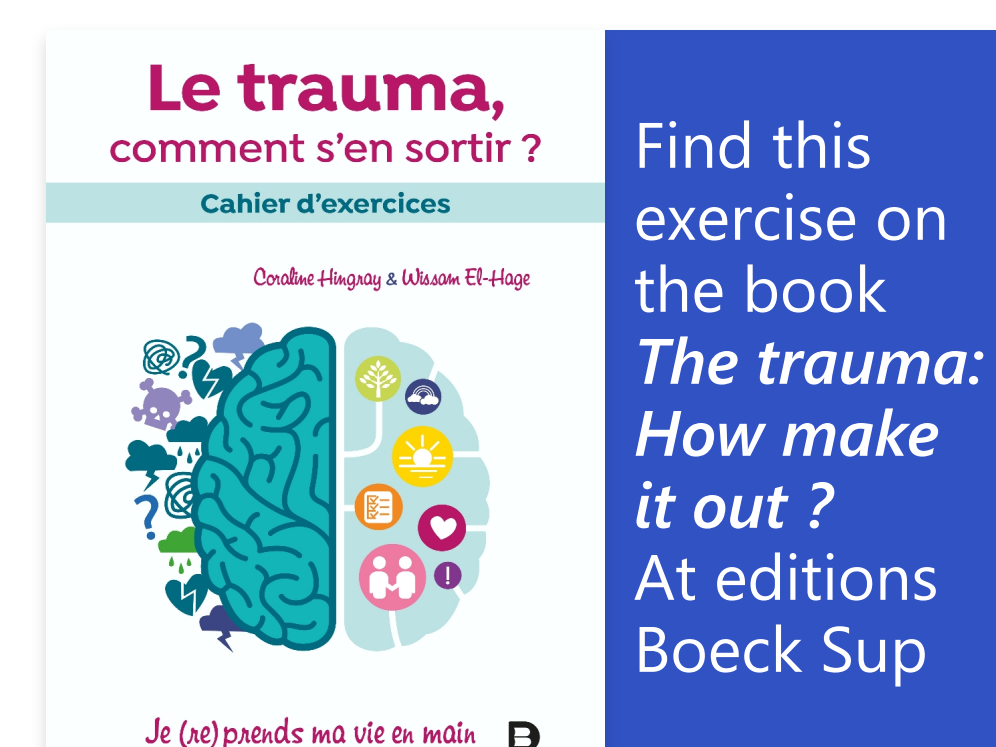


## Exercise sheet

# EXPOSURE

This exercise is a 7-step process that allows you to gradually expose yourself to your fears, what you're avoiding - whether it be situations or even the memory of the traumatic event.

You'll find the complete method below, but if it seems too difficult (and it may), don't hesitate to see a professional!



## Expose yourself to situations that frighten you, in 7 steps

Gradual exposure to frightening situations is also known as in vivo exposure. We've explained the principles of in vivo exposure, but how do you go about it in practice?

### Prerequisites

You need to be convinced of the usefulness of this type of exercise.  
You need to be aware that it's an approach that will lead to unpleasant temporary states of anxiety (rapid heart rate, sweating, desire to flee, etc.).  
These sensations are normal and not dangerous.

## Step 1 : List the situations you avoid

To do this, you need to ask yourself a series of questions:

What haven't I been doing for a while? What activities have I stopped doing because I feel too bad? What places do I avoid or leave as quickly as possible? What invitations or proposals do I refuse? What topics of conversation or reading do I exclude? What can I no longer do on my own?...

This step requires observation of your behaviour.

Don't hesitate to ask the people close to you what they think: they may also have noticed situations of this type and can help you to list them.

Take note of all the situations.

## Step 2 : Rate the situations you avoid

For each of the situations you avoid, rate your level of anxiety between 0 and 100 when you experience it. If you avoid it completely, rate your level of fear.

- 0 = perfectly at ease (so situations not listed)
- 30 = fear is definitely present
- 50 = strong fear with physical signs
- 80 = very high level of fear, feeling extremely vulnerable
- 100 = extreme fear, you flee, it's almost intolerable, you lose your mind and your ability to think...

Make a list below of difficult situations and things you avoid, ranking them from the least difficult to the most intolerable.

## Step 3 : Choose a situation

Choose one of the least anxiety-provoking situations on your list, but one that you would like to change. Above all, don't be too ambitious.

It has to be a moderately difficult situation, but not an intolerable one to begin with.

I choose the following situation:

## Step 4 : Draw up a graduated exercise list

Take the time to describe the situation in detail, depending on the circumstances, the time of day, whether you are accompanied or not, etc.

For example, if you're « afraid of going out alone in the street », the level of anxiety might include:

going out alone at night at 2am in a disreputable neighbourhood, going alone to the scene of the attack, or finding yourself alone in a busy street at lunchtime.

Draw up a list of practical exercises (place, time, accompaniment, etc.) for this situation, ranging from the least complicated to the most effective.

and rate the level of anxiety precisely between 0 and 100 for each exercise.

Of course, there's no question of confronting situations that are acknowledged as dangerous by everyone! Some situations can continue to be avoided if they're not considered safe by the majority of people and avoiding them doesn't restrict your sense of freedom.



## Step 5: Expose yourself to the first exercise in the first situation

If you have followed the steps correctly, this situation should be a realistic and achievable goal.

It's essential that it's not too difficult, but still be a source of apprehension and slight fear.

A few rules to follow: stay in the situation for at least 30-45 mins to allow you to feel the reduction in anxiety.

Do some breathing exercises if you need to, and try to stay connected to the situation and the unpleasant sensations.

Plan to repeat the exercise several times a week.

## Step 6: Review the exercise

After each exercise, relax, calm yourself and do something really enjoyable.

Take stock: How did it go? What went well? Was it worse or easier than you expected?

Congratulate yourself and encourage yourself: it's extremely brave to take this step!

## Step 7: Plan the next exercises and repeat them

If (and only if) you feel that your fear has subsided in this exercise, even under the most difficult conditions you set yourself, then it has become achievable and you can move on to another exercise.

Choose another exercise that's a bit more difficult for you, and expose yourself to it for at least 30 minutes. Then repeat it. If you do an exercise more than 7 times, staying in the situation for more than 30 mins each time and the fear is still too strong... ask a professional for help or change the exercise.