Seven-Day Expectancy Test Plan

A low-risk worksheet for testing anxious predictions through new learning—not forcing fear to disappear.

Choose the right target

Pick a safe, ordinary situation you avoid mainly because of anxiety: asking a routine question, entering a familiar cafe, sending a message after one review, or staying in a meeting without repeated reassurance. Do not use this worksheet for trauma memories, medical risk, dangerous compulsions, substance withdrawal, psychosis, or actual threats. Those need individualized professional guidance.

Define the experiment

Write one observable prediction. Replace 'It will be terrible' with 'If I ask a question, people will laugh and I will be unable to continue.' Rate how likely it feels from 0–100. Identify one optional safety behavior to reduce. Keep real safety equipment, prescribed medication, accessibility supports, and sensible preparation.

1	**Predict**	State one observable feared outcome and its expected likelihood.
2	**Approach**	Enter a manageable, safe situation that can test it.
3	**Allow**	Let anxiety be present without making calm the pass condition.
4	**Review**	Record what happened, how you coped, and what remains uncertain.

Seven-day learning log

Success means gathering honest evidence and approaching safely—not achieving zero anxiety.

Day	Situation	Prediction	Expected %	Outcome	Learning
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Review without forcing a positive story

Ask: What did I predict? What happened? Was the outcome less likely, less severe, or more manageable than expected? Record unpleasant outcomes accurately. Repeat only when the exercise remains safe and useful.

Stop and seek support

Pause if practice becomes flooding, self-punishment, dangerous avoidance, or a reason to change prescribed treatment. Seek professional help for major impairment, self-harm thoughts, inability to function, or risks needing clinical judgment.

Evidence note

Inhibitory learning emphasizes expectancy violation, varied contexts, and reduced reliance on safety signals; no single mechanism explains every response. Sources: Craske et al. (2014); Brown et al. (2023).