

Anxiety

Understanding the cycle of anxiety and what happens over time

1. The Anxiety Cycle



Important note

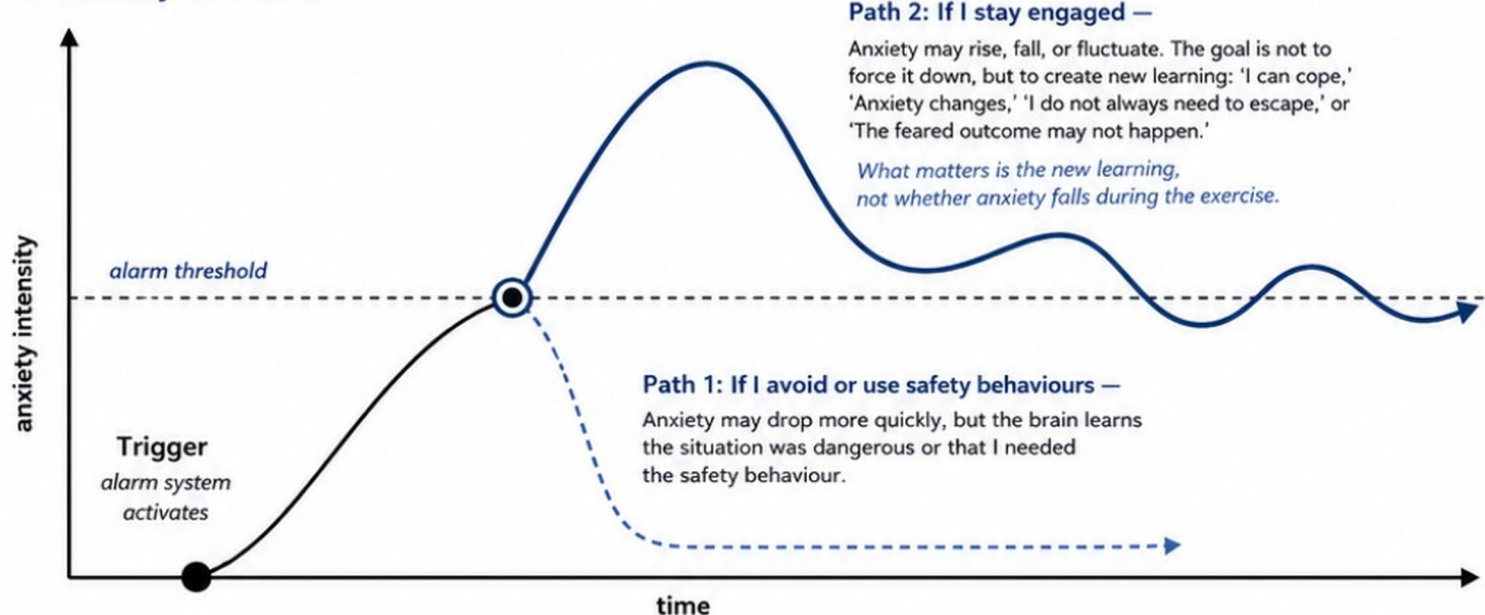
In genuine danger, protective action can be helpful. When danger is overestimated, relying on safety behaviours can keep anxiety going.



What helps

- Gradual exposure
- Reducing safety behaviours
- Grounding in the present
- Slow breathing to stay engaged
- Testing predictions
- Tolerating uncertainty

2. Anxiety over time



Takeaway

When the alarm system is overestimating danger, anxiety can feel dangerous without being harmful. Avoidance and safety behaviours can bring quick relief, but often keep the cycle going. New learning happens when we stay engaged long enough to discover what else is possible.

References

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- Craske, M. G., Treanor, M., Conway, C. C., Zbozinek, T., & Vervliet, B. (2014). *Maximizing exposure therapy: An inhibitory learning approach*. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 58, 10–23.