

Building Confidence in Social Situations Part 1

Handout

Tip 1 PERSONALITY QUALITIES

Going forward into social situations may trigger aspects we don't like about ourselves.

Improving confidence and self-worth can depend upon noticing what you can bring to relationships with others and drawing upon your positive personality traits. The soul refers to the depths of who we really are. It is useful to think about things you like about your soul. An example of this may be: kind, gentle, resilient, caring, assertive, hard-working, reliable, honest, practical, loyal, creative, consistent, appreciative, perceptive, patient, trustworthy, flexible.

There may be qualities that people find most appealing. An example of this could be: being open and honest, and taking responsibility for your actions are admirable qualities. Focusing upon superficial conditional aspects such as, appearance, achievements, success and economic status may not be long lasting, e.g. looks can fade.

Tip 2 POWER POSITIONS

There are various power positions. These enable people to have more presence in the room. I have often used the following technique to physically improve my confidence going into social situations, particularly when giving talks to large groups of people. 'Stand in a star fish position arms as tall and as wide as possible and legs apart.' Holding the pose for a few minutes can help change your posture to a more confident one.

Tip 3 PARTS OF SELF

The image of the poison parrot resembles the negative, inner critical voice often there to punitively give ourselves a hard time when we don't get things perfect, make mistakes, have imperfections and vulnerabilities. It can attack the self rather than encouraging the self to move forward into new situations. The poison parrot may focus upon our flaws, which doesn't help our confidence in social situations.

Tip 4 LIFE POSITION

In social situations, we can improve our confidence by seeing ourselves and others as OK. What that means is no one is in a one down life position.

Many of us are conscious of how we might be perceived by others. Although we do not have control of what people think about us, we can think about how our actions can impact others. In social situations we may want to come across friendly towards others. This can shown in out demeanour e.g. smiling,

showing empathy, concern, looking interested, actively listening. It is easy to see how creating a cold or expressionless way of being may put someone off from approaching us. Similarly being overly critical or sarcastic may not be received well by others.

Tip 5 ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

How we communicate can improve our confidence in social situations. We all have needs and wants. We all have opinions and feelings. How they are conveyed in social situations will have differing outcomes. If we take the passive communicating pattern – conveys a strong message that ‘my needs are not important’, ‘I am not important.’ It is easy to see how someone in a social setting may become overlooked or feel like they are not part of the group. The aggressive communication pattern on the other hand can be perceived as overbearing, domineering and dismissive of others needs. Assertiveness is an optimal way of communicating based upon: ‘everyone matters, opinions may differ but everyone is valued’. Everyone has a voice and no one is less or more important than the other. No one is on the attack or defence.

Tip 6 POSITIVE UNCONDITIONAL REGARD

It is common for young people to naturally want to compare themselves to others. It helps people feel like they fit in or see what they like or dislike in others. Also, help them form their identity and see their individual differences. However, the process of comparing can be unhelpful as people have different strengths and qualities. Some people will only see positive things in others and not see that others have imperfections. Some people fixate upon their imperfections and not see their own strengths and qualities. Confidence in social situations can be improved when there is positive unconditional regard towards self and others.

Tip 7 SELF-APPRECIATION

It is useful to stop notice what aspects of your personality have helped you get this far in life and what you are grateful for. What aspects of yourself has got you out of bed today? What inner resources have helped you get through life struggles and challenges?

We are all ordinary. We all have imperfections. We all make mistakes. We all have vulnerabilities. This makes us human!

Recommended resources:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-help-guides/social-anxiety-self-help-guide>

Passengers on the bus metaphor – unhelpful thinking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z29ptSuoWRc>