

Fear Ladder Challenge

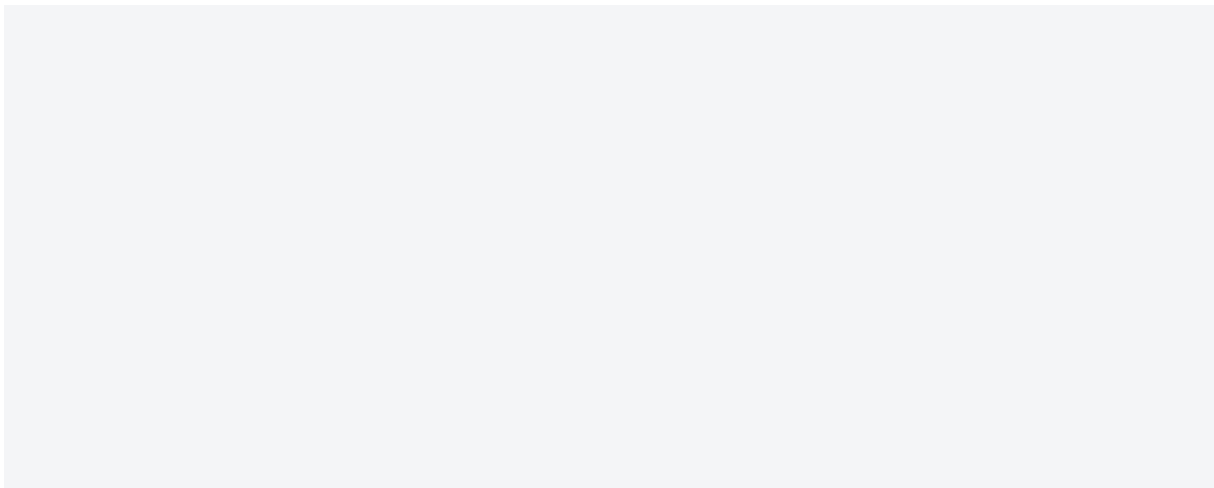
Encourage children to confront and overcome their fears by creating a structured, gradual approach to engage with what they currently avoid.

A “fear ladder” can help. Ensure the steps are small enough to build confidence but challenging enough to foster growth.

1. Fear list:

Let's write down something that scares you and what that means for you.

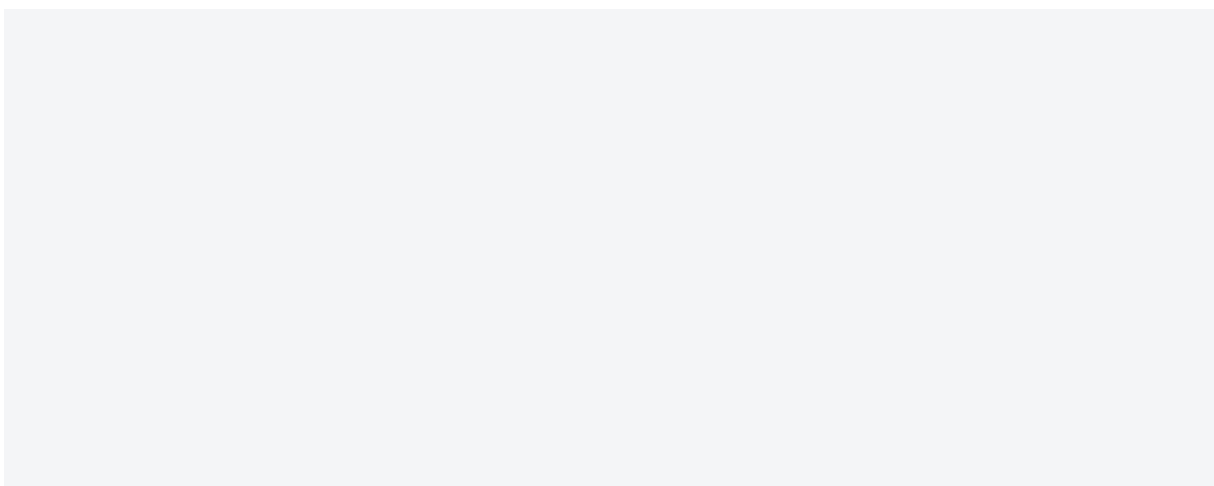
For example: 'Spiders scare me, so I don't want to play outside.'



2. Goals:

Decide what the end goal will be when this fear has been overcome.

For example: 'I would like to play in the garden on the grass.'



3. Bravery ladder:

Ask the child to draw a ladder or use the following pre-drawn one.

On the top step, write down their goal.

For example:

7	Play in the garden	Scariness (9)
6		
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

4. Safe planning:

Together, decide on small, manageable steps for the ladder that lead up to the top goal.

Each one is slightly scary but seems doable. Score each step.

For example:

7	Play in the garden	Scariness (9)
6	Walk across the grass	7
5	Stand on the grass	6
4	Stand on the edge of the garden	5
3	Walk down the path	4
2	Stand on the path	2
1	Put on boots	1

5. Climbing time:

Encourage the child to 'climb' the ladder from the bottom rung to the top. Celebrate each step!

As each one is completed, replace the scariness score with how they feel about it now.

6. Progress check:

Keep track of their achievements and encourage reflection on their growing bravery.

Useful references

- Stallard, P. (2019). *Thinking Good, Feeling Better: A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Workbook for Adolescents and Young Adults* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Stallard, P. (2021). *A clinician's guide to CBT for children to young adults: a companion to think good, feel good and thinking good, feeling better* / Paul Stallard. (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton