ACT AND CBT-INFORMED

Approach-Avoidance Choice Map

See what avoidance protects and what it costs before choosing a next step.

FOR	Adults	**TIME**	20-30 min

Avoidance often makes sense in the short term. This worksheet respects its protective function while making room to examine longer-term costs and a voluntary, supported approach step.

HOW TO USE

Complete this tool collaboratively or review it together afterward. Adapt language, pace, and format to the person's formulation, culture, access needs, capacity, risk, and preferences.

TOPICS: Anxiety / Avoidance / Exposure

01

Understand the protective move

Start with function, not criticism.

What situation, feeling, memory, or sensation do you move away from?

Be concrete and specific.

How do you move away?

Delay, reassurance, distraction, withdrawal, overpreparing, or something else.

What relief or protection does this give you now?

Name the genuine short-term benefit.

02

Notice the longer arc

Consider cost without shaming the strategy.

What does this pattern cost over days or months?

Relationships, time, confidence, opportunity, or energy.

What does the discomfort reveal that you care about?

What valued direction sits behind the fear?

03

Design a willing step

Choose the smallest step that is meaningful, safe, and voluntary.

The step

What will you approach, for how long, and with what support?

What internal experience may come along?

Thoughts, sensations, feelings, or urges.

How will you know the step served your values?

Measure willingness and learning, not only anxiety reduction.

> *Do not use this sheet for unsafe situations. Approach work should be collaborative and adapted to risk, readiness, culture, and capacity.*