

Specific phobias

Preparing to Discuss a Specific Fear

Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

A specific phobia involves more than disliking something. A clinician considers fear, avoidance, impairment, and the actual situation. This page helps prepare an assessment; it does not ask you to approach a feared object, watch distressing material, or create your own exposure plan.

Choose a recent, manageable example. Write, draw, or discuss your answers. Skip anything that does not fit; this page is not a diagnostic assessment.

Describe the fear and its cost

Name the situation broadly, what you fear will happen, and what it prevents or complicates. Include real hazards, cultural context, and practical access needs. You do not need to encounter the feared situation while writing.

Ask about an appropriate plan

Choose a meaningful goal, such as accessing necessary care or traveling when needed. Ask about treatment options, how suitability is assessed, and how any practice would be collaborative, safe, and adapted to your circumstances.

1. What specific situation or object brings fear, and what outcome concerns you?**2. How does avoiding it affect activities or care you want to access?****3. What real hazards, health considerations, or accommodations must be included?****4. What goal and treatment question would you like to discuss with a clinician?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Distinguish actual danger from phobic avoidance and assess medical considerations, trauma, OCD, and sensory differences. Do not provide generic exposure instructions, particularly for blood, injury, or medical procedures. Treatment practice requires appropriate assessment and collaboration.

Original educational resource. Adapt with a clinician; not a validated assessment or complete treatment protocol.

Conceptual references: E04, S03. Full sources are in the online preview and collection appendix.

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