Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) Worksheets - Exposure Hierarchy Builder

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Exposure Hierarchy Builder

Instructions:
An exposure hierarchy ranks your triggers from **least** to **most** anxiety-inducing. You'll start with lower-level items and gradually build tolerance, moving up the list.

1. **Brainstorm All Triggers**

   ◦ Write down every situation, place, object, or thought that causes **intrusive thoughts** or anxiety.
2. **Rate Each on a Scale of 0–100** (SUDS – Subjective Units of Distress)

   ◦ 0 = no discomfort, 100 = maximum distress.
3. **Organize from Least to Most Distressing**

   ◦ This final list becomes your "roadmap" for exposures.

Hierarchy Table

Trigger / Situation	SUDS Rating (0–100)	Notes / Variations
Example: Touch a doorknob in a public restroom	40	Variation: Wait 5 mins before washing hands
Example: Imaginally picture shouting something rude in church	60	Variation: Write it out in a journal first

Tips

- **Break It Down**: If an item is too big, create smaller steps (e.g., "touch doorknob with one finger" → "touch doorknob fully").
- **Honest Ratings**: Don't minimize or exaggerate. Accurate SUDS ratings help you choose the right starting point.

Disclaimer

These worksheets are **informational** and for personal use only. If your anxiety is overwhelming, consult a **mental health professional**.