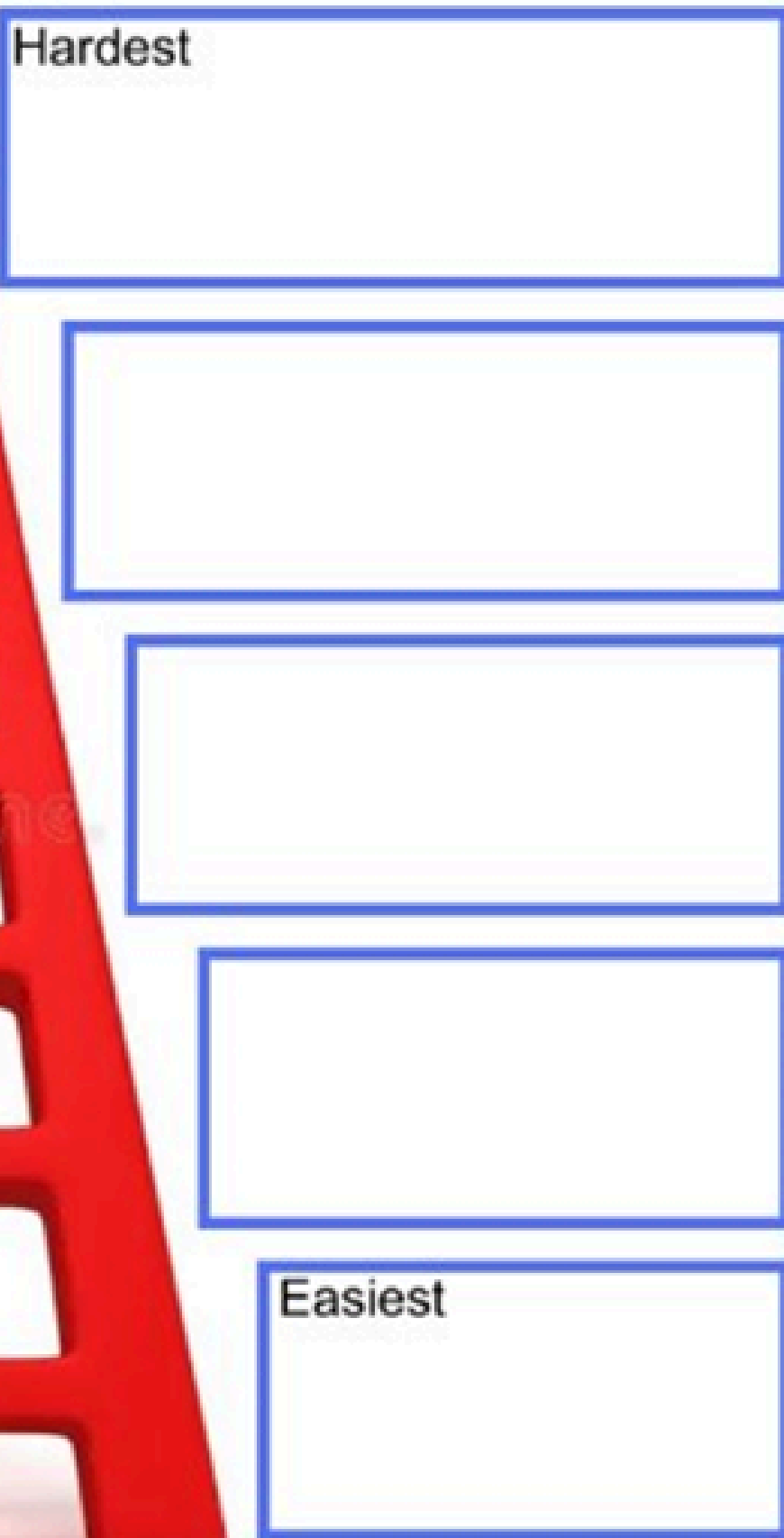# Graded Exposure

When fear is avoided, it only gets stronger, as we don't get to learn anything about our ability to cope.

Graded exposure is when you identify the anxiety provoking stimulus e.g. engaging in work in a classroom and make small steps to reach that goal whilst integrating relaxation strategies.

Goal Ladder

Goal:

Hardest

Easiest

Fear: _____

10.

9.

8.

7.

6.

5.

4.

3.

2.

1.

The steps to get back to school must be jointly agreed, but lead by the pupil.

Take a gentle approach in carefully considering the pace of the planned return to school, with emphasis on how rather than when.

Celebrate and consolidate each small step before expecting more.

It is important to note, smaller steps may be required, with the top of the ladder possibly not being the end goal of returning to school. It may instead be to leave the house.

Scaffolding and support should be provided at each stage of graded exposure.

Fear Ladder

Scaling can be helpful. Ask the student to rate on a scale of 1-10 how different school situations affect their worry level. This helps students identify triggers, the value given to certain factors and their potential influence on anxiety.

For example, 10 may be the biggest stressor, with q being the smallest stressor from the list.

Scaffolding and support should be provided through graded exposure to help the pupil begin to feel more comfortable with these stressors.

MY FEAR LADDER

Fear: _____

10.

9.

8.

7.

6.

5.

4.

3.

2.

1.