

Avoidance Continuum

Examples below illustrate how avoidance behaviors can fall on a continuum and often cannot be well understood based on the behaviors alone.

Clinical Example <i>Examples situations, not comprehensive</i>	Realistic/Helpful <i>Protective, adaptive avoidance</i>	Unclear <i>Potentially protective avoidance *additional information likely needed</i>	Unrealistic/Unhelpful <i>Likely not protective, maladaptive avoidance</i>
Chronic Environmental Stressors and Safety Fears			
Child exposed to community violence experiencing safety worries	Avoiding a local park that is a known site of gang activity	Avoiding taking public transportation home after dark <i>*Further information needed on home safety and family risk tolerance</i>	Avoiding all public transportation even when family members take the bus
Co-Occurring Medical Conditions and Worries about Health			
Child with epilepsy has anxiety about future seizures	Paying extra attention to physical sensations based on physician guidance	Avoiding walking down the stairs if she may have an aura <i>*Will need to consult with child's physician</i>	Avoiding walking on stairs or engaging in any physical activities despite medical clearance
Identity-related Stressors and Social Fears			
Child experiences discrimination due to their skin color	Avoiding a group of kids who have called the child racial slurs	Avoiding a classroom where one of the kids is present <i>*Depends on extent of the impairment</i>	Avoiding going to school after a bullying plan has been implemented by the school or the bully has been expelled
Fear of Specific Objects/Things/ Animals			
Child with a fear of snakes	Running from a poisonous snake	Avoiding walking in a field where a poisonous snake could be <i>*Depends on the prevalence of poisonous snakes in their area</i>	Avoiding playing in the backyard with other kids because a garter snake could be there
Separation Worries			
Child experiences worry about their mother's safety	Calling to check in on Mom when she does not arrive on time for pick-up	Worrying when Mom is 5 minutes late, and calling twice to check in <i>*Determine extent to which this is impairing to child and mother</i>	Worrying every time Mom is not on time and repeatedly calling to check in despite mom saying it is unnecessary
Rituals/Compulsions and Religiosity			
A Jewish child worries about appropriately adhering to Kosher meal practices	Checking whether a meal contains a mix of dairy and meat once prior to eating each meal	Checking whether a meal contains a mix of dairy and meat 3-4 times prior to eating each meal <i>*Consult religious leader on religious norms</i>	Checking that they have not or will not mix dairy and meat products ~ 20 times per hour

Realistic/helpful avoidance = Ex-CBT techniques likely not indicated.

Unrealistic/unhelpful avoidance = Ex-CBT is indicated; See Treatment Planning Guide for how to augment.

Unclear = Ex-CBT may or may not be indicated, depending on the impairment associated with avoidance; further examining client goals and collaborating with the client, their caregiver(s), or other supports can help determine whether a particular fear should be addressed through Ex-CBT or not.