

Anxiety Scale

When we struggle with managing anxiety, our anxiety response is often not an accurate reflection of the problem at hand. Building and using an Anxiety Scale can help recalibrate your anxiety response to more closely reflect the size of the problem. It can also help guide you as you de-escalate your anxiety a little at a time down the scale using the examples you've identified. For example, it is often not possible to get from a "10" to a "0" in one step. It is much more helpful to work from a "10" to an "8" then to a "5" and so forth. Here are some tips to build your scale.

1. Describe what it feels like to be totally calm ("0") and also your anxiety when it's at its worst ("10").
2. Next try to think of what will be your "5" which represents a balance of when you "feel" very anxious but you also feel confident that you will get through whatever the problem is. (I always suggest thinking about work or activities that you enjoy doing because usually we're pretty confident there even when problems arise.)
3. Next fill out the numbers on the scale by describing your anxiety at each number. For example "A zero (totally calm) is like when I'm snuggled on the couch watching TV" The more vivid your example at each number the more useful your scale will be.
4. Use this scale to start assessing your anxiety response in the moment versus what the "actual" situation calls for.

HINTS: It's very rare that we are "actually" in a life or death situation. And any situation that we encounter in our daily lives would arguably not need to be above a "5" because you've survived the problem before right?

Totally Calm

Balanced

Life or Death

