

UWE Wellbeing Service

Social Anxiety

Do you feel self-conscious or awkward in social situations, when meeting new people, or when speaking in groups? Do you worry about what others think about you? 'They'll think I'm stupid / anxious / boring / weak / weird...'

- Do you worry before social events and get increasingly anxious?
- Do you dwell on the event afterwards, being critical of what you said or did?
- Do you avoid going into social situations for fear of being judged?

Re-focusing attention

When in social situations, do you tend to focus your attention on:

- Worrying about being judged by others / what to say / am I doing ok?
- Monitoring physical sensations: am I blushing / sweating / shaking?

What happens if you shift your attention externally: onto listening to others, noticing what is going on around you?

What affect does shifting your attention externally have on your:

- Ability to follow and join in conversations?
- Symptoms of anxiety?

Overcoming avoidance

It is understandable to want to avoid going into anxiety provoking situations. However, avoidance often does not help to resolve anxiety, as we never get to find out that we **can** cope with situations and even enjoy ourselves! Many of the self-help resources below give details of techniques to try, whilst gradually facing fears.

Websites

- **GET self-help** provides information on how to manage a range of problems, including social anxiety www.get.gg/socialanxiety.htm
- **Mood Juice** provides a useful workbook for understanding and managing shyness and social anxiety <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/shynesssocialphobia.asp>
- **Anxiety UK** provides information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- **Social Anxiety West** their website provides useful information, peer groups run in Bristol depending on numbers. Check website to see current frequency. www.sawest.org
- **Big White Wall** provides safe online community of people who are anxious, down or not coping who support and help each other, guided by trained professionals www.bigwhitewall.com

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UWE library books

- Butler, G. (2009) **Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness**: A self-help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques At campuses, shelf mark: 152.46 BUT
- Antony, M.M. (2004) **10 Simple Solutions to Shyness**: how to overcome shyness, social anxiety & fear of public speaking. At Frenchay campus, shelf mark: 155.232 ANT
- Forsyth, J.P. (2007) **The Mindfulness & Acceptance Workbook for Anxiety**: a guide to breaking free from anxiety, phobias & worry using acceptance & commitment therapy. At Glenside campus, shelf mark: 616.85223 FOR

Further reading

- Clark, D.A. and Beck A.T. (2011) **The Anxiety and Worry Workbook**: The Cognitive Behavioral Solution
- Henderson, L. (2010) **Improving Social Confidence and Reducing Shyness**: Using Compassion Focused Therapy
- Antony, M.M. and Swinson, R.P. (2008) **The Shyness and Social Anxiety Workbook**: Proven, step-by-step techniques for overcoming your fear
- Eastham, C. (2016) **We're all MAD here**: the No Non-sense Guide to Living with Social Anxiety

Apps

- **SAM App** - a highly rated app to help you understand and manage anxiety, developed by UWE Bristol <http://sam-app.org.uk/>

Podcasts and Videos

- **Ted Talk** by a Health Psychologist on how to make stress your friend:
<http://tinyurl.com/qbnfp9f>