

OVERCOMING AVOIDANCE THINKING

Avoidance thinking happens when we avoid certain situations, tasks, or emotions because they feel uncomfortable, overwhelming, or challenging. Instead of facing difficulties head-on, we put them off or distract ourselves. While this might offer temporary relief, avoidance often makes problems worse in the long run, increasing stress and anxiety.

By recognising avoidance thinking and taking small steps to confront what we are avoiding, we can build confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills.

Task 1: Identifying Avoidance Thinking

Avoidance thinking can show up in different ways. Below are some common examples. Read each scenario and reflect on whether you have experienced similar thoughts. Then, rewrite each statement to encourage a more proactive approach.

Example:

Avoidance Thought:

"I will check my emails later because I do not want to deal with bad news right now."

Proactive Thought:

"Checking my emails now will help me stay informed and respond appropriately. Avoiding them will not make potential issues disappear."

Your Turn:

1. Avoidance Thought:

"I will start my project tomorrow. I just do not feel motivated today."



Proactive Thought:

2. Avoidance Thought:

"I will not attend that event because I will feel awkward and not know what to say."



Proactive Thought:

Task 2: Facing Small Discomforts

Avoidance grows when we do not practice facing small discomforts. This activity helps you build tolerance for discomfort in a manageable way.

1. Think of one small task you have been putting off. It could be making a phone call, replying to a message, or organising a small part of your home.
2. Set a timer for five minutes. Tell yourself you only need to work on it for this short time.
3. Take action. Once you begin, you may find it easier to keep going.
4. Reflect: How did it feel? Was it as difficult as you imagined? What can you do next time?

Write down the task you tackled and how it felt:

Task 3: Reframing the Fear of Failure

Many people avoid tasks because they fear failure. However, failure is often a necessary step toward improvement.

1. Think of something you avoided because you were afraid of not doing it well.
2. Answer these questions:
 - What was the worst thing that could have happened?
 - What was the best thing that could have happened?
 - What actually happened when you finally faced it (or if you had faced it)?

Write your reflection here:

Key Takeaway:

Avoidance thinking feels like a protective strategy, but it often keeps us stuck. By gradually facing discomfort, challenging avoidance thoughts, and reframing fear of failure, we can break free from avoidance and build confidence in handling challenges.

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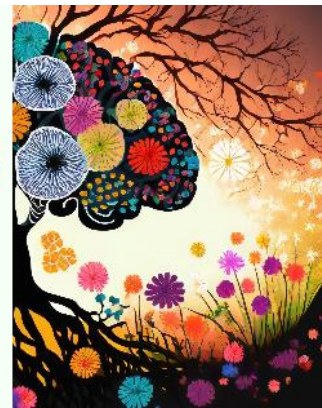
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