



Social Anxiety

Whether it is the butterflies in your belly, or a complete fear of not being able to function, social anxiety is one of the fastest growing anxiety categories for a reason.

1. Remember it's common and understandable to have concerns about how others will experience us. At the point of impacting our functioning, we just want to turn down the dial a little.
2. Write down all the fears you have to take them out of the shadows. Rate them as if you were an independent person on the likelihood of occurring.
3. Like an athlete before a race, predict that anxiety will head in a bell shape as it gets closer, and then ease once you get going. It's less likely to feel like a setback.
4. Giving in to social anxiety is a shallow win. It feeds the monster for next time you try. Set small goals to disrupt the pattern, even if it is at least getting dressed to go, or committing to staying half an hour only.
5. Plan the first 5 minutes after you walk in. ie I'll find someone I know, or I'll get a drink and read through the program while I take in the feel.
6. Lose the expectation to 'perform'. Curiosity and genuinely being present to those around you is a rare gift.
7. Focus on what you can impact on. It's not the time for guessing games.
8. Ask more questions than you answer, and listen more than you talk.
9. Understand your 'derailers' as an early sign of anxiety. For example, some people overtalk, others withdraw. Develop one strategy for managing this.
10. Make time to talk to a professional. Change is likely and possible. Life is too short.