

What is Social Anxiety?

Social Anxiety West is open to people who find social anxiety significantly interferes with their well-being and happiness. Below is a description of social anxiety to help you decide if our groups are right for you.

Social Anxiety Disorder, also called Social Phobia, is typically associated with marked and persistent fears that others will negatively evaluate, criticise, humiliate or reject you. This increased sense of threat in social situations causes anxiety and self-consciousness. If a large number of the items below describe you then you are welcome to turn up to one of our sessions.

- ⦿ You feel scared or intimidated in social situations and constantly worry about what others think of you.
- ⦿ You find that your mind goes blank when you try to speak to people.
- ⦿ You find it hard to open up to people and express yourself to them.
- ⦿ You find it uncomfortable to make eye-contact with people.
- ⦿ You constantly worry that others think you are odd, strange, boring or annoying to be around.
- ⦿ You experience acute embarrassment about being the centre of attention.
- ⦿ You avoid social situations and other people in general.
- ⦿ You experience trembling, blushing, or sweating in social situations and fear that people notice these reactions.
- ⦿ You feel very self-conscious about eating or writing in front of people, or feel generally very self-conscious.
- ⦿ You feel frustrated or angry with yourself and criticise or put yourself down about mistakes you make.
- ⦿ You find it hard to form close friendships or intimate relationships.

Our Self-Help Groups

Central Mixed Group

Every Thursday except the last Thursday of the month
7:00pm to 9:00pm
At Bristol Mind
35 Old Market Street
Bristol BS2 0EZ
Age 18 and over only

North Mixed Group

2nd, 3rd & 4th Sunday of the month
2:30pm to 4:30pm
At Horfield Quaker Meeting House
300 Gloucester Road
Horfield
Bristol BS7 8PD
Age 16 and over only

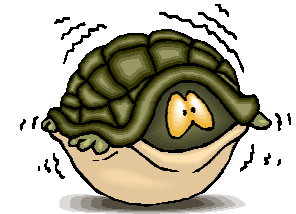
Women Only Group

Last Saturday of the Month
2:00pm to 4:00pm
At Bristol Mind
35 Old Market Street
Bristol BS2 0EZ
Age 18 and over only

V4.3 Updated 08/2/12

Social Anxiety West

Self-Help groups for Bristol, Bath and the West



Find social situations difficult? Feel uncomfortable around other people? Mind goes blank? Can't speak? Blush, sweat or shake? Feel very self-conscious? Worry that people think you are boring, strange or annoying? Always feel like people are laughing at you or thinking bad things about you?

Then you may be experiencing social anxiety and our self-help groups can help

www.sawest.org

email@sawest.org

0117 230 7735

What happens in a group session?

The activities in the group sessions aim to be sensitive towards our member's needs, provide variety and allow members to integrate and become part of the group. Outlined below are the some activities that take place during our support group sessions.

- ⦿ **How are you feeling?** - This involves saying literally one or two words about how you're currently feeling, but you can pass if you prefer. This is done at the start and end of every session.
- ⦿ **Games** – Members get the opportunity to play board games together.
- ⦿ **Pair Work** - Members are randomly split off into pairs to get to know each other and discuss their experiences of social anxiety.
- ⦿ **Small Groups** - Members are randomly split off into smaller groups of 4 or 5 people to chat about their social anxiety or talk around a related topic.
- ⦿ **Messages** - News about the group and social activities outside group sessions.
- ⦿ **Public Speaking** – An opportunity for members to practice their public speaking skills within a supportive environment.
- ⦿ **Goal Setting** – Time for setting out what you want to achieve and how.

You can pass on any activity without needing to give an explanation.

We are party supported by a Grassroots Grant from



Other Activities

Outside of group sessions our social secretary or other members organise various social activities, including going to the cinema, meals out, sports activities and going for walks. Also we hold a regular social on the last Thursday of the month. Please attend a session first to find out more about these activities.

Worried about your first session?

You are certainly not alone and due to the nature of social anxiety most members are very nervous about attending their first session. You may find it helpful to remember the following.

- ⦿ Our sessions are tailored for people with social anxiety.
- ⦿ A facilitator will recognise you are new, give you information, tell you where facilities are and explain everything during the session.
- ⦿ No pressure environment - you are under no obligation to take part in anything you do not wish to. You can leave at any time.
- ⦿ You do not have to keep coming. You are very welcome to try a session and not return. If then weeks, months or years later you decide to attend again, then you will be very welcome back.
- ⦿ Everyone attending has experienced what it is like to be socially anxious so they understand how it feels. If you do not say anything in the meeting, you won't be the first and we will understand why this is.

**Please just turn up
to a session. No prior
notice is required**

It is advisable to check our website first for up-to-date information on the time and place of sessions

Safe and Confidential Environment

Social Anxiety West believes that it is important that our members feel mentally and physically safe during sessions and feel able to discuss their issues in a confidential environment. To enable this, a facilitator is present and we ask members and facilitators to follow the session rules summarised below.

- ⦿ Keep other members' personal information confidential within your pair, small group or the whole group.
- ⦿ If you really need to speak about members with others then do not give away identifying information about them.
- ⦿ Discriminatory acts or remarks within the group are not tolerated.
- ⦿ Physical or mental bullying within the group is not tolerated.
- ⦿ Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol is unacceptable, except prescribed medications.
- ⦿ Everyone must respect the views of other members and accept that they may differ from their own.
- ⦿ Everyone must show sensitivity towards other members' personal issues.
- ⦿ Everyone must be given space to contribute if they wish to.

What's required of you?

We require very little from our members, you will be glad to hear, but please bear the following points in mind.

- ⦿ Please do not bring along other people who have not experienced social anxiety.
- ⦿ We ask for a small donation at the end of sessions to help with running costs. This is optional, but we depend on these donations to keep the group running. A typical donation is £2.