



# DEALING WITH FEAR AND ANXIETY

3D Recovery ® Resource 3.6

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## **Adaptive Fear**

Fear is an adaptive response to danger. Fear can motivate you to escape from potential harm.

## **Maladaptive Fear**

Fear can be maladaptive if you are not facing real danger. If you are afraid of things that cannot really harm you, then fear and anxiety may interfere with your ability to respond and adapt.

## **Anxiety**

Anxiety can be seen as a vague feeling of fear that may not be attached to a specific source. When you are feeling anxious, it may be helpful to identify the source of your fear and then you will be better prepared to determine if the fear is in response to a real danger (adaptive fear) or in response to something that cannot harm you (maladaptive fear).

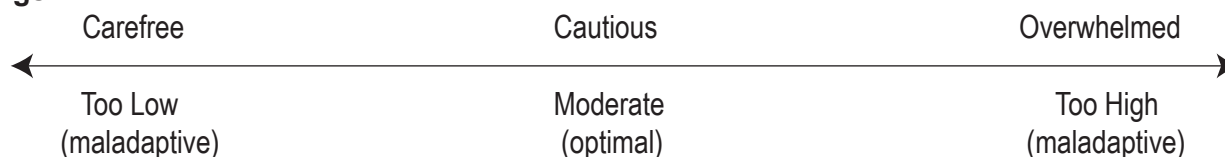
### **Feeling Words for Fear**

Mild Fear	Moderate Fear	Intense Fear
Nervous	Scared	Terrified
Anxious	Afraid	Horried
Apprehensive	Frightened	Panic
Wary	Threatened	Dread

## **Finding an Optimal Level of Fear**

In response to danger, too little fear (feeling carefree) or too much fear (feeling overwhelmed or paralyzed) can both be problematic in different ways. In response to danger, a moderate amount of fear (feeling cautious) may be optimal. Maladaptive levels of fear are often associated with problematic thoughts and actions. Conversely, an adaptive level of fear is often associated with effective thoughts and actions.

### **Feelings:**



### **Thoughts:**

"This is nothing to worry about"

"I need to be careful"

"I can't handle this"

### **Actions:**

Taking risks

Following recovery plan

Using addiction to escape

## **Coping with Fear and Anxiety**

The first thing to do in response to fear or anxiety is to determine if there is real danger. If you are in danger, you should take action to get yourself into a safer situation. If you are in a situation that makes you afraid you might relapse, you should seek a less-risky environment.

If you are feeling anxious in a way that creates an urge to use or act out, you should seek active ways to reduce your anxiety. These active coping strategies may involve social support (calling a sponsor or friend), physical exercise, or engaging in a safe but pleasurable activity.