

BHSS Decision Tree: Exposure vs. Worry Management Strategies

I. Identify Primary Presenting Problem

A. Distress tied to specific triggers or situations?

1. Yes → Exposure Therapy

a. Fear linked to avoidable situations (e.g., social, phobia, trauma reminders)?

i. Yes → In vivo or imaginal exposure

ii. No → Interoceptive exposure (e.g., panic symptoms)

b. Evidence of avoidance?

i. Yes → Build graded exposure hierarchy

ii. No → Use exposure for habituation/inhibitory learning

c. Reinforce emotional processing and reduction of avoidance

2. No → Proceed to worry-based assessment

B. Excessive, uncontrollable worry across domains?

1. Yes → Worry Management Strategies

a. Worries primarily future-oriented and hypothetical?

i. Yes → Cognitive restructuring and probability estimation

ii. No → Problem-solving strategies

b. Worry functions as emotional or imagery avoidance?

i. Yes → Imaginal exposure or emotional processing

ii. No → Scheduled worry time and stimulus control

c. Intolerance of uncertainty present?

i. Yes → Uncertainty exposure and behavioral experiments

ii. No → Cognitive techniques and relaxation

d. Reinforce metacognitive awareness and worry reduction

2. No → Consider mixed presentation

C. Mixed Symptoms (trigger + worry present)

1. Use combined approach (exposure + worry management)

2. Prioritize dominant symptom domain

3. Flexibly adjust interventions based on response