

RESTORING SOCIALIZATION COMFORT

Fear of being around other people is based in the automatic interpretative thoughts that rise when one considers the social situation. The distorted thoughts lead to negative emotions that lead to maladaptive behavior. In the case of social discomfort, the unrealistic thoughts lead to fear, which leads to social withdrawal and isolation behavior. This exercise is designed to help you identify your distorted thoughts and think about their origins as well as discover ways to replace them with more realistic thoughts.

1. View the common distorted, automatic thoughts that are listed and that lead to fear and social withdrawal. Check those thoughts that you have experienced.

I never know what to say.

I'll make a fool of myself if I speak up.

These people are much brighter than I am.

This person does not like me.

I'm going to have a panic attack.

People are mean and critical.

I can't speak to people unless I have a few drinks first.

Every time I'm in a group situation, people ignore me.

I can tell by the way she is looking at me that she thinks I'm stupid.

I've never been good with words.

2. What other negative thoughts go through your mind when you consider a social encounter? _____

3. Why do you think so negatively about interacting with others? What experiences have taught you to lack confidence? _____

4. Describe any childhood experiences with critical or rejecting parents, siblings, or peers that you believe still contribute to your current anxiety around people.

5. What is your greatest fear about social interaction?

6. Rate the strength of your desire to overcome your social fears.

1	2	3	4	5
No				Strong
Desire				Desire

7. Recall a time when you felt good about and enjoyed your social interaction. What was different in that situation? What made you able to overcome your anxiety?

8. How could you apply the coping skill you used in the situation described in item 7 to new social encounters?

9. Write three positive statements that are the opposite of the distorted, automatic thoughts that commonly lead to your fear of social interaction. Use these thoughts to build confidence and counteract the negative thoughts that build fear.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____