

Coping with Needle Procedures

Group Workbook



To Learn More

- Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine
206-987-2164
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



Seattle Children's[®]
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

Session 1

Welcome to the Coping with Needle Procedures Group!

Everyone who enrolls in our anxiety groups is here to learn how to deal with feelings of anxiety, nervousness, or fear that get in the way of getting injections or blood draws. Most people feel a little (or a lot!) unsure about joining group. We usually see that this improves as we get to know each other in group.

Group rules

We use these group rules to help everyone feel comfortable sharing and participating in group:

1. Confidentiality: What is shared in group, stays in group (but you can always tell your parents/caregivers).
2. Respect each other: Group members might be sharing personal information, so we want to make sure everyone feels safe and respected in group.
3. Show that you're listening when others are talking - it's hard to share things that are personal.
4. Show up! Participation is key for the group process and your own progress.
5. _____
6. _____

Above all, we hope you have some fun and get a lot out of coping with needle procedures group!

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a word that describes the uncomfortable feeling we get when we feel scared, nervous, or worried. We might use different words to describe the same feeling. What words do you use?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Anxiety is a normal, natural feeling that everyone has. Anxiety used to keep our ancestors safe in times of real threat. For example, if a lion was chasing them, anxiety would help them run away or fight to stay alive. It is pretty normal to be fearful of something that might hurt you, and many people feel uncomfortable about getting a poke.

For some people, and the people who join this group, anxiety grows too big for the situation. It is like a smoke alarm that is going off when there is no fire! It can really get in the way of doing things that you need to do, including get medical procedures like shots, injections, or blood draws. In this group, we will be learning ways to retrain our bodies and our minds to make that alarm less sensitive, so it doesn't get in the way when there is no real threat.

The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Model



THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND BEHAVIORS ARE ALL RELATED!

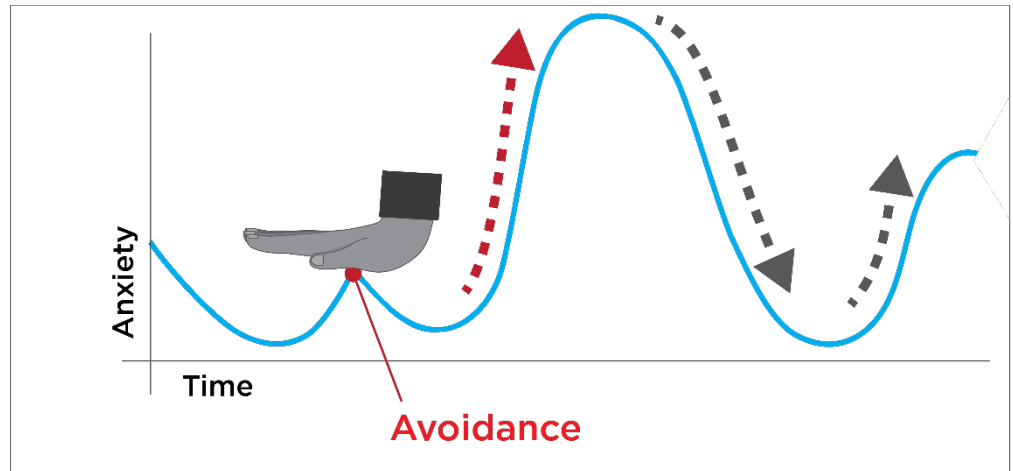
Measuring how anxious you feel: The Worry Scale

(Subjective Units of Distress - SUDs)

| Rating | How I feel | What I feel in my body | What situations get me here |
|--------|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10 | I feel unbearably bad, beside myself, out of control, overwhelmed - the most anxious I've ever been! | | |
| 9 | Feeling desperate, to the point where it's almost unbearable. | | |
| 8 | Freaking out. | | |
| 7 | Starting to freak out, but I can maintain control with difficulty. | | |
| 6 | Feeling bad to the point that I begin to think something ought to be done about the way I feel. | | |
| 5 | Moderately upset, uncomfortable. Unpleasant feelings are still manageable with some effort. | | |
| 4 | Somewhat upset to the point that you cannot easily ignore an unpleasant thought. | | |
| 3 | Mildly upset. Worried, bothered to the point that I notice it. | | |
| 2 | A little bit upset, but not noticeable unless I took care to pay attention to my feelings. | | |
| 1 | No distress and feeling basically good. | | |
| 0 | Peace, serenity, total relief. No anxiety of any kind about any particular issue. | | |

Ride the wave

When people feel anxious or have many of those physical feelings in their bodies, they often feel like they need to do something to stop it. In reality, the more we avoid things that make us anxious, the more anxious we feel.

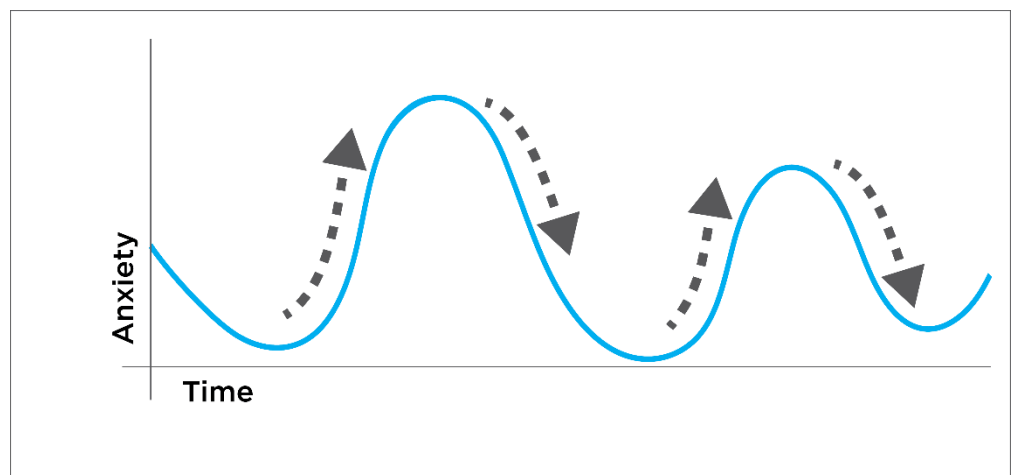


Have you ever heard this phrase?

“What goes up must come down.”

Anxiety and other feelings work the same way. If we stay in the situation, we retrain those uncomfortable signals from our body, and, if we repeat that over and over again, anxiety will continue go down.

So, rather than avoid things, we want people to ride the wave of anxiety. What this means is to allow yourself to experience the worry and anxiety without pushing it away or distracting yourself from it. Let it come and go naturally. Like a wave, it will subside. If we ride the wave, it gets easier over time.



Here's the secret: You do not have to do anything to make anxiety go away except to stay in the situation.

The Next Step – Exposures: Setting goals

We will soon begin practicing facing anxiety-provoking situations together; also known as doing exposures. Before we do so, it will be important to set goals for these efforts. The most helpful goals are:

S - Specific

M - Measurable (use a number so you can measure your progress)

A - Achievable (even if you don't believe it at first!)

R - Relevant (to your overall goals for group)

T - Time-specific (you'll be practicing achieving these goals in and out of group)

What are some SMART goals that you would like to work toward?

Example: "I will say hi to 2 people at school this week."

- _____
- _____
- _____

Exposures: Rewarding effort for doing hard things

An "exposure" is a situation in which you face something that makes you feel anxious or scared. Since we are asking you to do something that is difficult, it is important to think about ways to reward your effort. You might find it hard to find the courage or reason to do these things, but you can't expect it to be easy to face anxiety. Getting a reward helps increase the likelihood you'll try again. So, finding ways you or those around you can recognize this effort is important. Remember, rewards are not just for perfect jobs! We want to reward the effort you make toward facing your fears. It is best if there are lots of reward ideas, or ways of breaking rewards down into smaller pieces. Brainstorm some ideas below:

| Self-rewards | Special privileges | Things people can tell me or I can tell myself | Bigger rewards to earn |
|--------------|--------------------|--|------------------------|
| | | | |

Exposures: Creating a list of steps to facing feared situations

As we have been talking about, the best way to beat anxiety is to **face your fears**. That can feel scary, so we can consider breaking your fears down into smaller steps. Here are some examples:

| Fear Step | Worry Rating | Fear Step | Worry Rating |
|--|--------------|--|--------------|
| Spider crawls on your face | 10 | Get a blood draw | 10 |
| Spider crawls on your hand | 9 | Sit in the blood draw chair, use tourniquet, alcohol wipe, feel (not needle), poke on vein | 9 |
| Sit next to a free spider | 9 | Sit in blood draw chair, use tourniquet, alcohol wipe, and feel (not needle), poke on arm (not vein) | 8 |
| Sit a few feet away from free spider | 8 | Sit in blood draw chair, use a needle to poke an object | 7 |
| Sit next to a real spider in a tank/cup | 7 | Watch video of blood draw | 6 |
| Sit 8 feet away from a real spider in a tank/cup | 7 | Use tourniquet, alcohol wipe, feel vein | 5 |
| Hold a fake spider | 5 | Have someone give you a fake shot with a pen | 5 |
| Look at a fake spider | 3 | Look at different types of needles | 4 |
| Watch a movie of a spider | 2 | Sit in the same room as a needle | 3 |
| Look at picture of spiders | 2 | Look at a picture of a needle | 2 |

Here are some tips about making your own hierarchy:

- Consider a SMART goal.
- Make sure this is something you can practice both in group and outside of group.
- List all of the possible steps you can break this worry into (we can help with ideas!).
- Make sure you have enough steps at different worry levels.
- You do not have to have a step at each worry rating level.
- Put your steps in order from easiest (lowest rating) to hardest (highest rating).
- Consider/talk with your parents about relevant rewards.

Session 1 Homework: Build your own list of steps

What is my goal? _____

0 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10
No Anxiety Moderate Anxiety Extreme Anxiety

| Exposure step | Worry rating |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Additional Parent/Caregiver Reading

It is normal for caregivers to feel unsure of how to help their child cope with uncomfortable or painful needle procedures. Here is some additional information that we hope will help you feel empowered to support your child.

Avoidance is a key driver of anxiety/worry problems.

We know that some children avoid by **doing less** (for example, avoiding looking at or talking about needles), some avoid by doing **too much** (like obsessing about or researching worst case scenarios), and some avoid by **engaging in a “safety behavior”** (for example, requiring sedating medicine).

Avoidance interferes with learning that:

- The feared event is not so likely.
- The feared event is not so dangerous.
- We can handle when hard things happen.

Facing Fears!

A key component of treatment is exposures (facing fears). Exposures provide new learning opportunities:

- Feared things are not so likely.
- Feared things are not so bad.
- We can handle feared things if they do happen.

Exposures cause MORE anxiety in the moment.

- Anxiety is not dangerous.
- It can feel hard and it’s a sign you’re getting stronger - like weightlifting.

What can I do to help?

Validate feelings

“I know you’re feeling worried about this blood draw”

Express confidence

“I know you can cope with this”

Reward

Reward your child with praise, attention, and tangible rewards when they have put effort into facing their fears!

What doesn’t help?

Rescuing

Saving your child from something they feel anxious about, “She can’t do that or she’ll get too upset.”

Minimizing

“C’mon! This isn’t scary!” “It won’t hurt!”

What does supportive caregiving look like?

Support has two ingredients – expressing acceptance of your child and their feelings, and confidence in their ability to tolerate their discomfort. An example of a supportive statement is “I understand how you feel AND I know that you can cope.” Often parents or caregivers focus on one ingredient or the other. Or one parent or caregiver may be on one end of the spectrum and the other on the other end. Balancing these two ingredients is key!

Session 2

Applied Tension Technique to prevent fainting

Most people feel a bit uneasy when they see blood or needles. Some people feel faint or think that they might actually faint when they see blood or have to get an injection or blood draw. If you sometimes get dizzy or faint when there is blood or a needle, there is a simple technique to prevent fainting or speed up the recovery time if you do faint.

In most cases, fainting is harmless. But we still want you to tell us (or your parents/caregivers) if you are feeling faint so that we can help you. Together, we can use a technique to help you get through your exposure practice and medical procedures safely.

In Applied Tension Technique you tense all the muscles in your body, which then raises your blood pressure. If your blood pressure increases (and you bring more blood to your brain), you are less likely to faint.

How to do it

Sit in a comfortable chair and tense (tighten) the muscles in your arms, legs and torso for about 10 to 15 seconds. You should hold the tension until you start to feel a warm sensation in your head. Then, relax your body for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

TIP: When you relax your muscles after tensing them, the goal is not to become completely relaxed, because this will cause your blood pressure to drop. Rather, the goal is to let your body return to a normal state (not overly tense or completely relaxed).

Practicing

Practice this strategy several times a day for at least a week so that you will know how to use it really well if you feel dizzy.

More tips:

Position: If you do feel faint, lie down and raise your feet. This can help speed up your recovery. (The blood-draw chairs in the lab are designed to help people get in this position.)

Tense & Relax: If you tense the same part of your body in which you are getting an injection or blood draw, it can be more painful. Try to relax the part of your body that will be receiving the needle, while tensing the other parts of your body. Again, this is hard, so practice is important!

Before and After: Some people prefer to practice tensing and relaxing before or after the needle.

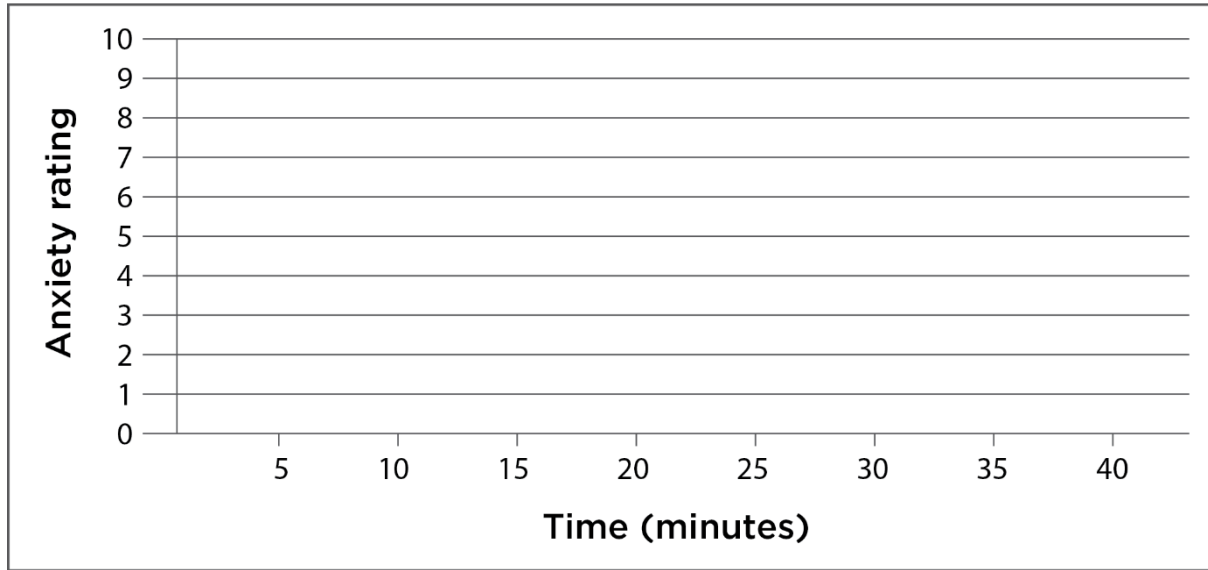
Headache: If you get a headache when trying the applied tension technique, try tensing less hard or practice a little less frequently.

Session 2 Exposure Practice

Exposure task _____

What do you think will happen? _____

Right before: How bad do you think your anxiety will be (0-10)? _____



After: Did the thing you thought would happen actually happen? **Yes** **No**

What did you learn? _____

Please answer these questions after you finish the exposure:

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| I think I could do this exposure again | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| What happened during this exposure was | Much worse than I thought | A little worse than I thought | About the same as I thought | A little better than I thought | Much better than I thought |
| If I did this exposure again it would be | Much worse than this time | A little worse than this time | About the same as this time | A little better than this time | Much better than this time |
| I think this exposure helped me | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| I am glad I did this exposure | Definitely not | Not really | Not sure | Kind of yes | Definitely yes |
| I think I could do a harder exposure next time | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |

Session 2 Homework: Exposure Practice

| Date | Exposure exercise completed | SUDs (pre/post) |
|----------------------|--|-----------------|
| Example: 1/6/2021 | Used an alcohol wipe on my skin where I will be receiving a needle procedure | 9 / 3 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Session 3

Imaginal Exposures

Another way we can practice facing our fears is to imagine that we are in the situation that makes us feel anxious. This is called an imaginal exposure because we are using our imagination to face our fears.

Set the Scene - appeal to your 5 senses

What do you **see**?

Where are you?
What is around you?

Who is there?

Parents/caregivers?
Doctors/nurses?

What do you **hear**?

What do you **smell**?

Can you **taste** anything?

What do you **feel**?

Is the room hot or cold?

What are all the steps before, during, and after your needle procedure?

Putting it all together

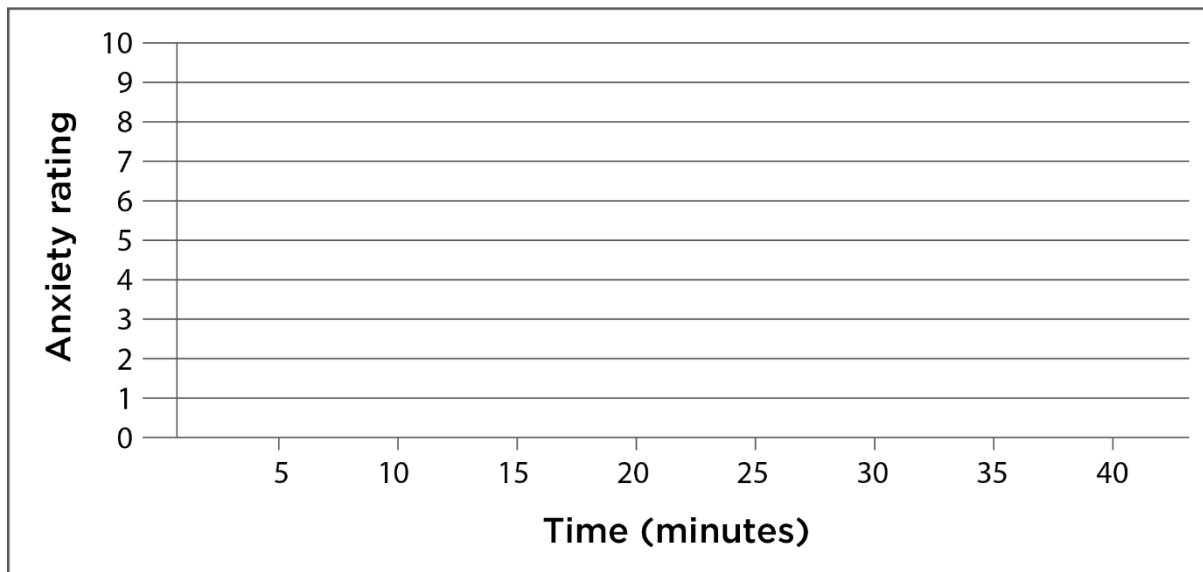
Write a story about what happens when you have a needle procedure.

Session 3 Exposure Practice

Exposure task _____

What do you think will happen? _____

Right before: How bad do you think your anxiety will be (0-10)? _____



After: Did the thing you thought would happen actually happen? **Yes** **No**

What did you learn? _____

Please answer these questions after you finish the exposure:

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| I think I could do this exposure again | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| What happened during this exposure was | Much worse than I thought | A little worse than I thought | About the same as I thought | A little better than I thought | Much better than I thought |
| If I did this exposure again it would be | Much worse than this time | A little worse than this time | About the same as this time | A little better than this time | Much better than this time |
| I think this exposure helped me | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| I am glad I did this exposure | Definitely not | Not really | Not sure | Kind of yes | Definitely yes |
| I think I could do a harder exposure next time | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |

Session 3 Homework: Exposure Practice

| Date | Exposure exercise completed | SUDs (pre/post) |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <i>Example:</i> 1/6/2021 | Used an alcohol wipe on my skin where I will be receiving a needle procedure | 9 / 3 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

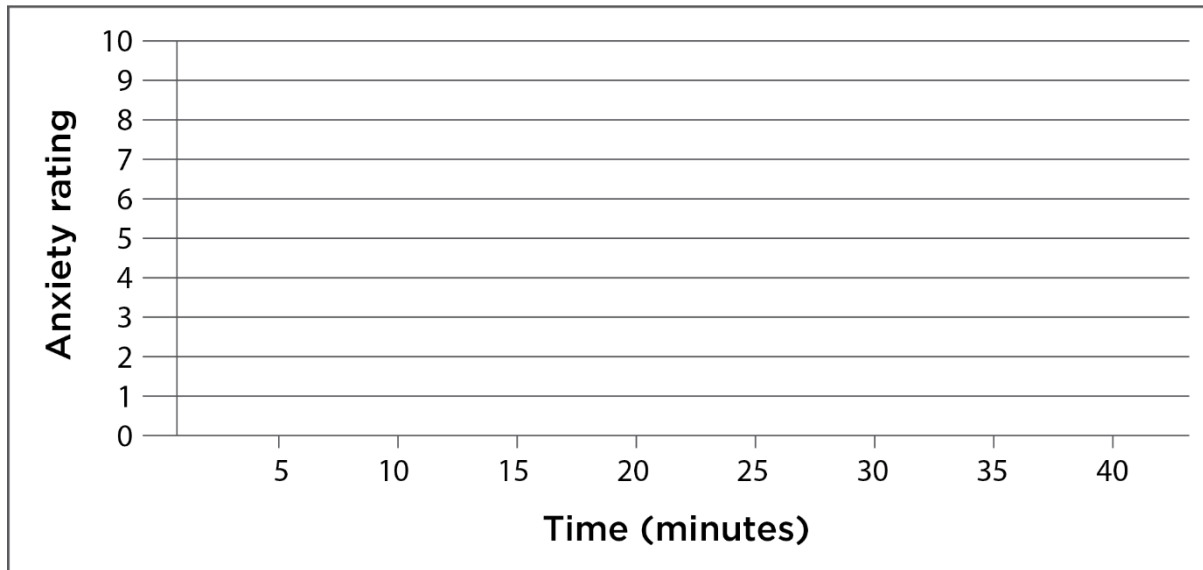
Session 4

Session 4 Exposure Practice

Exposure task _____

What do you think will happen? _____

Right before: How bad do you think your anxiety will be (0-10)? _____



After: Did the thing you thought would happen actually happen? **Yes** **No**

What did you learn? _____

Please answer these questions after you finish the exposure:

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| I think I could do this exposure again | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| What happened during this exposure was | Much worse than I thought | A little worse than I thought | About the same as I thought | A little better than I thought | Much better than I thought |
| If I did this exposure again it would be | Much worse than this time | A little worse than this time | About the same as this time | A little better than this time | Much better than this time |
| I think this exposure helped me | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| I am glad I did this exposure | Definitely not | Not really | Not sure | Kind of yes | Definitely yes |
| I think I could do a harder exposure next time | Definitely not | Probably not | Not sure | Probably yes | Definitely yes |

Session 4 Homework: Exposure Practice

| Date | Exposure exercise completed | SUDs (pre/post) |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <i>Example:</i> 1/6/2021 | Used an alcohol wipe on my skin where I will be receiving a needle procedure | 9 / 3 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Coping with Needle Procedures Group: The Last Session

Just because it's the end, doesn't mean it's over!

What are some top things I learned that I want to remember?

-
-
-

Advice to others who might struggle with anxiety:

-
-
-

Ways I plan to keep on practicing what I learned in group:

-
-
-