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CBT for Phobias

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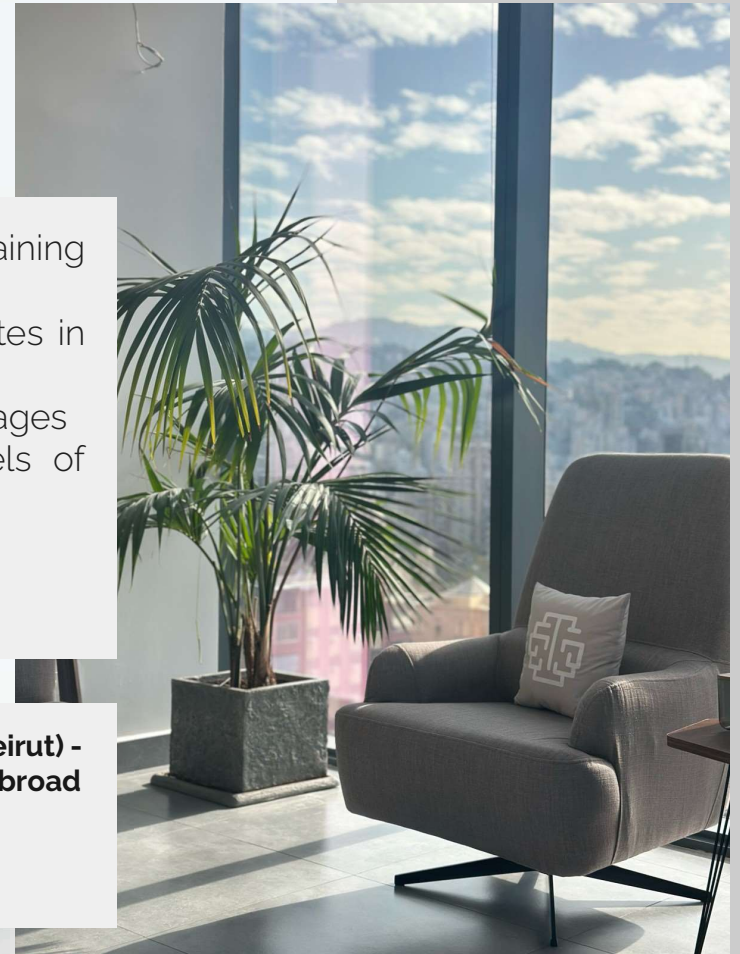
ABOUT US

Comprehensive psychological treatment & professional training institute:

- Team of expert psychologists trained at the best institutes in the world (Oxford University, Beck Institute)
- Evidence-based psychotherapeutic help for clients of all ages
- Clinical and corporate trainings for people at all levels of experience


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OUTLINE

- Understanding Phobias and their causes
- Assessment and diagnosis
- Overcoming Phobias

- 
- Definition: strong and persistent fear, triggered by specific objects or situation
 - Direct contact with the thing you are phobic → overwhelming fear + need to escape
 - Leading to avoidance



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Phobias can have a significant and painful effect on your life: feeling anxious all the time if you have to come into contact with your fear.

→ reduce enjoyment of life

Examples:

phobic of driving, elevator, flying



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What percentage of people have phobias?

- 60%
- 30%
- 17%



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- Around 60% of the population has some level of phobia
- 12% have a phobia that is so disabling that the person wants treatment



What are the most common phobias?

Most common phobias

Insects

Small
animals

Heights

Public
transport

Storms

Closed
spaces

Tunnels

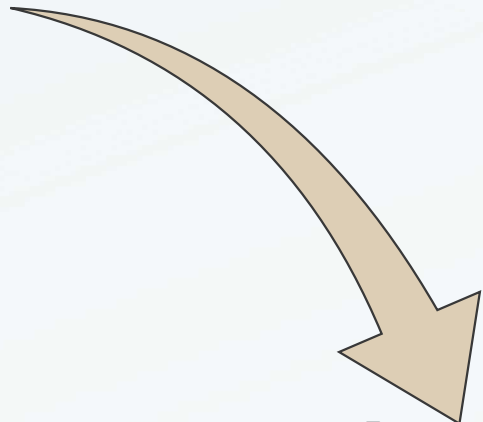
Crowds

Water



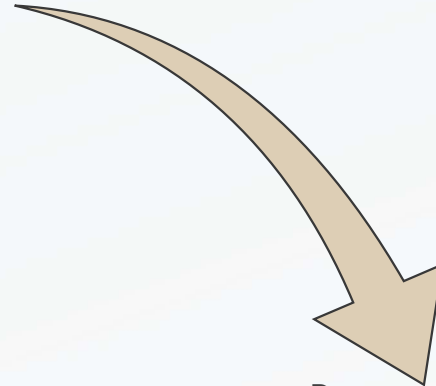
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Away from the
situation



Fears are out of
proportion to the actual
danger

Thinking about
your phobia



Danger seems to
increase



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Example: Spider phobic



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Seeing a spider



Dangerous and
aggressive threat



Fear of dying, go mad or
lose control



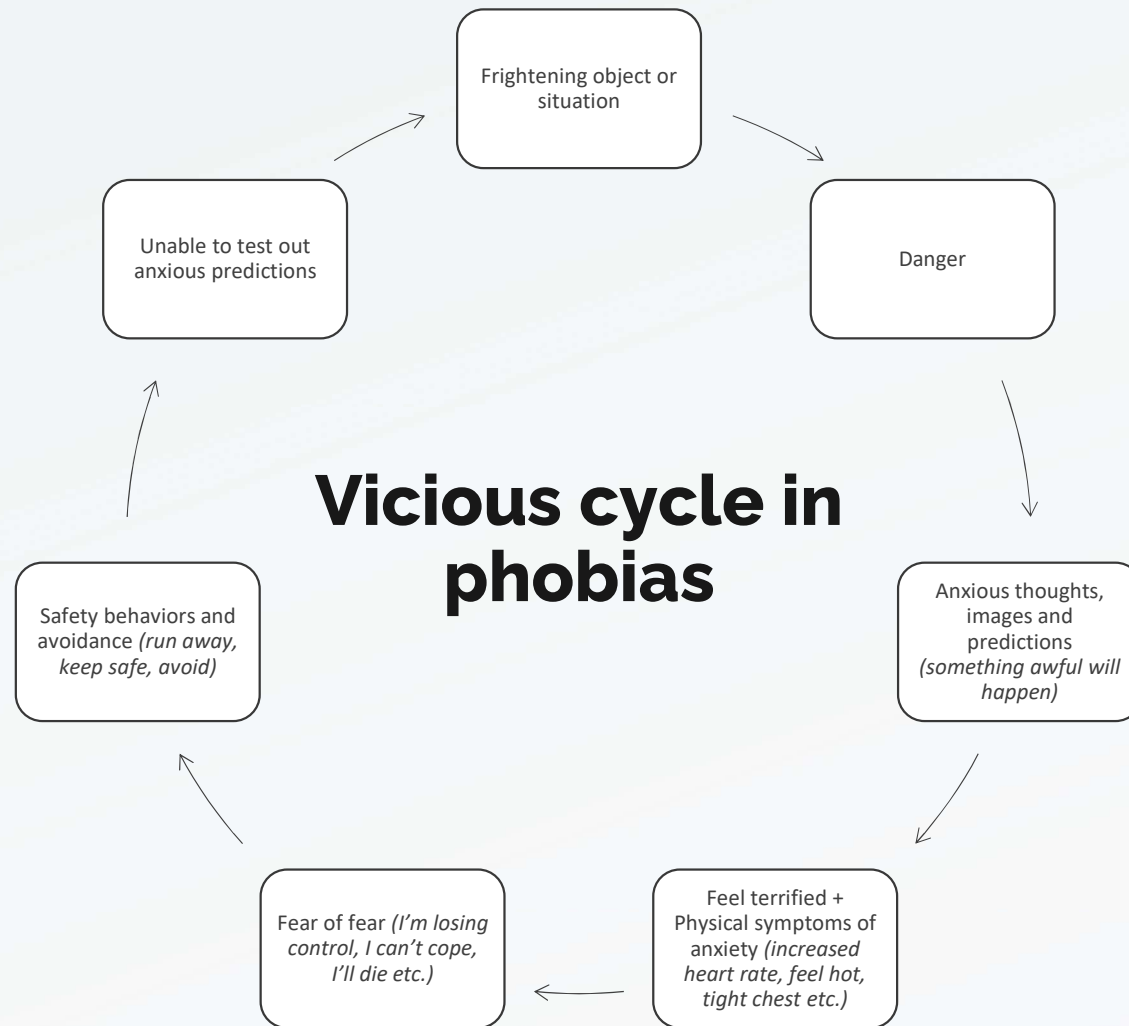
Get away from the room,
although spiders in this
country are harmless

Causes of Phobias

- Often start following an unpleasant or frightening experience
- Genetics and personality
- Childhood common fears
- Phobias with no obvious trigger, for example: height phobia
- Some phobias are more to do with disgust feelings than fears



What keeps Phobias going?

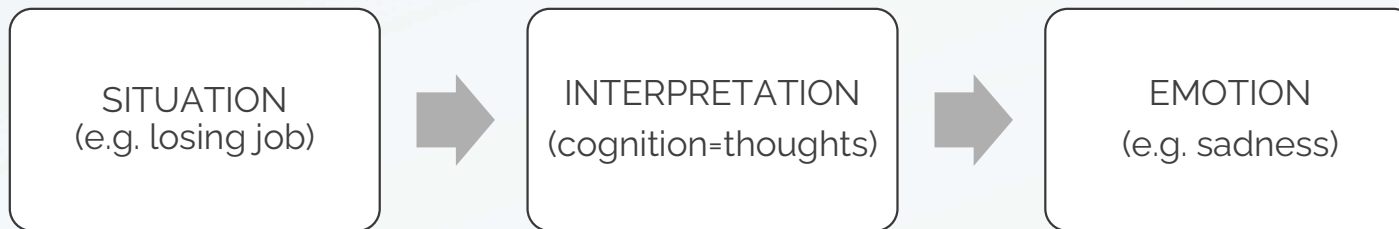




Assessment and Diagnosis

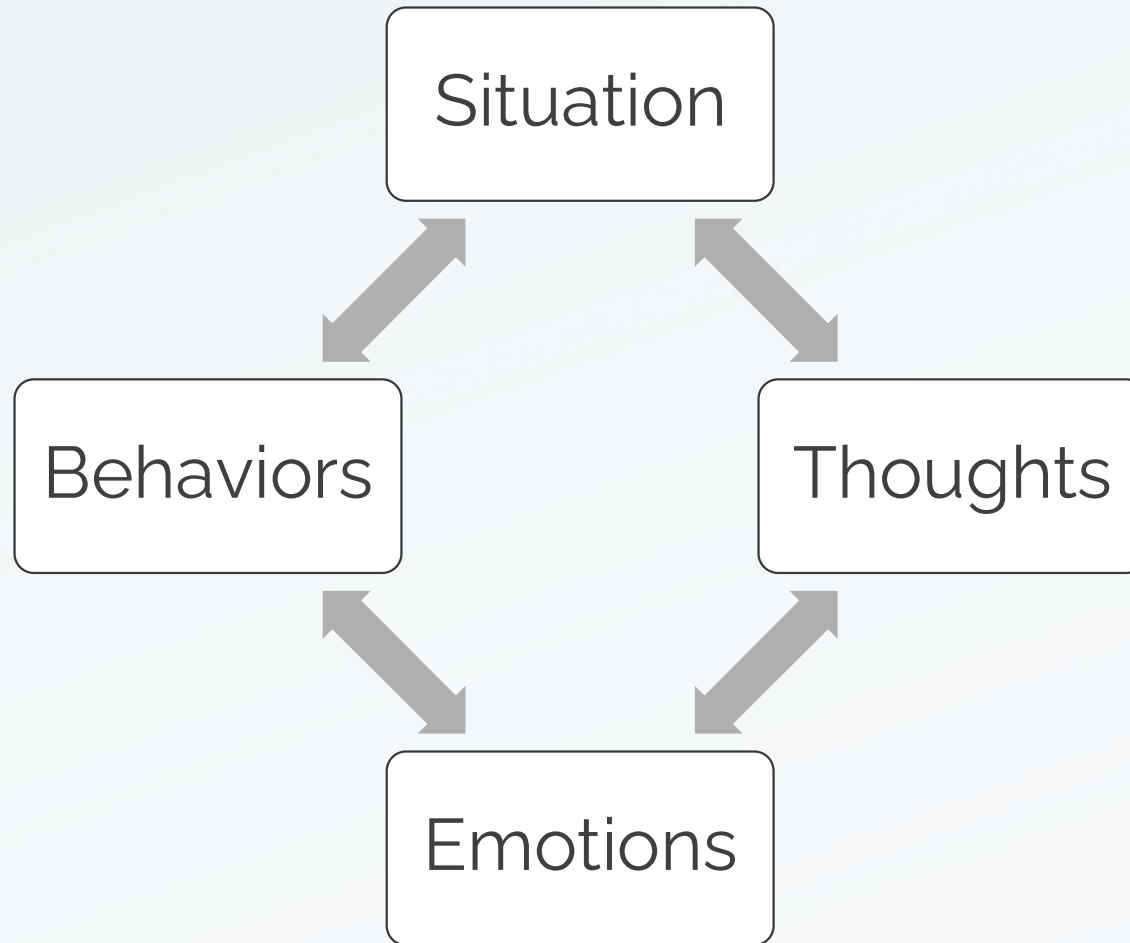
Cognitive Model

Cognitive Model

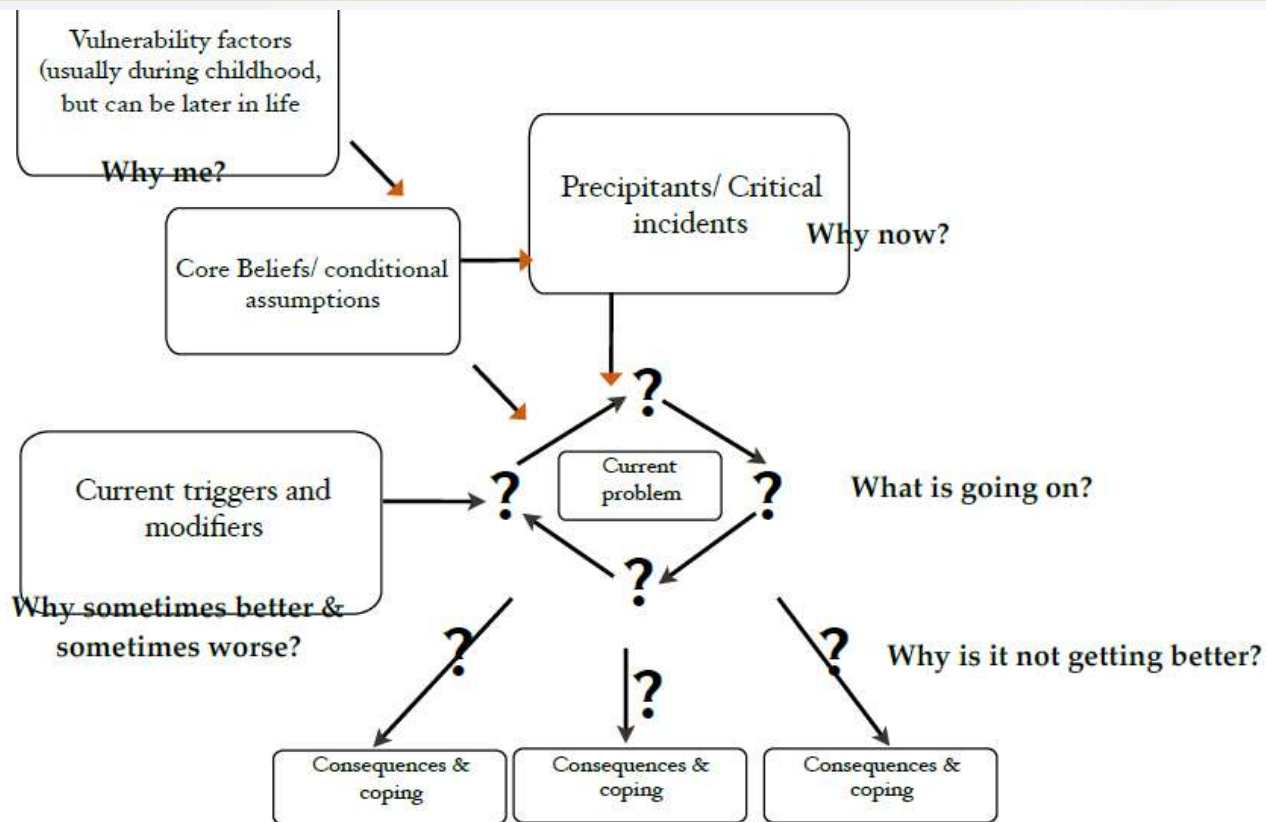




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Case Formulation (putting it all together)





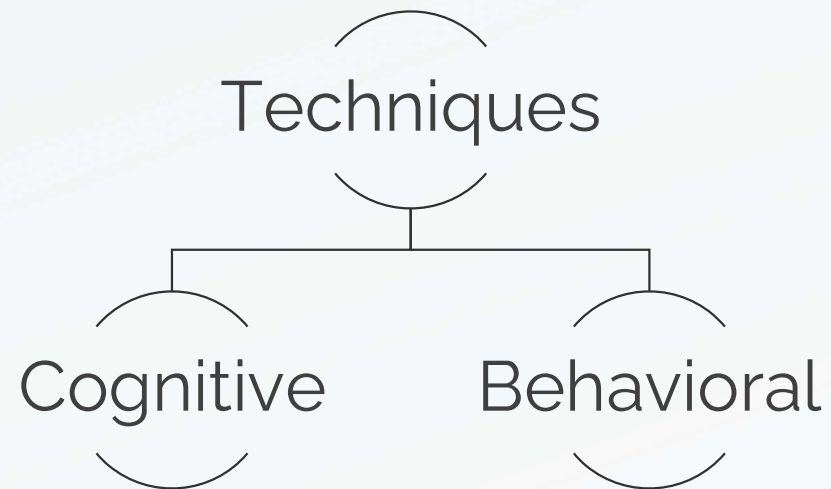
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Group Work

Examples + Consequences

Overcoming Phobias



THERAPY'S STRUCTURE

- Usually 10-15 sessions (longer for personality problems)
- Booster sessions
- Once per week
- 45 minutes

Cognitive

1. Work out your anxious thoughts and predictions

- Overestimating the likelihood that something bad will happen
- Overestimating how serious an event will be
- Underestimating other people's ability to help and not trusting other to help



What am I frightened of?	What are my anxious predictions?
Spiders	<i>If I see a spider, then it will crawl all over me If I have a spider on me, I'll lose control and get hysterical If I get hysterical, I'll never recover</i>
My example:	

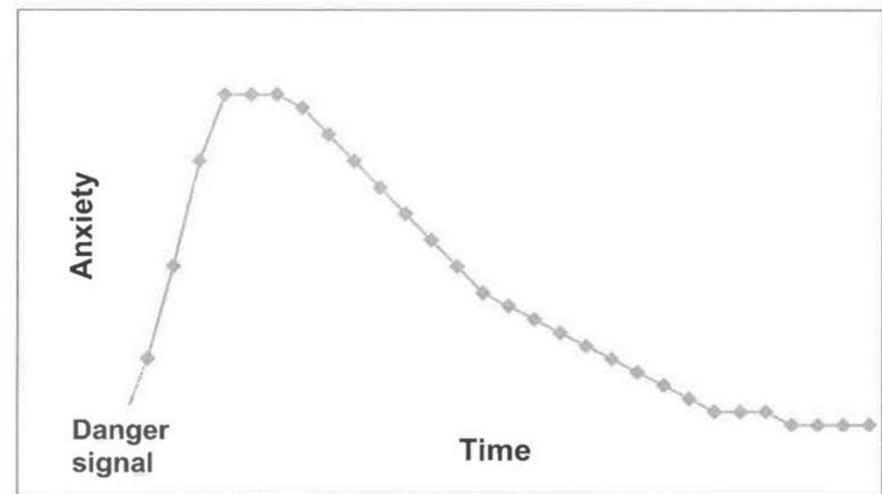


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2. Think through and challenge your anxious thoughts and predictions

- Challenge your fears in your mind before facing them.
- Learn to question your thoughts rather than accept them as the truth
- Be more rational about your fears
- Get the risk into proportion
- Learn about the psychological symptoms of fear

Changes in Anxiety During and After an Anxiety Response





What are the facts? what is the evidence for and against my beliefs?	<i>How many people in this country die of chock from seeing a spider?</i>
Am I confusing feelings with facts? Am I experiencing fear of fear?	<i>I may feel terrible and overwhelmed but this is just a feeling, it will do no harm and will go away soon. A feeling cannot harm me</i>
How can I cope better with the fear?	<i>Remember how fear goes away on its own.</i>
What is the worst thing that might happen? How would I cope if this were to happen?	<i>I may get trapped in the lift if it breaks down between floors. The do have alarm buttons and I will push that and wait for help. There is lots of air in a lift, I will not suffocate.</i>

Behavioral

3. Work out your unhelpful coping strategies and safety behaviors

"safe" → stops you from facing your fears and testing out your anxious predictions.

- Avoidance
- Taking tranquillizers
- Water etc.

If I did not have my phobia, what would I stop doing that I am doing now?



What am I frightened of?	How do I try and keep safe?	Why is this unhelpful?
Spiders	<i>If I saw a spider I would:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run away• Call for help and get someone to kill it• I check out each room before I go and sit down• I vacuum the house every day to kill any spiders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I continue to believe that spiders are very frightening and dangerous.• I never allow myself to come into contact with spiders• I feel better if I can do all my safety behaviors but I still have my phobia
My example:		

4. Experiments

- Start with a manageable step and move on to more difficult things when you feel ready
- Do not avoid
- Do not use any of your safety behaviors or unhelpful coping strategies



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Plan :

1. Hierarchy of fears
2. Write down your anxious predictions
3. Come into contact with your fears

Tasks:

1. Saying the word spider
2. Looking at pictures of spiders
3. Watching / talking about spiders
4. Looking at small spider in a jar
5. Touching a small spider, touching a large spider later on
6. Catching a spider using a glass and piece of paper
7. Allowing a spider to walk your hand

Experiments for a Spider Phobia

<i>Task</i>	<i>Prediction to test (belief rating)</i>	<i>Outcome and What I learned</i>
1. Saying the word 'Spider'	<i>It will make me feel so anxious and awful that I will lose control. This means that I will sob and scream and not be able to stop for hours (8)</i>	<i>I repeated the word spider frequently and then I got used to it. Anxiety went down as soon as I realised I did not lose control (4)</i>
2. Looking at pictures of spiders	<i>I won't be able to do it – I'll throw the book across the room. (8)</i>	<i>Unpleasant at first but got used to it- amazed at variety of spiders. I may have been worrying too much about losing control: did not throw book across the room! (2)</i>
3. Watching spiders on video and talking about the spiders to my friend	<i>It will make me feel terrified: I'll burst into tears and rush from the room (9)</i>	<i>Unpleasant at first, not as bad as I thought. Interesting. Friend likes spiders, and told me about holding a tarantula and surviving. (2)</i>
4. Looking at small spider in jar.	<i>It will see me and look at me. I can't do it. (10)</i>	<i>Didn't take much notice or move around much, and I coped fine. (2)</i>
5. Looking at small spider in open bowl.	<i>It will jump out and run all over me and I'll be so shocked I'll run out of the room. (10)</i>	<i>Spider moved around the bottom of the bowl, slowly. Could not jump out. (3)</i>
6. Touching small spider in open bowl.	<i>If I touch it it will run up my arm and get into my clothes, and I will die of fright. (8)</i>	<i>The spider moved away as soon as it saw my finger coming. Kept on moving away from me. (4)</i>
7. Working with a larger spider.	<i>The bigger the spider, the worse they are. They are better at jumping up at me, then it will be terrible, and I will die of fright. (7)</i>	<i>Even big spiders move away from me, and although they scuttle, they are not that fast. Got interested in variety of spiders, and how small even the big ones are relative to me. (2)</i>



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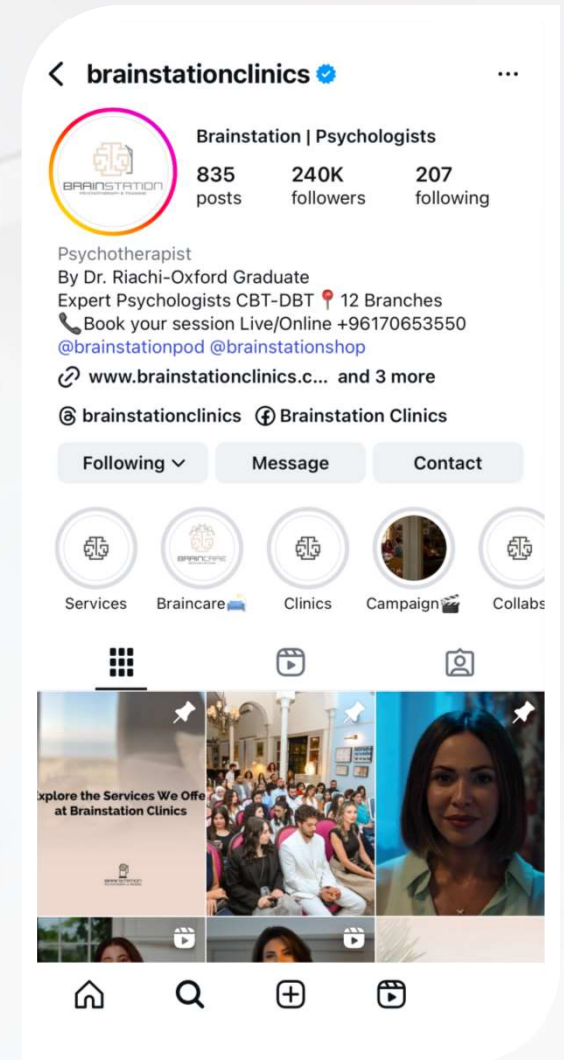
8. Catching a spider using a glass and piece of paper.	<i>It will go berserk, I will go mad having one near me, drop the glass and it will attack me. (8)</i>	<i>Fairly easy to catch a spider by putting a glass over it and slipping paper underneath. I can do this! (1)</i>
9. Allowing a spider to walk on my hand, swapping hand to hand	<i>I can't possibly touch it – it will run into my clothes and I'll just die of shock. (10)</i>	<i>I can move faster than the spider – I can predict what it will do and put my hand out to catch it. (1)</i>
10. Working on tasks at home	<i>I can't do it alone. If I try and do it on my own the fear will get much worse and I will go back to square one and all my progress will collapse. (6)</i>	<i>The more I practise the easier it is. (3)</i>

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