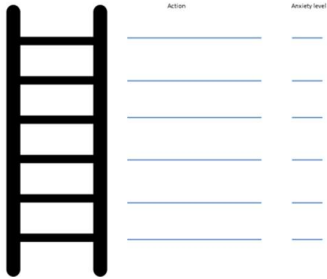


## Intervention using gradual exposure and desensitisation

<p><i>What is gradual exposure?</i></p>	<p>Gradual exposure involves gradually facing your fears and worries by gradually putting yourself into situations that you would normally avoid because of your anxiety. This can be done by creating an exposure ladder or anxiety/avoidance hierarchy.</p> <p>Gradual exposure can form part of a CBT approach.</p>
<p><i>Key Concepts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This approach is based on the belief that the more we do something that we are afraid of, or are exposed to something that we are afraid of, the less afraid we tend to be and the easier it becomes to be in that situation.</li> <li>• The goal of exposure is to gradually expose ourselves to whatever it is that we are avoiding, which helps us reduce the anxiety.</li> <li>• We are more likely to reach our goals if we don't avoid, but by doing the exposure exercises the anxiety can actually become less, so we feel better.</li> <li>• Desensitization: We can make our brain less sensitive to certain anxiety triggers through experience and over time.</li> </ul> <p>Exposure and desensitization are just one set of skills used in CBT. It works best when we know what triggers our anxiety, and are aware of avoidance and safety behaviours that we use when anxiety presents itself.</p>
<p><i>What does it involve?</i></p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draw a ladder.</li> <li>2. On the top rung of the ladder, write the final step that you want to achieve. This will differ depending on the child, it may be a full week in school, a day, a full lesson or going into the lunch hall.</li> <li>3. On the bottom rung of the ladder, write the first thing you want to do to face your anxiety. This needs to be an action that is currently in reach.</li> <li>4. Put other steps on the rungs, gradually building up to reach the top rung.</li> <li>5. Ensure steps are small and achievable.</li> <li>6. Start to carry out the action on the first step.</li> <li>7. Measure your anxiety on a scale of 1 -10 or 1 -100, with 10 or 100 being the most anxiety-provoking situation.</li> <li>8. Move on to the next rung when you feel ready.</li> <li>9. Reward yourself for achieving each step.</li> <li>10. If one step seems unachievable, think about how you could break it down further and smaller, more manageable steps.</li> </ol> </div> </div> <p>It is important to work with the young person to think about what <b>coping technique</b> (e.g. thinking, grounding, relaxation, distraction) they will use as they work through the rungs on the ladder and what <b>support</b> will be in place for them within school.</p>