

# Social Anxiety West

## Socials Survey Report July 2010

To improve the accessibility and benefit of our 'last Thursday of the month' socials we conducted a survey to identify the barriers that prevent people from attending. The results are summarised in this report.

The totals for answers that attracted less than three responses have been concealed to make the report less personal to any individual member.

### **We asked our members: 'Have you attended any of our 'last Thursday of the month' socials within the last six months?'**

A total of 23 people responded to the survey. Eleven (48%) had attended a social within the last six months and twelve (52%) had not.

### **We asked our members: 'If you are hesitant or do not want to attend our monthly socials then please let us know why. You may have many reasons but please just tick the main reasons that apply.'**

Twenty one people answered this question. Out of those twenty one...

8 (38%) said, 'I feel down or depressed and struggle to find the energy or motivation.'

7\* (33%) said, 'I am scared or feel too overwhelmed by the thought of attending.'

5 (24%) said, 'I do not like the places where they are held.'

5 (24%) said, 'The time/day of the month is not convenient for me.'

4 (19%) said, 'I cannot afford to attend.'

4 (19%) said, 'I have too much going on and feel too busy to socialise.'

3 (14%) specified another reason.

Less than 3 said, 'I am often not sure where or when they are.'

Less than 3 said, 'I do not see how attending will benefit me.'

Less than 3 said, 'There is someone I do not want to see/speak to.'

Less than 3 said, 'I had a negative experience at a previous social.'

Less than 3 said, 'I am having too much fun doing other things.'

### **We asked our members: 'It is possible that you have all the fears listed below, but please just let us know what your main fears are that prevent you from attending socials?'**

Eighteen people answered this question. Out of those eighteen...

8 (44%) said, 'I am scared that I will not know what to say to people.'

7 (39%) said, 'I think that people will not like me.'

7 (39%) said, 'I worry that I will be the only person to turn up or that there will be only two of us and it will be uncomfortable.'

7 (39%) said, 'I feel anxious or overwhelmed when in crowded places.'

6 (33%) said, 'I feel anxious or overwhelmed when in noisy environments.'

4\* (22%) said, 'I worry that others will exclude me.'

3 (17%) said, 'I get anxious about travelling or travelling alone.'

Less than 3 said, 'I get anxious about eating or drinking in front of people.'

Less than 3 specified another fear.

\* Due to a survey error not all responses for these questions could be collected. We have estimated the number from the responses we did collect for these questions.

## **What we found**

Some of the results were as expected, i.e. a significant proportion of people are struggling to attend socials due to feeling depressed and anxious, and have fears about not knowing what to say, people not liking them, or struggling with noisy or crowded environments. We hope that our members can take comfort in the fact that they are not alone with these fears and that other people at socials will feel this way as well. We will continue to run our sessions and improve the group to help people overcome these challenges.

## **How we select places**

It is often difficult to find the right balance and a place that is affordable and suitable for all. We also cannot control what a place will be like on the night. More recently, the venues we have been trying are quieter and less crowded than our previous venue (the Commercial Rooms). We try and choose places that are quiet, do not have loud music, have seating for groups, attract a non-intimidating crowd, have cheap food and are central. We hope this encourages more people to attend.

## **Why the last Thursday of the month?**

We should explain that one of the reasons we hold a social on the last Thursday of the month is because the Bristol Mind building is used by another group on that day. We therefore offer a social as the next best thing and as a regular opportunity for people to get out, challenge their fears and socialise.

## **Things we will do**

Based on your collective responses and individual comments we will endeavour to do the following...

- Identify and let you know about suitable and affordable places to park.
- Try a variety of venues and switch between the most suitable / liked.
- Think up a standard cover story that all members can use in case they bump into someone they know while socialising with the group and they do not want them to know they attend the group.
- Attempt to find out how many are interested in attending beforehand so people can feel confident that there will be at least a few people attending.

**Thank you very much for all your responses. They really help us improve the group and that helps everyone who is a part of it.**