



DIY Guide for Kids

How to

Learn and Practice Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) for OCD



MindWeal

DIY Guide for Kids:

How to Practice Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) for OCD



Hey there! Are you looking for ways to better manage your OCD? Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) is an effective method that can help you gain more control over your OCD symptoms. This guide will show you how to practice ERP at home with the support of your parents. Remember, symptoms might initially worsen before they improve, so having the support of your parents and professionals is essential.

Disclaimer: This guide is intended to complement, not replace, your psychotherapy with a licensed therapist. It's very important to work with a professional therapist who can guide you through this process safely and effectively.

What is ERP?

ERP stands for **Exposure and Response Prevention**. It's a type of therapy that helps you face the things that make you feel anxious (exposure) and learn not to do the things you usually do to feel better (response prevention).

Why ERP Works: ERP helps you realize that you can handle your fears without needing to do compulsions, and over time, those fears start to feel less scary.

Step 1: Create a Supportive Space

Why It's Important: Feeling safe and supported makes it easier to tackle your fears.



What You Can Do:

- Talk to your parents about how you're feeling.
- Make sure your home environment is calm and positive.
- Let your parents know how they can help you feel supported

Activity: Create a Supportive Space

My Support Team:

Who can I talk to about my feelings?

What makes me feel safe and supported?

My Calm Environment:

How can I make my room more calming?

Step 2: Make a List of Fears

Why It's Important: Knowing what scares you helps you plan how to face it.

What You Can Do:

- **List Your Fears:** Write down a list of things that make you feel anxious or scared.
- **Rank Them:** Rank them from least scary to most scary.
- **Create a Fear Ladder:** Rewrite them in a list from least scary to most scary. This is called creating a "fear hierarchy" or "fear ladder."

Activity: Listing My Fears Example

| My Fears | Fear Ranking |
|--|--------------|
| <i>Fear of germs</i> | 1 |
| <i>Fear of being late</i> | 3 |
| <i>Fear of making mistakes on homework</i> | 5 |
| <i>Fear of forgetting things</i> | 4 |
| <i>Fear of my dog dying</i> | 2 |

Activity: Creating a Fear Ladder Example

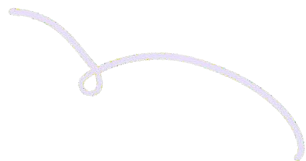
Rewrite Your Fears from Least Scary to Most Scary

| |
|--|
| <i>Fear of making mistakes on homework</i> |
| <i>Fear of forgetting things</i> |
| <i>Fear of being late</i> |
| <i>Fear of my dog dying</i> |
| <i>Fear of germs</i> |

Step 3: Plan Exposure Exercises

Why It's Important: Facing your fears helps them become less powerful over time, making you feel more in control.

What You Can Do:



- **Decide Exposure Exercises:** Design exposure exercises to help you face your fear and anxiety while also learning not to perform the compulsions that usually follow. Write them down for each fear.
- **Be Specific:** Clearly define what you will do for each exercise. Don't be vague; specify exactly what action you will take and for how long.
- **Choose Manageable Tasks:** Choose tasks that you can handle and gradually increase the difficulty.

Activity: Plan Exposure Exercises Example

| Fear | Exposure Exercise |
|--|---|
| <i>Fear of making mistakes on homework</i> | <i>Complete homework for 30 minutes without erasing</i> |
| <i>Fear of forgetting things</i> | <i>Leave my backpack unchecked for 20 minutes</i> |
| <i>Fear of being late</i> | <i>Allow myself to leave the house 5 minutes later than usual for school and for swimming</i> |
| <i>Fear of my dog dying</i> | <i>Distract myself from the thought and not check on my dog or ask for reassurance from parents</i> |
| <i>Fear of germs</i> | <i>Eat a snack without washing hands for 1 minute after touching a doorknob</i> |

Step 4: Do Exposure Exercises

Why It's Important: Facing your fears helps them become less powerful over time, making you feel more in control.



Activity: Logging Exposure Exercises Example

| Fear Faced | Date & Time | What did I do? | How Did it Go? | Aced it or not? |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| Fear of making mistakes on homework | MM/DD/YY HH:MM | Completed homework for 20 minutes without erasing but then I had to erase | Felt nervous and anxious | NO |
| Fear of making mistakes on homework | MM/DD/YY HH:MM | Completed homework for 30 minutes without erasing | Felt nervous but completed it | NO |
| Fear of making mistakes on homework | MM/DD/YY HH:MM | Completed homework for 30 minutes without erasing | Was able to do it easily, did not get nervous or worried | YES |
| Fear of forgetting things | MM/DD/YY HH:MM | Was able to leave my backpack unchecked for 20 minutes | Was worried the whole time and was not able to focus in class | NO |
| Fear of forgetting things | MM/DD/YY HH:MM | Was able to leave my backpack unchecked for 20 minutes | Was not worried at all and handled it easily | YES |



Tips for Long-Term Success

- **Be Consistent:** Practice ERP exercises regularly, even when it's hard.
- **Practice Relaxation:** Try [deep breathing exercises](#), [progressive muscle relaxation](#) or [mindfulness](#). Practice these relaxation techniques regularly.
- **Handle Setbacks:** If you have a setback, don't worry—it's normal! Talk about it with your parents and figure out what happened, then keep practicing and don't give up.
- **Talk About It:** Keep talking to your parents and your therapist about how you're feeling and what's working.
- **Celebrate Successes:** Celebrate every little victory. You're doing a great job!

To further develop and practice the skills you've learned in this guide, please use our ERP for OCD Workbook. Access the workbook [HERE](#)