

14

Separation Anxiety Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · Self-Assessment

2 · Symptoms Checklist

3 · Identifying Triggers

4 · Personal Anxiety History

5 · Coping Strategies Inventory

6 · Managing Negative Thoughts

7 · Self-Compassion Practices

8 · Exposure Therapy Plan

9 · Setting Healthy Boundaries

10 · Effective Communication Skills

11 · Healthy Attachment Styles

12 · Physical Wellness for Anxiety

13 · Visualization of Positive Outcomes

14 · Travel Anxiety

How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

Contents

Self-Assessment.....	4
Symptoms Checklist	6
Identifying Triggers	8
Personal Anxiety History	12
Coping Strategies Inventory	15
Managing Negative Thoughts	20
Self-Compassion Practices.....	24
Exposure Therapy Plan	26
Setting Healthy Boundaries	30
Effective Communication Skills.....	32
Healthy Attachment Styles	33
Physical Wellness for Anxiety	36
Visualization of Positive Outcomes	39
Travel Anxiety	41

Self-Assessment

The following are common signs you might be struggling with separation anxiety. Rate each statement on a scale from 1-5 (1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 being “strongly agree”):

Statement	Rate (1-5)
1. “I experience excessive distress when anticipating or experiencing separation from home or from major attachment figures.”	1-2-3-4-5
2. “I have persistent and excessive worry about losing major attachment figures or possible harm to them.”	1-2-3-4-5
3. “I have persistent and excessive worry about experiencing an untoward event (e.g., getting lost, being kidnapped, having an accident, becoming ill) that causes separation from a major attachment figure.”	1-2-3-4-5
4. “I am persistently reluctant or refuse to go out, away from home because of fear of separation.”	1-2-3-4-5
5. “I have persistent and excessive fear or reluctance about being alone or without major attachment figures at home or in other settings.”	1-2-3-4-5
6. “I am persistently reluctant or refuse to sleep away from home or go to sleep without being near a major attachment figure.”	1-2-3-4-5
7. “I have repeated nightmares involving the theme of separation.”	1-2-3-4-5
8. “I repeatedly complain of physical symptoms (such as headaches, stomachaches, or nausea) when separation from major attachment figures occurs or is anticipated.”	1-2-3-4-5

Score: ____/40

The score reflects the severity and impact of your separation anxiety.

1. What statements resonated with you more than the others?

2. Which of the identified patterns or habits from the assessment do you feel most interested in working on changing?

Symptoms Checklist

1. Review the list of common symptoms below and place a checkmark next to any that you relate to or add any additional symptoms that may not be listed.

Emotional Symptoms:

- ☐ **Excessive Worry:** Intense and persistent worry about being separated from loved ones.
- ☐ **Fear of Abandonment:** Irrational fear that a loved one will leave or never return.
- ☐ **Sadness and Loneliness:** Feeling overwhelmingly sad or lonely when away from a significant person.
- ☐ **Panic Attacks:** Sudden episodes of intense fear or discomfort.
- ☐ _____

Cognitive Symptoms:

- ☐ **Intrusive Thoughts:** Recurrent, unwanted thoughts about separation or potential harm to loved ones.
- ☐ **Difficulty Concentrating:** Trouble focusing on tasks due to preoccupation with separation.
- ☐ **Catastrophic Thinking:** Imagining the worst-case scenarios about being apart from loved ones.
- ☐ **Forgetfulness:** Difficulty remembering things or being absent-minded due to anxiety.
- ☐ _____

Physical Symptoms:

- ☐ **Stomachaches:** Physical discomfort or pain in the stomach area.

- ☐ **Headaches:** Frequent or severe headaches.
- ☐ **Nausea:** Feeling queasy or nauseous, sometimes leading to vomiting.
- ☐ **Fatigue:** Feeling unusually tired or drained of energy.
- ☐ **Sweating:** Excessive sweating, especially in anxiety-provoking situations.
- ☐ **Rapid Heartbeat:** Palpitations or a racing heart during or in anticipation of separation.
- ☐ **Shortness of Breath:** Difficulty breathing or feeling breathless.
- ☐ _____

Behavioral Symptoms:

- ☐ **Clinging Behavior:** Staying very close to a loved one, refusing to let them out of sight.
- ☐ **Avoidance:** Avoiding situations that might lead to separation.
- ☐ **Checking Behaviors:** Constantly checking on the whereabouts or safety of a loved one.
- ☐ **Difficulty Sleeping Alone:** Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep without the presence of a loved one.
- ☐ **Protest at Separation:** Exhibiting strong resistance or tantrums when separation is imminent.
- ☐ **Reluctance to Leave Home:** Refusing or hesitating to leave the house without a loved one.
- ☐ **Excessive Communication:** Frequent calls, messages, or other forms of contact with a loved one when apart.
- ☐ **Seeking Reassurance:** Continually seeking reassurance about the loved one's return or safety.
- ☐ _____

Identifying Triggers

A trigger is an event, situation, or thought that causes a reaction, such as anxiety.

1. Review the list of common triggers below and place a checkmark next to any that you relate to or add any additional triggers that may not be listed.

- ☐ Being away from a loved one
- ☐ Traveling alone
- ☐ Loved one being late or uncontactable
- ☐ Upcoming significant events (e.g., moving, starting a new job)
- ☐ Memories or thoughts of past separations
- ☐ Situations where you feel out of control
- ☐ Relationship difficulties or breakup.
- ☐ Military deployment or assignment.
- ☐ Children leaving home (empty nest syndrome).
- ☐ Hospitalization or medical treatment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Think about the last few times you experienced separation anxiety.
Write down what was happening right before you felt anxious.

Example: "Last weekend when my partner went on a business trip, I felt a surge of anxiety."

2. Identify specific situations that consistently trigger your anxiety.

Example: "Whenever my child goes on a school trip, I feel extremely anxious."

3. Reflect on any recurring thoughts or memories that seem to trigger your anxiety.

Example: "I often think about the time I got lost as a child, and it triggers my anxiety."

4. Describe how you feel emotionally when faced with these triggers.

Example: "I feel panicked and helpless when I can't reach my partner."

5. Describe any physical symptoms you experience when faced with these triggers.

Example: "I get stomachaches and feel nauseous when I am alone."

6. List strategies you can use immediately when you encounter a trigger. The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ **Deep Breathing:** Practice deep, diaphragmatic breathing to calm the body's stress response.
- ☐ **Grounding Techniques:** Focus on sensory experiences (sight, touch, sound) to stay present and connected.
- ☐ **Visualize a Safe Place:** Picture a calming and safe environment in your mind to reduce anxiety.
- ☐ **Positive Self-Talk:** Replace negative thoughts with affirmations and encouraging statements.
- ☐ **Reach Out for Support:** Contact a trusted friend, family member, or therapist for reassurance and guidance.
- ☐ **Use Distraction Techniques:** Engage in activities that occupy your mind, such as hobbies or listening to music.
- ☐ **Create a Comfort Zone:** Surround yourself with familiar objects or items that bring comfort.
- ☐ **Journaling:** Write down your thoughts and feelings to gain clarity and process emotions.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

7. Develop long-term strategies to manage and reduce your anxiety. The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ **Physical Exercise:** Engage in physical activities to release tension and boost mood.
- ☐ **Limit Stimulants:** Reduce intake of caffeine and other stimulants that can exacerbate anxiety.

- ☐ **Educate Yourself:** Learn more about separation anxiety and coping strategies to empower yourself in managing triggers effectively.
- ☐ **Healthy Diet:** Eat a balanced diet rich in nutrients to support physical health and stabilize mood.
- ☐ **Adequate Sleep:** Establish a consistent sleep schedule and practice good sleep hygiene to improve resilience to stress.
- ☐ **Therapy:** Attend regular therapy sessions to explore underlying causes of anxiety and learn coping skills.
- ☐ **Limit Alcohol and Caffeine:** Reduce consumption of substances that can increase anxiety levels.
- ☐ **Social Support:** Nurture relationships with supportive friends, family members, or support groups.
- ☐ **Time Management:** Prioritize tasks and manage time effectively to reduce feelings of overwhelm.
- ☐ **Self-Care:** Dedicate time for self-care activities that promote relaxation and enjoyment.
- ☐ **Regular Relaxation:** Incorporate regular relaxation practices such as baths, reading, or hobbies that promote calmness.
- ☐ **Limit News and Media Exposure:** Reduce exposure to negative news and media that can exacerbate anxiety.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

8. Identify people you can turn to for support when you experience anxiety.

Personal Anxiety History

1. Describe any childhood experiences related to separation anxiety.

Example: "When I was a child, I would cry whenever my parents left me at school. I was always worried they wouldn't come back."

2. Reflect on your relationship with your parents or primary caregivers.

Example: "I was very close to my mother and always wanted to be with her. I felt anxious when she wasn't around."

3. Note any early traumatic events that might have influenced your anxiety.

Example: "I remember getting lost in a crowded mall when I was five. I felt terrified and alone until my parents found me."

4. Describe your experiences with separation anxiety during your school years.

Example: "I felt anxious every time I went on school trips. I would call my parents multiple times a day to check in."

5. Reflect on how separation anxiety affected your friendships and relationships.

Example: "I always feared that my friends would leave me or forget about me if we didn't see each other often."

6. Note any significant life changes that triggered your anxiety.

Example: "When I moved away to college, I had a hard time being away from my family. I felt homesick and anxious all the time."

7. Describe how separation anxiety affects your current relationships.

Example: "I worry a lot when my partner travels for work. I call and text frequently to make sure they're okay."

8. Reflect on any impact separation anxiety has on your work or career.

Example: "I avoid taking business trips because I feel anxious being away from home."

9. Note any experiences with travel that have been influenced by separation anxiety.

Example: "I feel extremely anxious when I have to travel alone. I constantly worry about being away from my family."

10. List any coping strategies you used in the past and their effectiveness.

Example: "As a child, I would bring a favorite toy to school to feel closer to home. It helped a little, but I still felt anxious."

11. Identify the people who have supported you through your anxiety.

Example: "My best friend has always been there for me. She listens and reassures me when I feel anxious."

Coping Strategies Inventory

1. Write down all the coping strategies you currently use when you experience separation anxiety. Rate the effectiveness of each coping strategy on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = not effective, 10 = very effective).

Example: “I call or text my partner frequently (7),” “I watch movies to distract myself (5),” “I use deep breathing exercises (8).”

2. List the pros and cons of each coping strategy.

Coping Strategy	Pros	Cons
<i>e.g., Calling my partner</i>	<i>Immediate reassurance, reduces anxiety quickly.</i>	<i>Can be disruptive to their day, not always possible.</i>

3. Brainstorm new coping strategies you could try to manage your separation anxiety. The following are some examples:

1. Deep Breathing:

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Inhale slowly through your nose, allowing your abdomen to expand.
- Hold your breath for a few seconds.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth.
- Repeat for 5-10 minutes.

2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR):

- Sit or lie down comfortably.
- Start with your toes, tense the muscles for 5-10 seconds, then relax them.
- Move up to the next muscle group (e.g., calves, thighs) until you reach your head.
- Focus on the feeling of relaxation after releasing the tension.

3. Visualization:

- Close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel safe and relaxed (e.g., a beach, a forest).
- Focus on the details, such as sounds, smells, and sensations.
- Spend a few minutes immersing yourself in this scene.

4. Mindfulness Meditation:

- Find a quiet place to sit comfortably.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breath.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath.
- Continue for 5-10 minutes.

Grounding exercises are techniques that help individuals stay mentally and emotionally present in the current moment. Here are 10 grounding exercises with instructions:

5. 5-4-3-2-1 Exercise:

- Name 5 things you can see around you.
- Identify 4 things you can touch or feel.
- Notice 3 things you can hear.
- Acknowledge 2 things you can smell.
- Recognize 1 thing you can taste or remember a taste you enjoy.

6. Grounding Object:

- Hold a small object (e.g., a smooth stone, a stress ball).
- Focus on its texture, weight, and temperature.
- Use it as a tactile anchor to stay present in the moment.

7. Mindful Walking:

- Take a walk at a slow pace, focusing on each step.
- Notice the sensation of your feet touching the ground.
- Pay attention to the movement of your body and the surroundings.

8. Name Game:

- Choose a category (e.g., fruits, cities, animals).
- Name items in that category alphabetically (e.g., apple, banana, cherry...).

This engages your mind in a structured task, diverting attention away from anxiety.

4. Choose a mix of current and new strategies to include in your coping plan. Outline specific action steps for implementing each strategy.

Example: Deep breathing exercises: Practice for 5 minutes every morning and during anxiety episodes.

5. Keep a log of when you use each coping strategy and how effective it is.

Example: “Today, I used deep breathing exercises during an anxiety episode and.”

Coping strategy used	Effectiveness (0-10)	Notes
<i>e.g., Deep breathing exercises</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Felt my anxiety decrease from an 8 to a 4</i>

Coping strategy used	Effectiveness (0-10)	Notes

Managing Negative Thoughts

1. Write down the negative thoughts you frequently experience related to separation anxiety.

Example: "I'm afraid my partner will never come back," "I can't handle being alone," "Something bad will happen if I'm not there."

2. Describe the situations in which these negative thoughts usually occur.

Example: "When my partner leaves for a trip," "When I have to spend the night alone," "When my loved ones don't answer their phone."

3. For each negative thought, list the evidence that supports and contradicts it.

Negative Thought	Evidence For	Evidence Against
<i>e.g., "I'm afraid my partner will never come back."</i>	<i>"I read about a person whose partner didn't return."</i>	<i>"My partner has always returned from trips in the past," "We have good communication and trust."</i>

Negative Thought	Evidence For	Evidence Against

4. Consider alternative, more balanced perspectives for each negative thought.

Negative Thought	Alternative Perspective
<i>e.g., “I can’t handle being alone.”</i>	<i>“I have handled being alone in the past and can do it again,” “I can use this time to focus on self-care.”</i>

5. Create positive affirmations to counteract your negative thoughts.

Negative Thought	Positive Affirmation
<i>e.g., "I can't handle being alone."</i>	<i>"I am strong and capable of managing on my own," "I can enjoy my own company and find peace within myself."</i>

Self-Compassion Practices

Self-Compassion is treating yourself with the same kindness, care, and understanding that you would offer to a good friend. It reduces anxiety and stress, improves emotional resilience, enhances overall well-being, and fosters a more positive self-image.

1. Write yourself a kind letter as if you were comforting a friend. Use words of encouragement and understanding.

2. Reflect on the fact that many others experience separation anxiety. Write about how this connects you to others and reduces feelings of isolation.

Example: "I am not alone in feeling this way. Many people struggle with separation anxiety, and it's a common human experience. Knowing this helps me feel less isolated and more connected to others."

Create and repeat self-compassionate phrases when you feel anxious.

Example: "This is a moment of suffering, but I can be kind to myself. May I be strong, may I be calm, may I be patient."

4. List activities that make you feel relaxed and happy. Schedule time for self-care activities each day.

5. Find a mirror where you can stand comfortably. Look at yourself in the mirror and say positive affirmations out loud.

Example: "I am worthy of love and happiness," "I am strong and resilient."

Exposure Therapy Plan

Exposure Therapy is a psychological treatment that helps individuals face and gradually become less sensitive to their fears.

1. Write down specific situations related to separation that cause you anxiety. Be as detailed as possible.

Example: "Being home alone for an hour," "Partner going on a weekend trip," "Traveling alone for work."

2. Assign a rating to each situation based on how much anxiety it causes you on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = no anxiety, 10 = extreme anxiety). Organize the situations from least to most anxiety-provoking.

Example:

- *"Being home alone for an hour" - 5*
- *"Partner going on a weekend trip" - 8*
- *"Traveling alone for work" - 9*

3. Begin with the situation that causes the least anxiety and gradually work your way up the hierarchy.

Example: Start with “Being home alone for an hour.”

4. Define specific, measurable goals for each exposure session.

Example: “Stay home alone for one hour without calling or texting anyone.”

5. Schedule regular exposure sessions, starting with the least anxiety-provoking situation and gradually increasing in difficulty.

Example: “Monday: Stay home alone for one hour. Wednesday: Stay home alone for two hours.”

6. Use relaxation techniques before and after each session to manage anxiety.

Example: Practice deep breathing or mindfulness meditation before starting the session.

7. Keep a detailed log of each exposure session, noting the situation, duration, anxiety level before and after, and any observations.

Situation	Duration	Anxiety Level Before	Anxiety Level After	Observations
e.g., Being home alone for an hour	1 hour	5	3	Felt anxious at first but gradually relaxed. Distracted myself by reading.

8. Reflect on your experiences at the end of each week. Consider what worked well and what didn't.

Example: "This week, staying home alone for an hour was successful. I struggled with staying calm initially but relaxed over time."

9. Note any patterns or insights you observe during the exposure sessions.

Example: "Distraction techniques like reading or watching TV helped reduce anxiety during exposure."

10. Make any necessary adjustments to your exposure plan based on your reflections.

Example: "I'll use guided meditation at the beginning of each session to help calm initial anxiety."

Setting Healthy Boundaries

Healthy Boundaries are limits you set to protect your well-being and ensure mutual respect in relationships.

1. Reflect on situations where you feel overwhelmed, anxious, or uncomfortable. Identify areas where boundaries are needed.

Example: "I feel anxious when my partner doesn't respond to my messages immediately. I need a boundary to manage my expectations and anxiety."

2. Write down specific boundaries you need to set in different areas of your life (e.g., relationships, work, personal time).

Example:

- *Relationships: "I need to limit how often I call my partner when they are away."*
- *Work: "I need to set boundaries around work hours to ensure I have personal time."*
- *Personal Time: "I need to allocate time for self-care activities daily."*

3. Use clear and direct language to communicate your boundaries. Be specific about your needs and expectations.

Example: "I need to limit our phone calls to once in the evening when you are traveling. This will help me manage my anxiety."

4. Explain the reason behind your boundary to help others understand its importance. Ask for cooperation in respecting your boundaries. Be open to discussing and negotiating if necessary.

Example: "Limiting our calls helps me focus on other activities and reduces my anxiety about your absence."

5. Practice setting boundaries through role-playing scenarios. This can help you feel more confident in real situations.

Effective Communication Skills

1. Using “I” statements to express your feelings and needs without blaming or criticizing others. Structure your statements using the formula: “I feel [emotion] when [situation] because [reason]. I need [need].”

Example: “I feel anxious when you don’t answer my calls because I worry something might have happened. I need reassurance that everything is okay.”

2. Acknowledge the other person’s feelings and show understanding. Use phrases like “I can see why you feel that way” or “That sounds really tough.”

Example: “I understand that it’s frustrating for you when I call too often. I’m working on managing my anxiety better.”

3. Use clear and direct language. Avoid passive or aggressive communication. Practice saying “no” when necessary.

Example: “I need some time to myself to manage my anxiety, but I’ll check in with you later.”

Healthy Attachment Styles

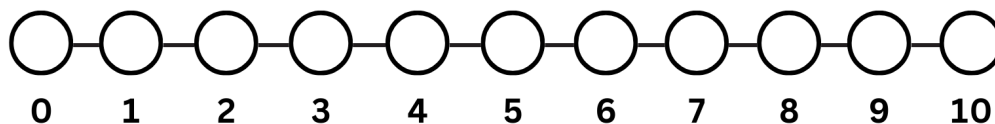
Attachment styles refer to the characteristic ways in which individuals form and maintain relationships with others. It originates from early interactions with caregivers and influences how people approach relationships throughout life. The main types are:

- **Secure Attachment:** Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy, trusting, and balanced.
- **Anxious Attachment:** Clingy, overly dependent, and fearful of abandonment.
- **Avoidant Attachment:** Emotionally distant, self-reliant, and uncomfortable with closeness.
- **Disorganized Attachment:** Inconsistent behavior, fear of intimacy, and difficulty trusting others.

1. Think about your past relationships and how you behaved and felt in them. Write down any patterns you notice.

2. Based on your reflections, determine which attachment style best describes your behavior in relationships.

3. Rate how much your current attachment style impacts your separation anxiety on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = no impact, 10 = extreme impact).



4. Identify specific changes you want to make to move towards a secure attachment style. The following are some suggestions.

For Anxious Attachment Style

- ☐ Increase self-confidence (e.g., Practice self-affirmations daily)
- ☐ Develop independence (e.g., Spend time engaging in solo activities)
- ☐ Manage anxiety (e.g., Learn and practice relaxation techniques)
- ☐ Set healthy boundaries (e.g., Clearly communicate needs and boundaries to partners)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

For Avoidant Attachment Style

- ☐ Increase emotional openness (e.g., Share feelings and thoughts with trusted individuals)
- ☐ Develop trust (e.g., Gradually open up about personal experiences)
- ☐ Practice intimacy (e.g., Engage in activities that require closeness and vulnerability)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

For Disorganized Attachment Style

- ☐ Increase emotional regulation (e.g., Learn and practice techniques to manage intense emotions)
- ☐ Create a sense of security (e.g., Establish stable routines in daily life)
- ☐ Build Trust in Relationships (e.g., Engage in consistent and reliable interactions with loved ones)
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

My Attachment Style: _____

Changes to make to move towards a secure attachment style:

5. After a month, rate the effectiveness of your efforts to develop a healthier attachment style on a scale from 1 to 10.

Action	Effectiveness (1-10)

Physical Wellness for Anxiety

1. Choose an exercise you enjoy, such as walking, running, or swimming. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week.

2. Focus on incorporating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats into your meals. Avoid excessive sugar, caffeine, and processed foods.

3. Create a consistent sleep schedule, avoid screens before bedtime, and create a relaxing bedtime routine. The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- ☐ Establish a calming pre-sleep ritual such as reading or taking a warm bath.
- ☐ Avoid electronic devices at least an hour before bedtime.
- ☐ Ensure your bedroom is cool, quiet, and dark.
- ☐ Use a mattress and pillows that support good sleep posture.
- ☐ Avoid caffeine and alcohol in the evening.
- ☐ Eat dinner at least two to three hours before sleeping.
- ☐ Use deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation to unwind.
- ☐ Use calming scents like lavender or chamomile in your bedroom.

- ☐ Expose yourself to natural light during the day and dim lights in the evening.
- ☐ Use calming sounds to create a peaceful sleep environment.
- ☐ Jot down your worries or to-do lists earlier in the evening to clear your mind.
- ☐ Perform gentle stretches to relax your muscles.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

4. List the benefits and challenges you experienced with each strategy.

Strategy	Benefits	Challenges
<i>E.g., Exercise</i>	<i>Increased energy, improved mood</i>	<i>Finding time to exercise consistently</i>

5. How can you overcome the challenges you faced?

Example Answer: “I can set reminders to turn off screens and create a more relaxing bedtime routine.”

[illegible]

Visualization of Positive Outcomes

Visualization involves creating detailed mental images of successful and positive experiences to reduce anxiety and build confidence.

1. Write down specific situations related to separation that cause you anxiety. Be as detailed as possible. 2. Assign a rating to each situation based on how much anxiety it causes you on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = no anxiety, 10 = extreme anxiety).

Example:

- “When my partner leaves for a business trip” - 8
- “When I have to spend time alone at night” - 7
- “When my loved one doesn’t respond to messages” - 6

2. Choose one anxiety-provoking situation to start with.

Example: “When my partner leaves for a business trip.”

3. Write a detailed description of a positive outcome for the chosen situation.

Example: “I feel calm and confident while my partner is away. I use this time to focus on my hobbies and self-care. We stay connected through regular check-ins, and I feel secure in our relationship.”

4. Add sensory details to make the visualization more vivid and realistic.

Example: "I see myself smiling and enjoying a book. I hear my partner's reassuring voice during our calls. I feel relaxed and at ease in my cozy home environment."

5. Visualization instructions:

- Find a quiet and comfortable place where you can practice visualization without interruptions.
- Use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation to calm your mind and body before you begin.
- Close your eyes and imagine the positive outcome you described. Focus on the sensory details and immerse yourself in the experience.
- Practice visualization regularly to reinforce the positive outcomes and build confidence.

Travel Anxiety

Write down specific situations related to travel that cause you anxiety. Be as detailed as possible. Assign a rating to each situation based on how much anxiety it causes you on a scale from 0 to 10 (0 = no anxiety, 10 = extreme anxiety).

Example:

- “Flying on a plane” - 8
- “Staying in a hotel alone” - 7
- “Being away from my family” - 9
- “Navigating unfamiliar places” - 6

2. Make detailed travel plans to reduce uncertainty and increase your sense of control.

Example: “Book accommodations in advance, and research the destination.”

3. Bring items that provide comfort and familiarity during your travels.

Example: “Pack a favorite blanket, photos of loved ones, and comforting snacks.”

4. Learn and practice relaxation techniques to use during travel.

Example: “Practice deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and mindfulness meditation.”

5. Maintain regular contact with loved ones to feel supported.

Example: “Call or text family members each evening to check in and share your experiences.”

6. List the benefits and challenges you experienced during your trip.

Benefits	Challenges
<i>e.g., Reduced anxiety, felt more prepared, enjoyed the trip</i>	<i>Initial high anxiety, difficulty navigating unfamiliar places</i>

Benefits	Challenges

5. What modifications can you make to improve your travel anxiety plan?

Example: “I’ll practice more relaxation techniques before the trip and download helpful travel apps.”

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: Separation anxiety disorder · recognized diagnosis across the lifespan
- ICD-11 CDDR: 6B05 Separation anxiety disorder · recognized anxiety or fear-related disorder
- A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Establish persistence, excess relative to developmental/cultural context, distress or impairment, and rule out generalized anxiety, panic/agoraphobia, illness anxiety, trauma-related conditions, autism-related distress, psychosis, and relationship coercion.

Document-specific corrections

- Use the recognized name ·separation anxiety disorder· only when a qualified assessment supports it; adult presentation is valid.
- Add persistence, developmental/cultural excess, distress/impairment, and exclusion/differential checks before interpreting the self-assessment.
- Distinguish separation fear from coercive relationships, realistic caregiving concerns, panic/agoraphobia, generalized anxiety, trauma, autism-related distress, and illness anxiety.
- Require collaboratively graded, consent-based exposure; never use separation exposure where actual safety or dependent-care needs are unresolved.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 26, 33, 35, 39, 41]: identify each measure and rights holder; verify intended population, reliability/validity, scoring and cutoffs, reproduction permission, and current license. If these are author-created items, label them informal, remove diagnostic cutoffs, and do not claim validation.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Pages [1, 2, 3, 11, 26, 27, 28, 29]: require topic-qualified clinical review for consent, readiness, contraindications, escalation thresholds, and whether clinician-guided use is necessary.
- Exposure work should be formulation-driven, collaborative, graded, and designed to reduce avoidance and unhelpful safety behavior ·not delivered as forced flooding. Screen medical and trauma-related explanations when relevant.

Crisis and current resources

- NICE anxiety guidance; local emergency and domestic-abuse resources when feared separation involves actual danger.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg113>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg113/chapter/recommendations>