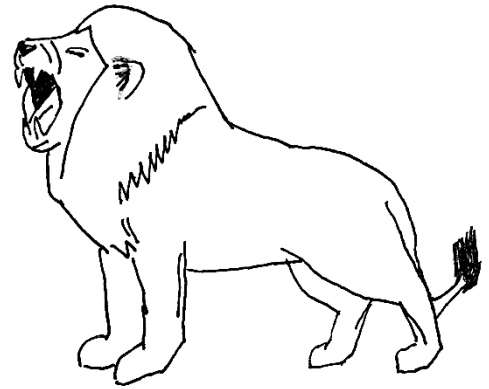


# First Approach Skills Training for Anxiety (FAST-A)

## Workbook



FAST-A is a brief program for youth with anxiety and their caregivers.  
It is meant to be your first step to overcoming problems with anxiety.

For some families, more support (such as a full course of cognitive-behavioral  
therapy, or certain medications) can also be helpful.

Nat Jungbluth, PhD  
Kendra Read, PhD  
Jennifer B. Blossom, PhD

*This workbook was made possible by funding from the WA State Healthcare Authority, as well as feedback and contributions from many generous colleagues. Special thanks to the dedicated primary care-based stakeholders across WA State who have piloted and contributed to the development of this program.*

## How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is intended for youths (ages 7 to 11) and their caregivers.

Below is the way most families work through the workbook (together with a healthcare provider, or on their own). If you need to move slower or faster that is totally fine.

### Meeting 1

Go through pages 3-18 together. Use page 18 to record what happens that week.

### Meeting 2

Go through pages 19-29. Use page 28 to record what happens that week.

### Meeting 3

Go through pages 30-32. Use page 31 to record practice over the next week.

### Meeting 4

Use pages 33-36. Use page 36 to record practice over the next week.

### After Meeting 4

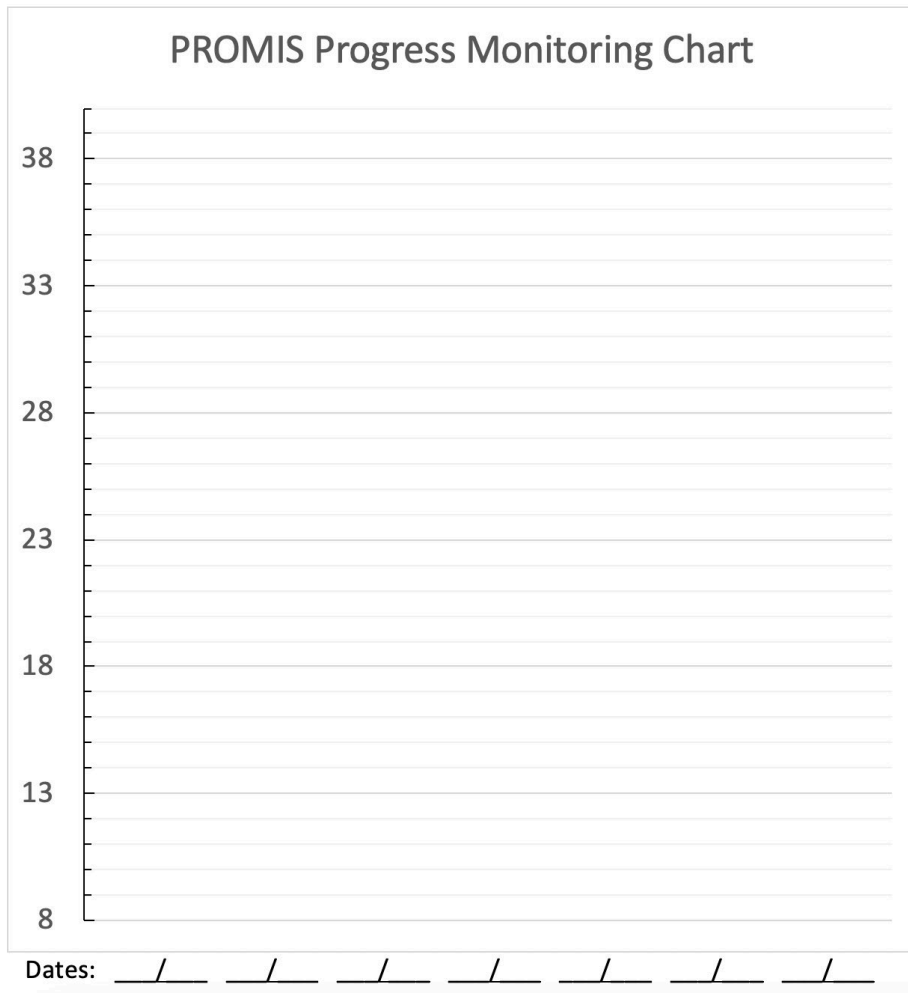
Continue to practice the skills independently, or with occasional check-ins with your healthcare provider. Use pages 37-40.

# Tracking Your Progress

As you go through this program, it helps to check in every couple of weeks to measure progress. Below is a chart you can use to see what happens to your anxiety over time.

We recommend using the PROMIS questionnaire (here is the [child/teen version](#), and here is the [parent/caregiver version](#)).

After you fill it out, write in the date below put a dot right above the date to show the score you got. You can label P for parent score and C or T for child or teen score if you want to track both.



## FAST-A Meeting 1

Check out the information below to learn about anxiety problems and how to overcome them!

### What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a word for the uncomfortable feeling we all get when we think something bad might happen. It is a normal, natural feeling that everyone has.

Anxiety is often helpful, but sometimes it gets too strong and starts to interfere in our lives.

People use different words to describe anxiety, like *frightened*, *stressed*, *scared*, or *worried*. What words do you use?

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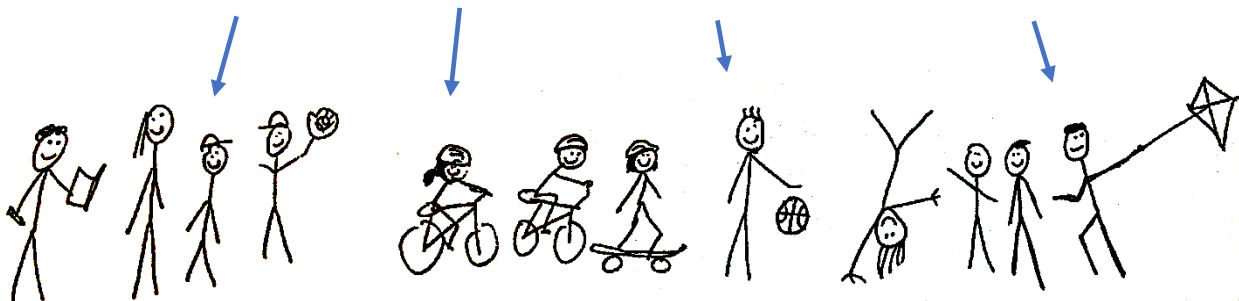
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### Did you know?

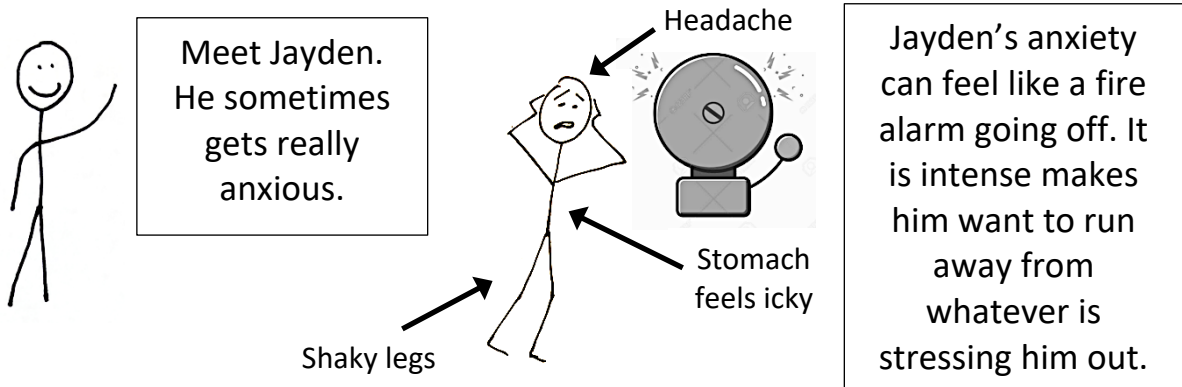
About **one in every three kids** has a big anxiety problem at some point while growing up...and **one in three adults** do too!

So...out of these 12 kids and teens, about **FOUR** will have problems with anxiety at some point that keep them from doing things that matter to them.

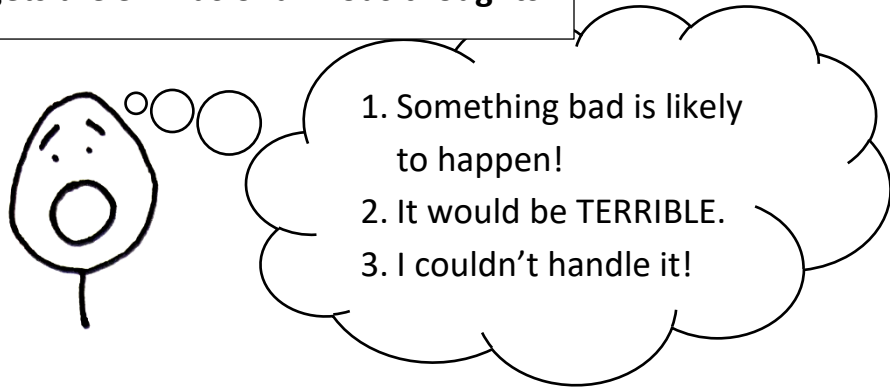


Many famous people have struggled with anxiety! You probably even know a few, like Selena Gomez, Adele, Bill Heder, or Lady Gaga.

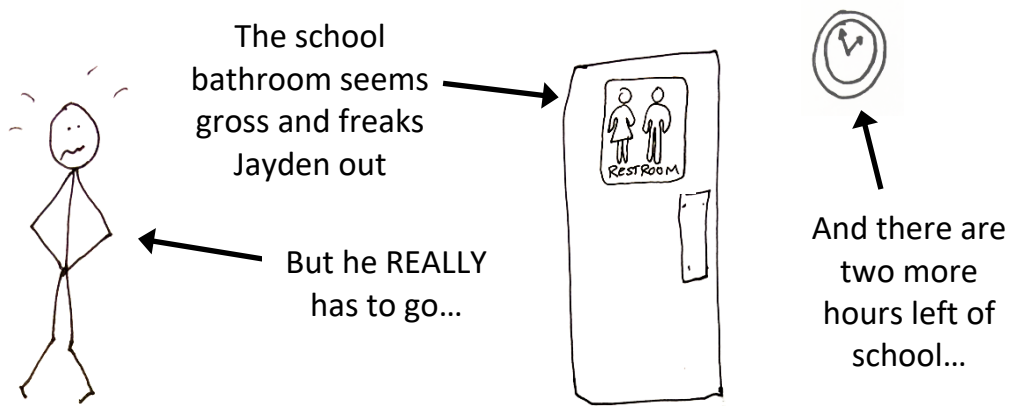
# Jayden Thinks Anxiety Stinks



And Jayden gets the **3 kinds of anxious thoughts**:



And Jayden's anxiety often shows up when it's really...not fun...



If anxiety is such a pain, why do we even have it? Learn what it's good for on the next pages.

# What is the **Stress Boost** response?

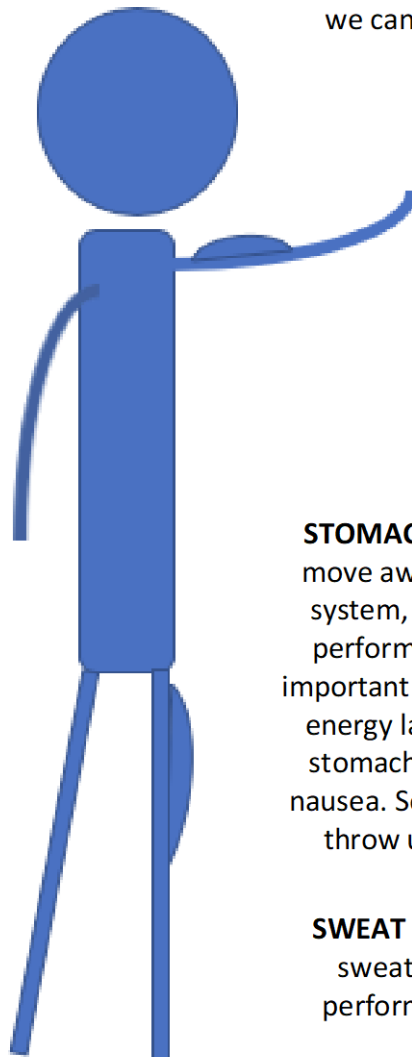
When we feel **anxious, excited** or **in danger** our body gets a **BOOST**.

**HEAD** - Our brain turns on the stress boost system when it notices danger or challenges. Sometimes people get headaches when anxious.

**BREATHING** - Our lungs may breathe faster to get extra oxygen to our brain and muscles. We might feel a little dizzy from extra oxygen.

**HEART** - Our heart may beat faster, to get extra blood, oxygen and energy to our brain and big muscles so they are stronger and faster.

**SKIN** - Blood often moves away from the surface of our body, and our hands and feet, which is good if we get injured. It can make our skin feel cold or tingly, and we might look pale.



**EYES** - Our eyes may open wider to let in more light, so we can better spot danger.

**MUSCLES** - Extra blood and energy flows to our big muscles to help us fight or escape danger. Our muscles can feel tense and a bit shaky from the boost of energy and blood sugar.

**STOMACH** - Blood and energy move away from our digestive system, because survival and performance **NOW** are more important than digesting food for energy later. This can feel like stomachaches, butterflies, or nausea. Sometimes people even throw up or have diarrhea.

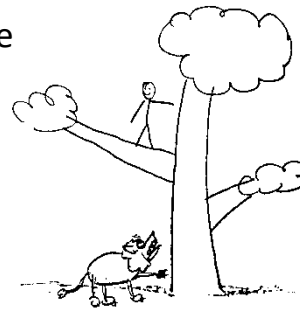
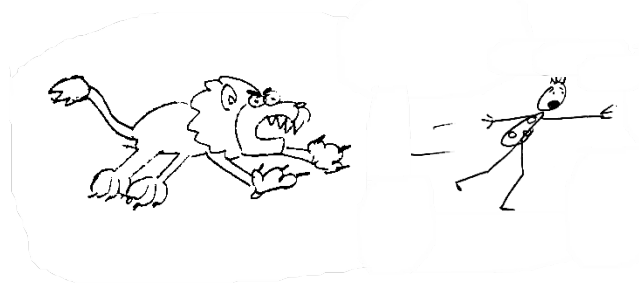
**SWEAT** - Our skin often gets sweaty, to help our high performance body cool off

**These changes are not dangerous and are often helpful!**

Your job is not to get *rid* of anxious feelings, but to learn to do the things you need and want to do *anyway*. Doing this will help re-train your stress boost to only go off when you really need it.

**FUN FACT:** Scientists call some of these changes the “fight, flight, freeze” response because they help animals fight, flee or freeze to get out of danger.

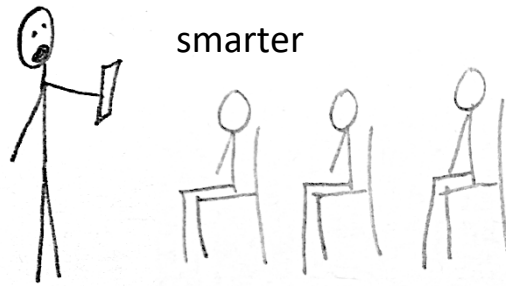
The **stress boost response** helped our ancestors survive



And it can make us faster



smarter

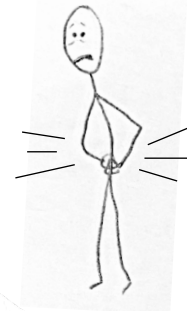


and safer

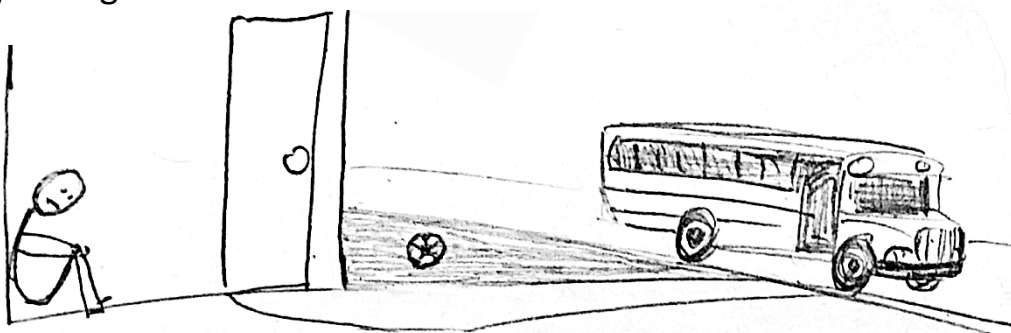
Yikes!  
That was close!



...even though it can often be uncomfortable



The stress boost can help us as long as we don't miss out on life by hiding from it.



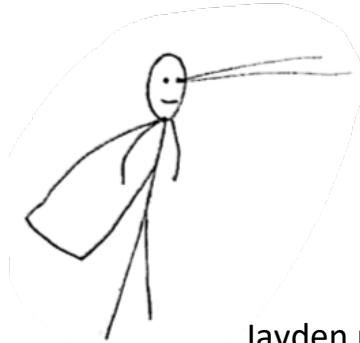
## Why do some people seem to get more anxious?

Sometimes having a strong stress boost system is like being a bit taller or having brown eyes. It's just a part of who we are. We can also get more stress boost and danger alert reactions after scary things happen to us.

The cool thing is that having strong stress boost and danger alert systems can help us do extra well at things!

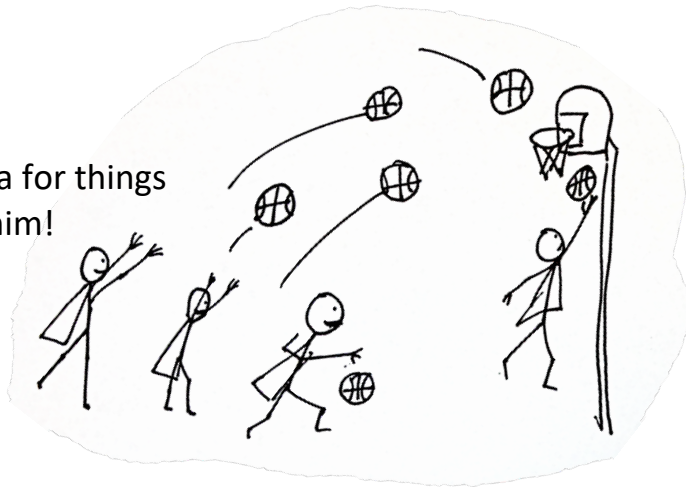


Remember Jayden? His stress boost and danger alert system is EXTRA strong. For him it sometimes works like having a super power...



Jayden sees problems 10 miles away!

Jayden prepares extra for things that are important to him!

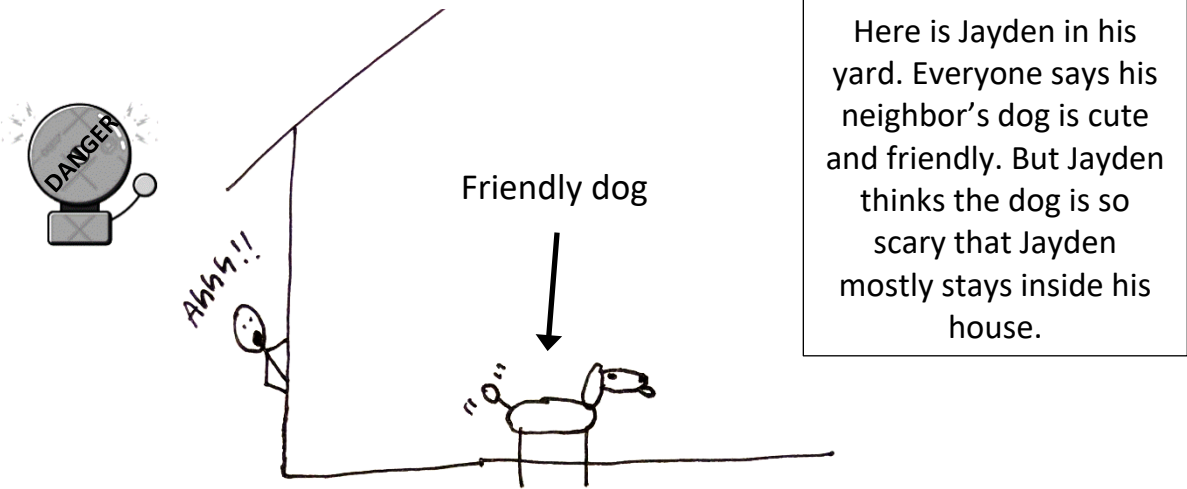


Jayden gets his performance **boosted** in situations that matter!

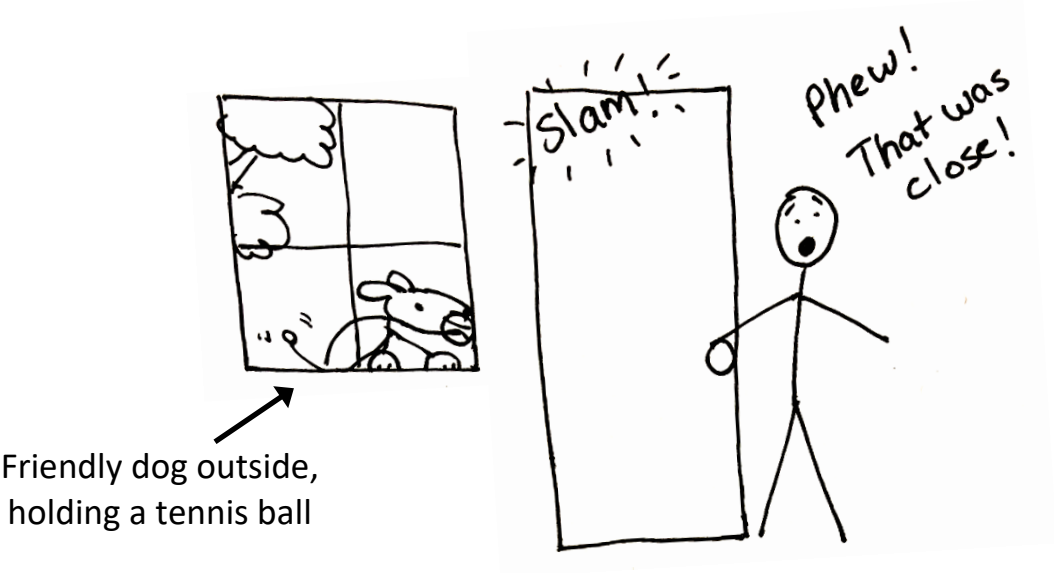




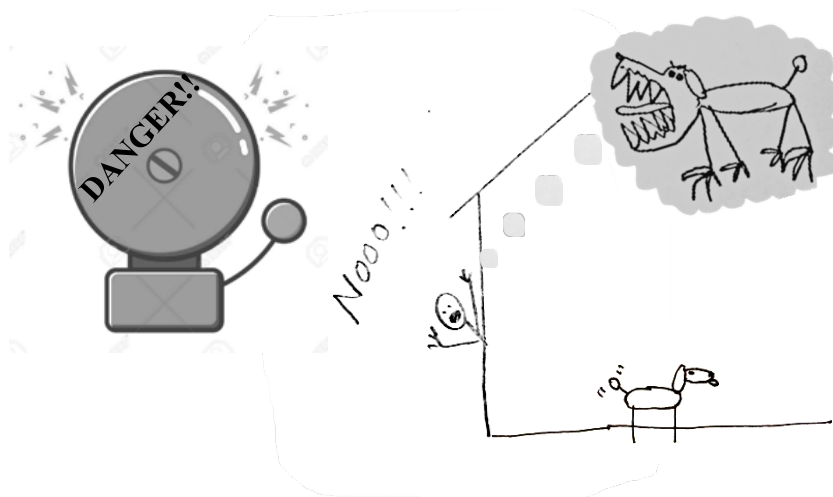
But other times Jayden's danger alert system is too sensitive....



When we stay away from normal situations that FEEL scary but are actually pretty safe...well, we usually feel a lot SAFER! We feel RELIEVED!



But over time, **avoiding normal situations** only makes us more scared of them. The situations we avoid begin to feel more and more dangerous!



Jayden has been avoiding the dog for 5 weeks, and for Jayden the dog is starting to seem like a **terrifying monster**. Jayden's fear alarm goes off **big time** whenever he is outside and the dog is around.

The good news is there is a way **we can CHANGE how scary things feel!**

We can learn to **turn down the fear alarm** by slowly trying out the safe things we are scared of.

## What is “Exposure” or “Brave Practice”?

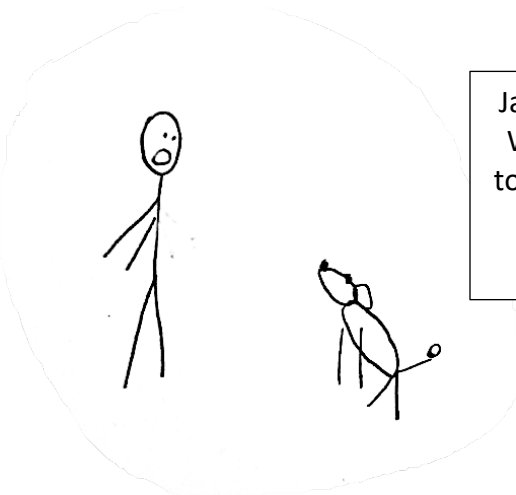
**Exposure** is a fancy word for facing our fears to turn down our anxiety. Some people call this “brave practice.”

To make things feel less dangerous, we just need **new experiences** to teach our brain and body we aren’t actually in great danger.

When we face our fears we learn:

- \* the bad thing we expect doesn’t actually happen!
- \* the bad thing isn’t as bad as we thought
- OR...
- \* we handle it better than we thought we would.

That’s it.  
That’s brave practice.



Jayden is tired of only playing inside. With his dad’s help, Jayden decides to try facing his fear to get over it. He makes a plan to spend some time with the neighbor’s dog...

## How it works

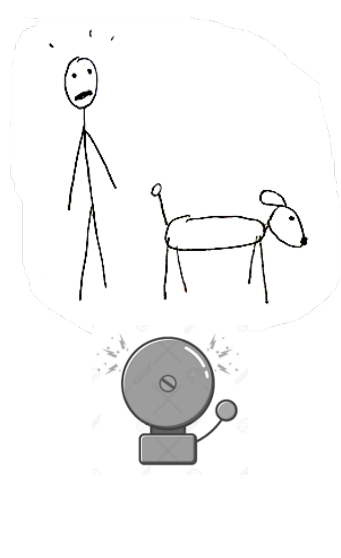
The more times we face our fear and it turns out ok, the more our brain and body will settle down. The fear alarm gets quieter.

Watch what happens to Jayden's fear alarm when he spends a little time with the dog every day for a week.

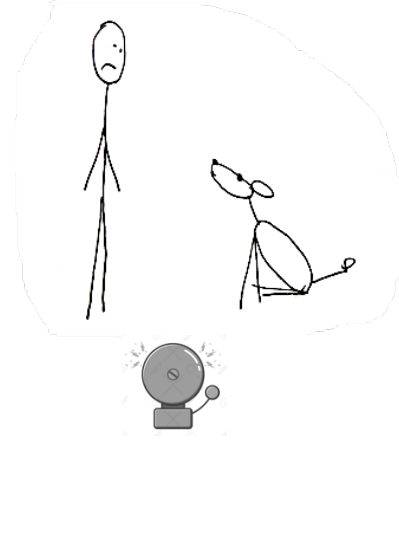
Monday



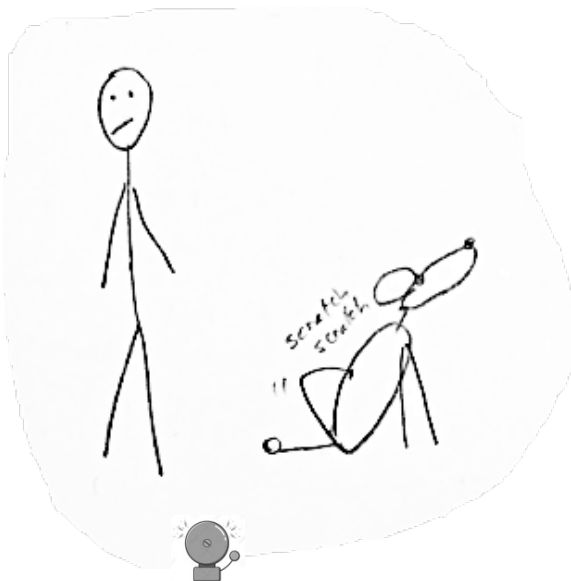
Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



## But what if the danger is real?

Sometimes the thing we fear is something that could actually happen, or we need some **new SKILLS** or a **PLAN** to have things turn out ok.

Check out a few of these **common fears** and some ways that **skills and plans** can help kids feel more brave.



Dogs

Learn to greet dogs safely  
Learn ways to tell if a dog is unsafe



Bullying

Learn tips for responding to teasing  
Get more supervision or support from adults



Failing a test

Get more support at school  
Learn study skills  
Get extra practice



Dangerous neighborhood or people

Make a plan to walk with friends  
Figure out which places are safe/not safe  
Plan what to do if something dangerous happens



Fires, earthquakes

Make a plan in your family, learn ways to stay safe



Situations we don't know how to handle

Get good advice  
Practice what you'll say or do

Once we have a plan, or some new skills, we feel more brave.  
We can face our fears and our brain will learn:

- \* the bad thing isn't so likely  
*or*
- \* the bad thing isn't quite so bad  
*or*
- \* we can handle tough things like  
this



So, for each of your fears, we will ask:

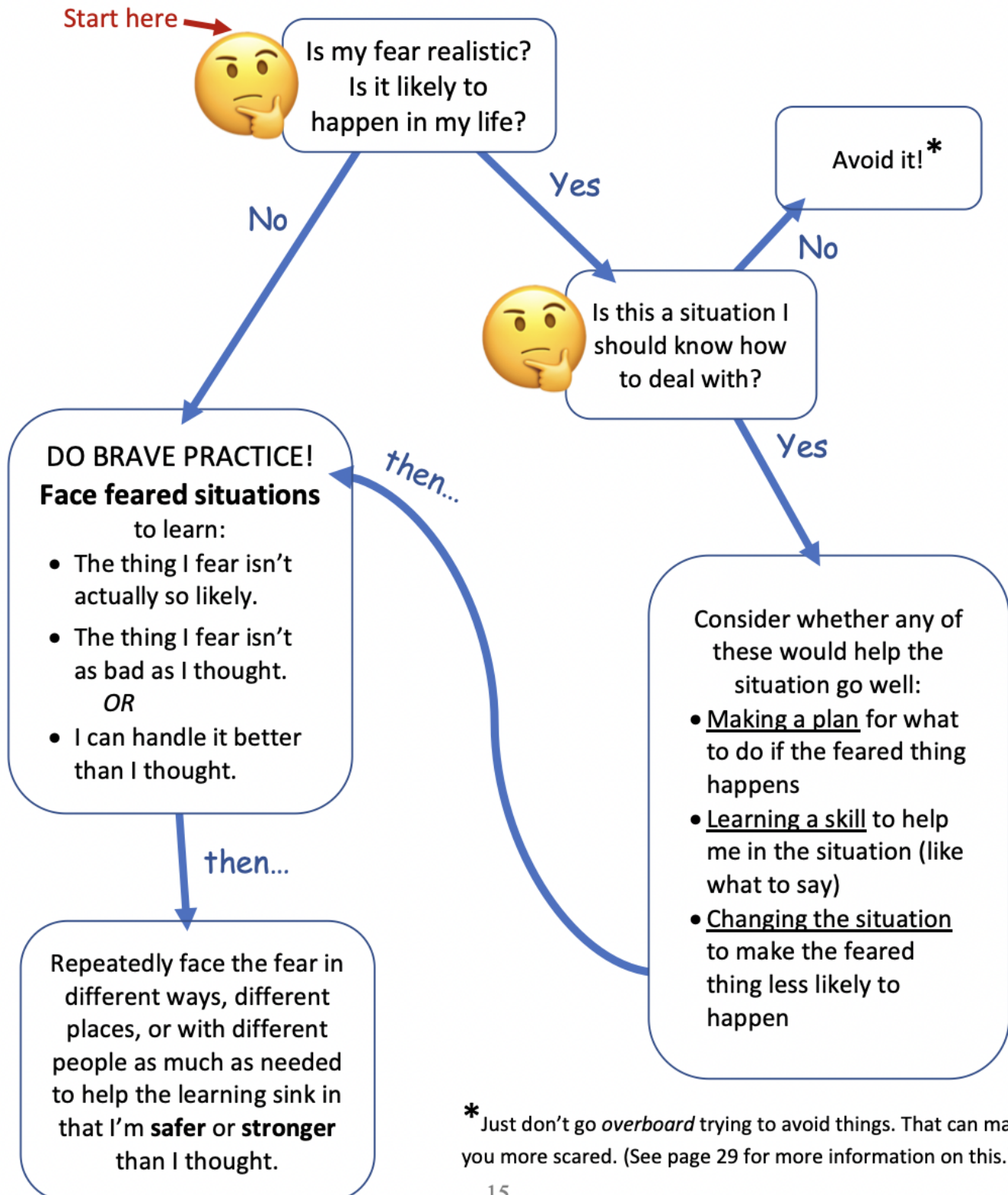
- Is this fear something that might really happen?
- Would some new skills or a plan help you face your fear, if you have to?

For any fear you want to conquer, use the guide on the next page to decide what to do...

Answer the questions and follow the paths for these two example fears:

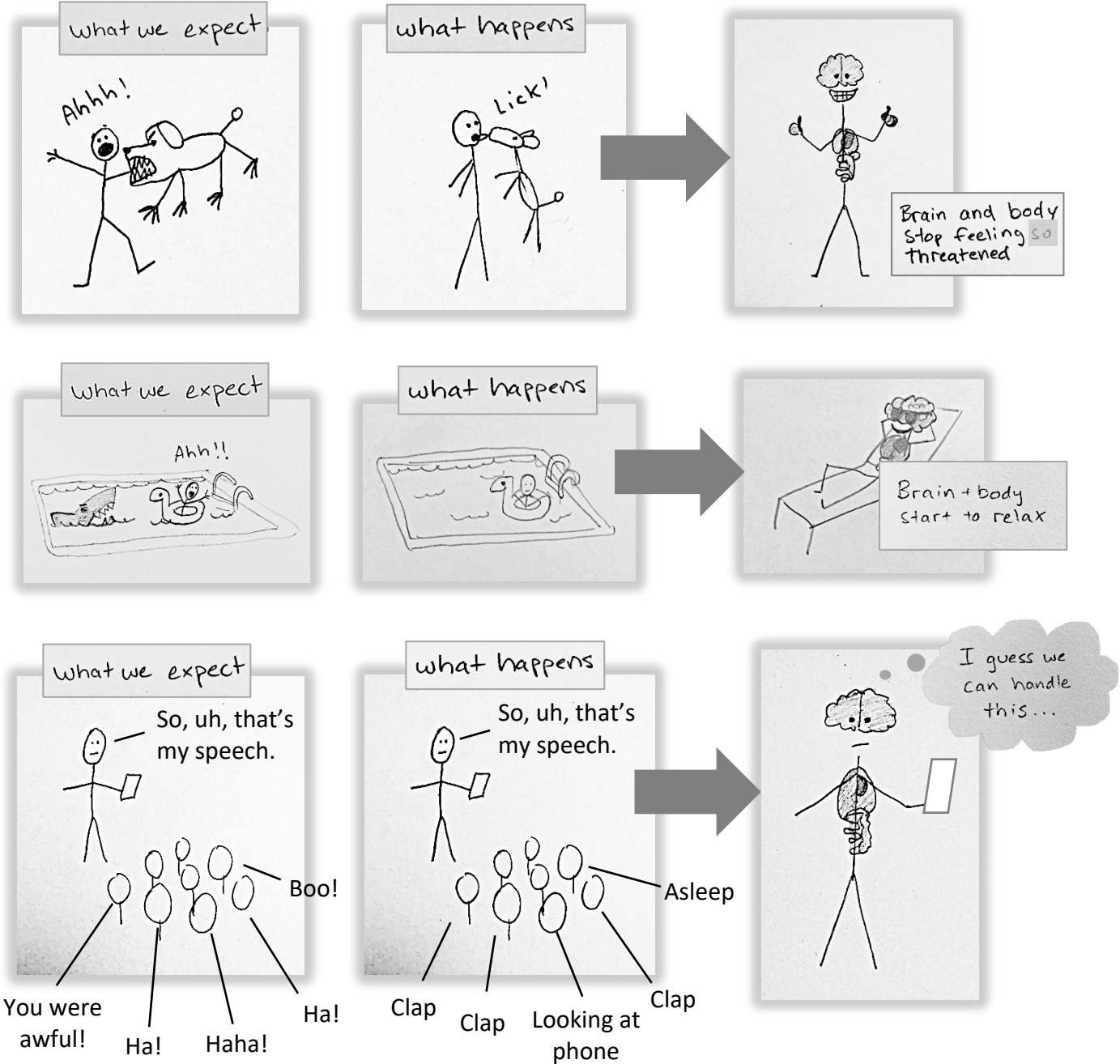
1. I won't leave my house at night because I'm afraid of zombies.
2. I won't go to places like the zoo because I'm afraid I will get lost.

## Guide for Overcoming Fears



Brave practice, or facing fears, changes our brain and body's threat alarm. All you have to do is have experiences that **don't match what you expect**.

The more you face your fear and things go ok, the more your brain and body will settle down.



Can you think of times when **real life didn't match your fears**?  
When things you were scared of turned out better than you expected?  
What happened to your anxiety?



## FAST-A Meeting 1 Summary:

- Anxiety is a normal feeling.
- Problems with anxiety are very common (about 1 in 3 people).
- Anxiety can help us do our best.
- Avoiding things, when they aren't actually dangerous, can lead to problems, including more anxiety and distress.
- You can change your body's fear reactions by facing fears (brave practice).
- You can face fears in small steps at first to make it easier.
- Sometimes when facing fears it is helpful to learn new skills or make a plan. Other times you can just go right ahead and face your fear.

The next 2 pages are for you to complete at home this week.  
In your next FAST-A meeting you will learn more about how brave practice works.

## At-Home Practice – Week 1



### Where is anxiety a problem for you?



Like ice cream, there are many different flavors of anxiety. Some flavors of anxiety will sound like what you struggle with, some will not. Many of these things would make most people anxious or worried. Check off the items that usually make you feel really upset or have started to get in the way of your life. **Put a star next to the things that would be extra important for you to work on. Use this information to set goals with your provider.**

#### Being away from family

- being apart from your parents or other caregivers, during the day or at night
- staying at school or in class

#### Social stuff

- worry that people might think something bad about you or laugh at you, or that you will be embarrassed
- speaking to new people
- answering questions in class
- eating or using a bathroom around other people
- standing up for yourself

#### Worrying

- worrying that something bad might happen to you or the people that you love (health and safety)
- doing well enough in school or other activities (e.g., dance, music, sports)
- your future
- things going on in the world or in your community (e.g., politics, crime)
- natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, tornadoes)
- family stress (e.g., divorce, finances)

- worry about little things that have happened in the past

#### Specific fears

- fear of specific animals (e.g., dogs, spiders, insects), heights, storms, the dark, vomiting, needles/shots, choking or something else very specific

#### Feelings in your body

- feeling anxious in your body (e.g., difficulty breathing, heart racing, feeling dizzy) out of the blue
- wanting to avoid places where you've felt anxious in your body before

#### Other stuff

- not making mistakes or being perfect
- thoughts about being contaminated by germs, dirt, or chemicals
- thoughts that are scary, violent, or sexual that make you feel really afraid
- worries that you might do something that you do not want to do
- things that you have to do repeatedly (washing, checking things, asking questions) or have to do in a certain order or routine

## At-Home Practice – Week 1

What are one or two goal areas you want to work on during this program? Think of times or places that anxiety currently gets in the way for you. Use the checklist above to get ideas.

Goal Area	How will life be different when I conquer this fear/worry?
1	
2	

To help track your progress, please rate how much you think anxiety problems are messing up your life right now, on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely):

Youth rating: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/caregiver rating (about youth's life): \_\_\_\_\_

How did I notice anxiety in my life this week?

Event or situation	What I worried might happen	How Anxious I felt (0-10)	What happened?

Caregivers, please also review the [FAST-A 2-page Caregiver Handout](#).

## FAST-A Meeting 2

1. Review your At-Home Practice sheets. Decide on the first Goal Area you will work on together.
2. Read the next section to learn the 4 tricks to make brave practice work best.
3. Use the “My Goal/Retrain Your Brain” worksheet to make a plan for reaching your goal.
4. Check out the Brave Practice Examples for Common Fears sheet to get ideas you can use.

## Four tricks to make brave practice work best



### 1. Start easy.

You don't have to face the really scary stuff right away. You can start with easier steps and move on to harder stuff.



### 2. Choose the right practice.

Pick challenges that will help you with your goals and test out your specific fears. This sometimes means doing unusual things, like making mistakes on purpose, to see if what you fear really happens.



Meet Alysha. She worries people will tease her, so she spends way too much time fixing her hair and picking out clothes. She avoids crowded places where people might notice her.

Here are some of Alysha's brave practices:



Messed up hair at a public library



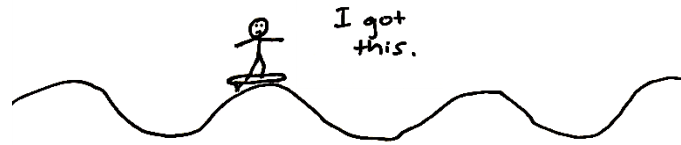
Strange clothes at coffee shop



Water spill on her shirt at school

During each brave practice, Alysha pays attention to whether her fears are really true. *(Do people notice? Do people tease her? Can she handle the discomfort? Can she cope with people's comments?)*

The brave practices are hard at first, but only one person comments on the water spill and it's not a big deal.



### 3. Ride the anxiety waves.

When we face our fears, our anxiety usually goes up and down, like waves in the ocean. That's normal! In fact, having the anxiety go up and down when we face fears helps us learn.



Brave practice is also a lot like weightlifting or working out—when it feels hard, that is a sign you are getting a REALLY GOOD workout, and you are teaching your brain a lot.

### 4. Stay until you learn.



When we face our fears, it is important to **stay in the situation** long enough for our brain and body to **learn something new**.

Depending on the fear, this might be 5, 10 or even 30 minutes. If we get freaked out and run away, this doesn't help and can make our fears even bigger.

So, try to stay in the situation until you can tell your brain is learning:

*Maybe my fear isn't so likely*

*Maybe this isn't so bad*

*Maybe I can handle things like this.*



Usually you'll notice your stress level start to go down as your brain and body take in the new experience, but don't worry if it doesn't.

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hint: Pick something you'd like to be able to do if you can overcome your fear)



Below, write in some steps you could take to help your brain learn it doesn't need to feel so scared about doing your goal. Fill in 10-15 ways you can face your fear including some easy, medium and hard ones. (Check out the **Brave Practice Examples Sheets** for ideas!)

Harder Steps

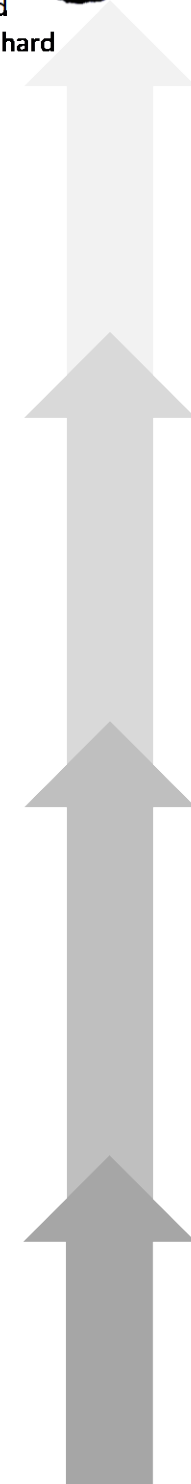


*PRO TRAINING TIP:  
Unlike lifting weights,  
for Brave Practice you  
can skip right to the  
harder workouts for  
faster results!*

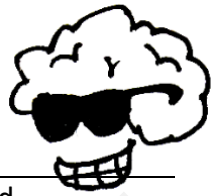
Medium Steps



Easier Steps



Train Your Brain...with Brave Practice Workouts!



# My Goal: To go to a friend's house when they have a dog

(Hint: Pick something you'd like to be able to do if you can overcome your fear)

Below, write in some steps you could take to help your brain learn it doesn't need to feel so scared about doing your goal. Fill in 10-15 ways you can face your fear including some easy, medium and hard ones. (Check out the **Brave Practice Examples Sheets** for ideas!)

## Harder Steps



Go to a dog park and walk around inside

Lay down on the floor with a dog in the room

Give a dog a treat ✓

Let a dog lick your face ✓

Let an energetic dog sniff your hand ✓

Visit a pet rescue or shelter ✓

Pet a dog you meet on the street

Brush past a dog when walking down the street (don't cross the street!)

Watch a video of a military/police dog in training

Be in the same room as a dog when they play with a toy

## Medium Steps



Go to a dog park and watch from the outside

Let a calm dog sniff your hand

Go into a pet store when there are dogs there

Watch your parent or sibling play with a dog from another room or across the street ✓

Go on a walk with your neighbor when they walk their dog ✓

Watch a video of a kid playing with a dog

Watch a dog-themed "Try Not to Laugh" video ✓

## Easier Steps



Watch a movie that has a dog as a main character ✓

Watch a video about dog social cues

Watch a video of puppies playing

Listen to people's stories about their dogs ✓

Play with dog toys

Watch a video of puppies sleeping

Look at a picture of a dog

Look at pictures of dogs dressed up in costumes

Play with a stuffed dog

# Train Your Brain...with Brave Practice Workouts!





(This is an extra copy for any other goals you want to work on in the future.)

My Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hint: Pick something you'd like to be able to do if you can overcome your fear)



Below, write in some steps you could take to help your brain learn it doesn't need to feel so scared about doing your goal. Fill in 10-15 ways you can face your fear including some easy, medium and hard ones. (Check out the **Brave Practice Examples Sheets** for ideas!)

Harder Steps

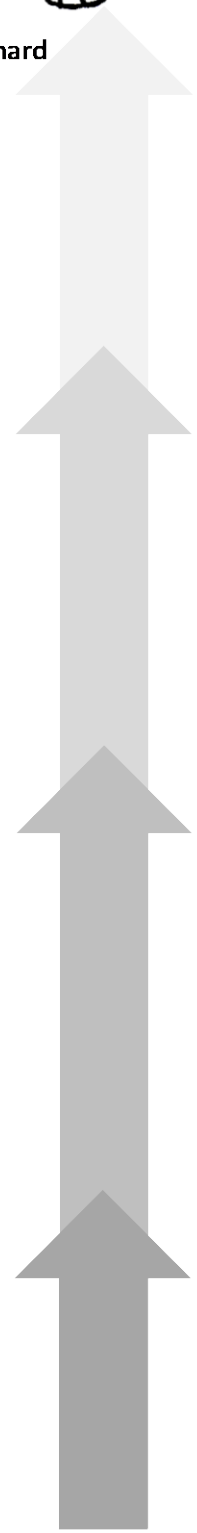


*PRO TRAINING TIP:  
Unlike lifting weights,  
for Brave Practice you  
can skip right to the  
harder workouts for  
faster results!*

Medium Steps



Easier Steps



Train Your Brain...with Brave Practice Workouts!

## Brave Practice Examples for Common Fears

Many of the following ideas come from [www.bravepracticeforkids.com](http://www.bravepracticeforkids.com). Visit [www.bravepracticeforkids.com](http://www.bravepracticeforkids.com) for more up to date resources on helping kids learn to manage their anxiety.

### Social Stuff

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a 1-minute presentation to your clinician on random topics (earthworms, boogers, pizza, the flu).</li> <li>• Call a restaurant and ask what is on the menu.</li> <li>• Text a friend about something you think they will like.</li> <li>• Wear a silly hat and walk around the clinic building.</li> <li>• Ask several people what time it is while wearing a watch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give a 1-minute presentation to your parents' friends</li> <li>• Go to a public place (the mall, grocery store) &amp; tell people you are doing a survey. Ask their favorite ice cream flavor</li> <li>• Introduce yourself to a new person in your building or neighborhood</li> <li>• Go to a public place and sing happy birthday as loudly as you can.</li> <li>• Answer a question in class when you're not sure you know the answer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For everyone, the price of having relationships is occasional awkwardness, rejection, mistakes, and embarrassment. One goal of brave practice is learning you can handle those things. They get easier with practice!</li> <li>• Sometimes it helps to learn new skills (like making small talk, joining group conversations, handling teasing).</li> <li>• But often the best practice involves just being yourself, focusing on others, and staying in the present moment when you are interacting.</li> </ul>

### Worrying

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch a news story about your worry (health, safety, crime, etc.).</li> <li>• Write a story about the worst-case scenario you are imagining and read it repeatedly.</li> <li>• Break a small rule like being 5 minutes late to class or turning in work a few hours late.</li> <li>• Make mistakes on purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have caregivers change plans at the last minute, show up early or late.</li> <li>• Take a walk with no destination and flip a coin to decide which direction to go</li> <li>• Answer a question wrong on purpose (on homework, on a quiz).</li> <li>• Practice not asking a parent if something bad is going to happen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For fears that are real, youths can learn skills or make a plan for if they happen.</li> <li>• BUT, too much planning is often a SAFETY BEHAVIOR. Instead youths can practice living with uncertainty, doing things without a plan.</li> <li>• Caregivers can work on giving less reassurance about worries.</li> <li>• Kids can practice the skill of sitting with the uncomfortable feelings of not knowing what will happen.</li> </ul>

## Being Away from Family

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradually decrease the amount of time caregivers spend in session.</li> <li>• Send caregivers on a walk or errand and talk about what the child fears could happen, without calling or texting to check in.</li> <li>• Spend time alone in a room, gradually increasing time.</li> <li>• Have caregiver leave session and return later than expected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradually increase space (and time!) apart in the house (different rooms, different floors).</li> <li>• Have a caregiver run an errand while the child remains at home.</li> <li>• Have playdates, sleep overs.</li> <li>• Practice sleeping independently (caregiver can sit in chair by the bed, then gradually increase distance from bed) while child falls asleep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kids can learn skills for sad feelings during separation (distraction, getting support of a teacher).</li> <li>• Safety behaviors like texting or calling to check on caregivers can be decreased, with rewards for sticking to the plan.</li> <li>• Caregivers can work on reducing reassurance about separation.</li> <li>• It can be helpful to learn other skills, like what to do if you get lost or need help and your caregiver isn't with you.</li> </ul>

## Specific Fears

(things like needles, vomit, blood, heights, spiders, other animals)

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at a picture or watch a video of the feared object or situation (animal, needle, vomit, etc.)</li> <li>• Read or tell short stories about children encountering the feared object or situation.</li> <li>• Bring the feared thing into the room and gradually get closer to it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a trip to see the feared object or situation (go to a pet store, go to the doctor with a sibling, etc.).</li> <li>• Go on a scavenger hunt to find the feared object/animal.</li> <li>• Watch educational videos about the feared topic (flu shots, blood draws, high places, animals).</li> <li>• Look for and cut out any unnecessary safety behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caregivers can work on reducing avoidance or accommodation about these fears (like asking family friends to put their dogs away when you come over).</li> <li>• Some people with fears about blood or needles will faint in the presence of blood or needles, or when talking about them. Practice <u>Applied Tension</u> to prevent fainting: <a href="https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/blood_and_needles.pdf">https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/blood_and_needles.pdf</a></li> </ul>

## Feelings in Your Body

(fear of having panic attacks or other body feelings)

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do things that bring on your panic or body symptoms, to help teach your brain they aren't dangerous.</li> <li>Examples:</li> <li>⇒ Spin fast in an office chair (1 min);</li> <li>⇒ breathe forcefully, fast and deep (1 min);</li> <li>⇒ hold your nose and breathe through a straw (2 min);</li> <li>⇒ hold your breath (30 sec);</li> <li>⇒ high knees running in place (2 min);</li> <li>⇒ tense all body muscles (1 min);</li> <li>⇒ put head between legs or lie down and relax and then sit up quickly (1 min);</li> <li>⇒ stare at yourself in a mirror hard without blinking (2 min);</li> <li>⇒ put on several heavy sweatshirts and do jumping jacks;</li> <li>⇒ then combine exercises for best results!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do exercises that bring on your symptoms (see at left) in different places, in different combinations, with or without your caregiver.</li> <li>• Go to places or do activities that you fear could bring on panic or body symptoms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For many people with panic attacks or body symptoms that frighten them it is helpful to do bring on the feelings on purpose so you can test out your fears about them.</li> <li>• It is also key to start going places and doing activities you've been avoiding for fear of getting panic or body symptoms. With practice you'll learn you can handle it.</li> <li>• Decrease safety behaviors, like drinking water, keeping certain items nearby, staying near exits, or keeping phone or parent close by.</li> </ul>

## Other Stuff

(including obsessive compulsive disorder)

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go on a germs scavenger hunt (touch floors, door knobs, parts of a toilet) without washing hands.</li> <li>• Break a rule without "confessing".</li> <li>• Write your name with your non-dominant hand. No erasing or re-writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a ritual (compulsion) "just wrong" (do the opposite of what OCD says!)</li> <li>• Avoid "checking" things (like door locks)</li> <li>• Make a mess of your belongings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obsessions are uncomfortable thoughts, feelings or images; Compulsions are the things you do over and over to get rid of or manage your obsessions.</li> <li>• The solution is to do things that bring up obsessions, but NOT do the compulsions you normally do. This teaches your brain that obsessions can be tolerated, and compulsions aren't necessary.</li> </ul>

## Week 2 At-Home Practice

If you haven't finished the My Goal/Re-train Your Brain sheet, make sure to do that for your next meeting.

Also, let's identify some **small rewards** you can earn for doing the hard work of completing **daily brave practices**. Good examples are small items, privileges, treats, or fun activities.

Write ideas in this box:

Sometimes families decide on bigger rewards that can be earned over time. Parents/caregivers can assign point values to each reward and kids/teens can earn points by doing their brave practices. Harder brave practices can be worth more points!

Reward idea	Points to earn it

Just remember: The true reward is overcoming your anxiety! These rewards are just a bonus to recognize and encourage your hard work along the way.

Track how you notice anxiety in your life this week:

Event or situation	What I worried might happen	How anxious? (0-10)	What happened? Did I take any brave steps (big or small)?

Week 2 At-Home Practice: What Are “Safety Behaviors”?



When people are really scared of a situation, sometimes they do things to feel more safe. Some things we do to feel safe are just **GOOD IDEAS**. Like wearing a seat belt in a car.

But some things we do to feel more safe are not really needed. We call these **SAFETY BEHAVIORS**. Like always wearing a helmet and safety goggles whenever you ride in a car...that’s too much.

Extra safety behaviors that we don’t really need to do are a form of **avoidance** and can keep our brain feeling anxious about situations that aren’t really that bad.

In the list below, circle the behaviors you think are **GOOD IDEAS** (just right) and cross out the behaviors you think are **SAFETY BEHAVIORS** (too much).

- Wearing a helmet when skateboarding.
- Wearing a helmet while sitting on a couch in your house.
- Practicing everything you are going to say in your head before you speak to make sure you don’t say something wrong.
- Never going into a kitchen because knives are dangerous.
- Checking important homework assignments to make sure you didn’t make mistakes.
- Checking your homework twelve times to make REALLY sure there are no mistakes.
- Washing your hands before eating a meal to keep from getting sick.
- Washing your hands for 10 minutes to make sure you got them really clean.
- Checking under your bed and in your closet for bad people or monsters before bed.
- Leaving the light on and door open when you sleep to keep you safe from danger in the shadows.
- Checking again and again for spiders around you to make sure none will “get” you.
- Carrying a 20-pound emergency supplies backpack everywhere you go in case of an emergency.

List any things you do that might be safety behaviors:

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As you face your fears, keep an eye out for “safety behaviors” that might keep you from learning that situations are safe or tolerable. Stopping safety behaviors can feel scary at first, but you will feel braver if you do. If you aren’t sure whether something is a safety behavior or just a good idea, check with your caregiver or health care provider to see what they think.

### FAST-A Meeting 3

1. Review your Week 2 At-Home Practice Sheets. Have you identified some rewards you can use?
2. Next, figure out a brave practice that you can do together in the meeting today. Feel free to start on the easier side to begin with, but remember that harder exposures help you reach your goal faster!
3. Remember to use the decision tree on page 14 if you think you might need to learn new skills, make a plan, or change the situation in some way to help make your brave practice a success.
4. Use the Doing Brave Practice worksheet to help with your first brave practice.
5. Lastly, use the At-Home Brave Practice Tracking Sheet to plan and then track your brave practices and rewards for the coming week.

# Doing Brave Practice Worksheet

Brave practice means facing fears to overcome them. Being afraid, anxious or worried when it is not dangerous can get in the way. When you face fears on purpose, you learn 1) your worst fears are not likely to happen, 2) they aren't as bad as you expected, or 3) you can handle it. Avoiding fears makes them grow, but facing fears shrinks them.

## Before you start:

List exactly what you will do to face your fear. (Be specific about your goals—what will you do and for how long.)

What are you afraid will happen if you do this? (Be specific.)

How high do you think your anxiety will get (0-10)?

What is a reward you can have for facing your fear successfully?

## After you finish:

Were you able to face your fears?

How did your experience compare to what you were afraid would happen? What surprised you?

What did you learn? What evidence do you have that you can handle the situation?

How high did your anxiety get? Rate on a scale from 0 (totally calm, no anxiety) to 10 (the most anxious you've ever been).



### At-Home Brave Practice Tracking Sheet

Date	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
What I will practice:							
My reward for practicing:							
Highest anxiety rating (0-10)							
What did you notice?							

At the end of the week, please rate how much you think anxiety problems are messing up your life right now, on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely):    Youth rating: \_\_\_\_\_    Parent/caregiver rating (about youth's life): \_\_\_\_\_

### FAST-A Meeting 4+

1. Review your Home Brave Practice Tracking Sheet.
2. Use the Weekly Parent/Caregiver Agenda for Continuing Brave Practice and Doing Brave Practice and At-Home Brave Practice Tracking Sheet to guide today's meeting and next steps.
3. If there is time, check out the Relapse Prevention Handout to learn how to keep anxiety in check once you've overcome it.

### FAST-A - After Today's Meeting

1. If you've been doing FAST-A meetings with a healthcare provider, talk with them about whether you should continue to check in, in person or by telephone.
2. Schedule regular meetings on your own, just you and parent/caregiver, to plan and carry out brave practices that can help you feel braver in your life.
3. Work your way up toward your goals. Do brave practice in different ways until your brain catches on, until you can do all the things you want to in your life without anxiety stopping you.
4. Keep practicing together! Anxiety has a way of showing up again in the future... so always be ready to tackle your fears with more brave practice!

## Weekly Parent/Caregiver Agenda for Continuing Brave Practice

- 1) **Review the past week's brave practice.** Praise successes and ask questions to solidify what was learned:  
Example questions:
  - a. *What did you learn from your practice?*
  - b. *Did the things you feared actually happen?*
  - c. *Was there any evidence your fears were not accurate?*
  - d. *Was there any evidence you can handle situations like this?*
- 2) **Rewards.** Make sure you are up to date with giving out rewards/points that have been earned.
- 3) **Make sure we are on the right track.** Are we working on the right things? Are there other important fears or goals we need to address? Are the rewards still motivating?
- 4) **Identify a brave practice for today.** Use the Doing Brave Practice Worksheet to plan it.
- 5) **Support the Brave Practice.** Remember to:
  - a. Validate (*"I know this is hard/scary"*).
  - b. Show confidence (*"You can do this"*).
  - c. Encourage (*"You are doing great"* *"I am so proud of you"*).
  - d. Look out for Safety Behaviors (ways the youth might be avoiding or distracting themselves during brave practice) and encourage them to try giving them up.
  - e. If the brave practice allows for it, ask questions DURING the practice to help with learning:  
Example questions:
    - i. *What are you noticing about the situation?*
    - ii. *What is your anxiety like, in your body?*
    - iii. *What does your anxiety want you to do? What ways are you tempted to avoid?*
    - iv. *What are you going to do instead? Why?*
    - v. *What are you learning so far?*
    - vi. *How does this compare to what you expected?*
- 6) **Use the Doing Brave Practice Worksheet.** Record what happened and what was learned.
- 7) **Use the At-Home Brave Practice Tracking Worksheet.** Make a plan for daily practice in the coming week.
- 8) **Schedule the next caregiver and youth Brave Practice planning meeting.** Meetings should happen at least weekly, or more often for faster progress.

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## At-Home Brave Practice Tracking Sheet

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# Relapse Prevention Handout

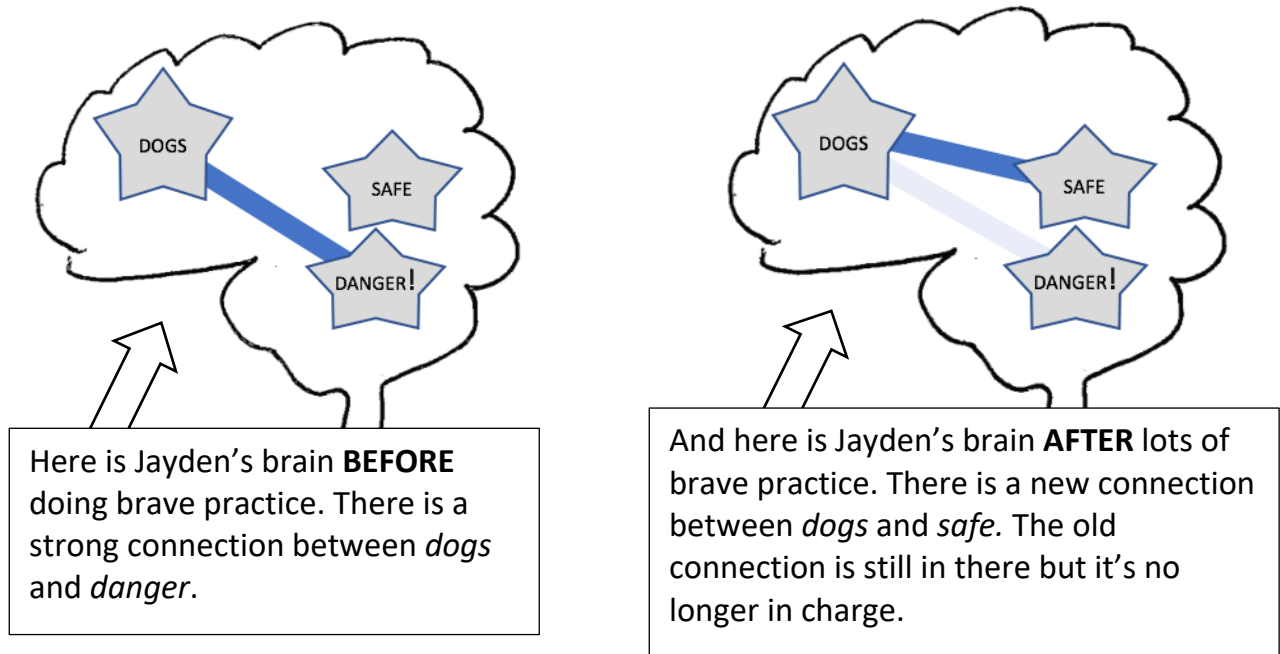
*Relapse prevention* means keeping your anxiety problems from coming back. Even if you're not quite done tackling your anxiety problems, you might have questions about what happens after you succeed. Read on to find out!

## How do I know when I have overcome my anxiety problem?

You have overcome your anxiety problem when you stop having really big fear reactions most of the time in normal situations. Of course you will still feel anxious about stressful or important things, and you will still have big anxiety reactions sometimes. The most important sign of success is that you have learned how to do what matters to you, and you live your life the way you want to, even if big or small anxiety shows up.

## Will my anxiety come back?

Sometimes people overcome their fears, only to have the fear spring back up later on. Why does this happen and what can you do about it? Check out these illustrations to find out.



As long as Jayden keeps practicing, he will continue to feel safer about dogs.

If Jayden stops practicing (like for example during a pandemic!) or if he has a bad experience with a dog, that old connection can become the stronger one and his fear will come back. But it's OK! A bit of extra practice with dogs should restore the safety connection. Practicing will teach his brain that bad things are unlikely to happen, and if something bad does happen he can handle it.

*(continued on next page)*

**What about other fears?**

People with a big fear response about one thing in life are more likely to have big fear responses about other things. You can apply your brave practice skills to any situation where your fear is stopping you from doing things you need or want to do.

**Planning ahead**

Answer the questions below to make a plan to prevent anxiety problems from coming back later on.

**1) Identify future trigger situations**

Can you think of any events or situations that could cause your fears to come back? Someone who is really anxious about school might feel more anxious after a holiday break. Someone who has overcome a phobia of dogs might feel more anxious after hearing about someone bitten by a dog. What are changes or situations that could come up that might trigger a return of YOUR fears?

**2) Make a plan to be brave**

For any trigger situations you can think of, make a plan for how you can handle it. Is there any extra preparation or practice you can think of that will help you feel more confident?

**3) Remind yourself**

What are some things you can tell yourself if you find that you are getting too scared of normal situations in the future and you feel stuck?

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**KEEP GOING!!  
DON'T STOP!**

