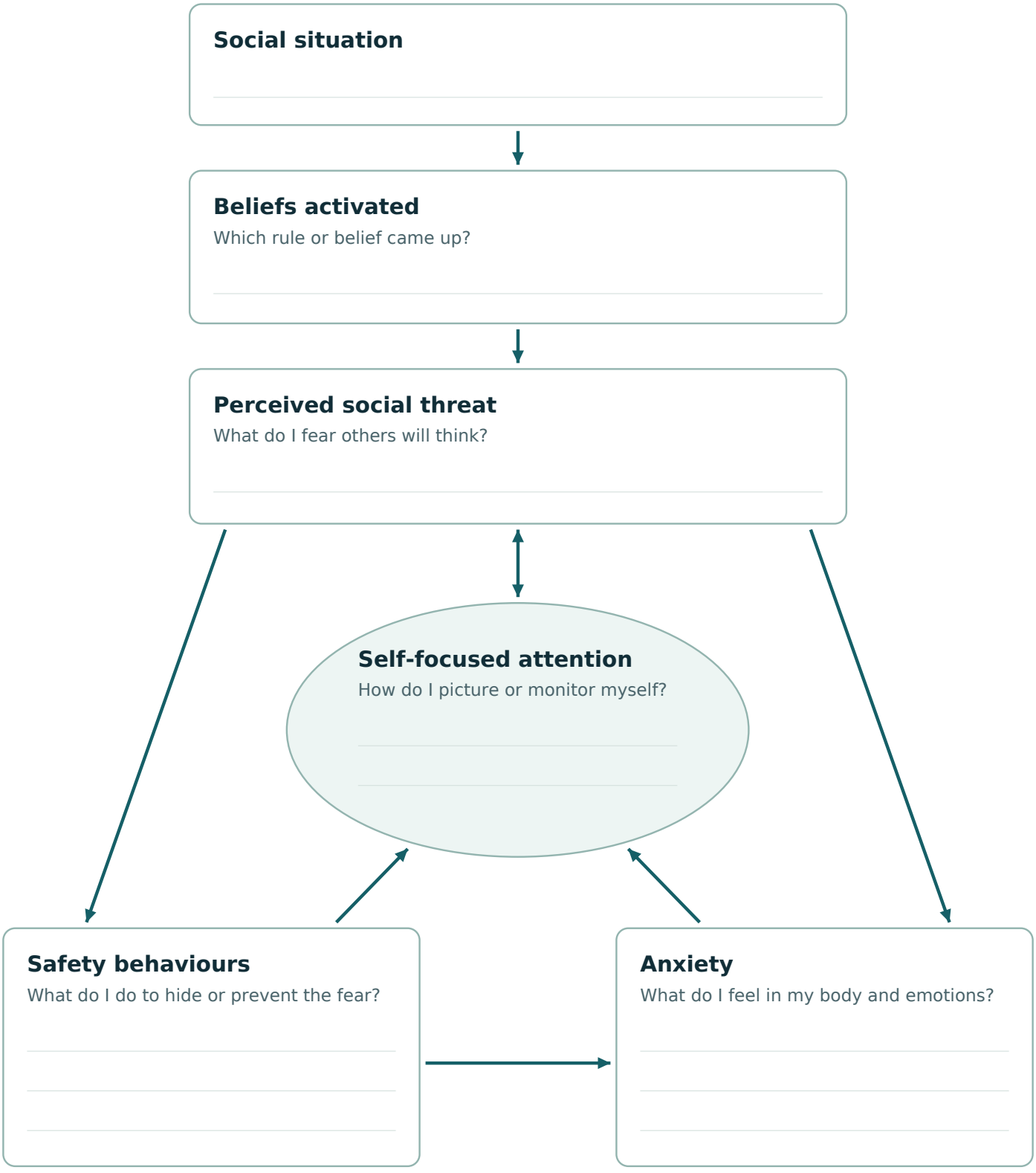
Social anxiety model

Start at the top. Follow the arrows to see how self-focus, safety behaviours and anxiety connect.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.



Informed by Clark & Wells (1995). Central self-image: the model calls this "self as a social object".

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Social anxiety experiment

Make a specific prediction and a fair test. Plan any safeguards before practice; record observations afterwards.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

BEFORE PRACTICE

Situation / goal / prediction (0-100%)

What I will change / support to keep

What I will observe / when to finish

AFTER PRACTICE - observations and learning

What happened: facts rather than guesses

Learning / uncertainty / prediction now

Next step

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Social attention experiment

Compare specific observations. A difference is useful information, not a demand to feel calm or certain.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

Agreed conversations, participants and purpose

A: usual self-focus and habits

Attention, selected habits and prediction

Observations from the interaction

Participation / recall; anxiety 0 (none)-10 (most)

B: engaged attention; agreed habits reduced

Attention, selected habits and prediction

Observations from the interaction

Participation / recall; anxiety 0 (none)-10 (most)

What I learned / what is still uncertain

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Social event preparation

Compare specific observations. A difference is useful information, not a demand to feel calm or certain.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

Event and why I want to participate

Useful preparation

What I have noticed

What helps participation / what limits it

My preparation endpoint and next action

Threat rehearsal / imagined outcomes

What I have noticed

What helps participation / what limits it

My preparation endpoint and next action

What I learned / what is still uncertain

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Social event review

A brief, fair review is enough. Repeated checking with others can turn a review into reassurance seeking.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

Event / moment I keep replaying

Facts: what actually happened

My interpretation / what I cannot know

One useful action or learning point

My endpoint for this review

Activity I will return to

If replay returns: my response

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Video feedback worksheet

Compare specific observations. A difference is useful information, not a demand to feel calm or certain.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

Purpose, consent and secure recording/deletion agreement

Prediction BEFORE viewing

Observation AFTER viewing

Specific visible feature / behaviour

Specific visible feature / behaviour

What I expected or observed

What I expected or observed

Optional matched ratings and useful detail

Optional matched ratings and useful detail

What I learned / what is still uncertain

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Social anxiety setback plan

Keep the learning visible. Match each early sign with a practical response rather than waiting for a difficult week.

Editable PDF: replace or delete the fictional examples. Blank PDF: print and write. Guidance follows.

What I have learned

If I notice...	A small response I can use	Support / when to review

Helpful habits to keep

Support / when to ask for help

Review date / reminder

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Toolkit guide and contents

The worksheets come first. Select what fits your goals; you do not need to complete every sheet.

Using this collection

These are educational practice aids, not a diagnostic test or a complete treatment programme. Choose safe, ordinary social situations; exposure does not mean accepting mistreatment or abandoning personal boundaries. The adult treatment framework needs appropriate adaptation for people aged 16-17. Seek a suitably trained clinician's advice about developmental needs, bullying, trauma, neurodivergence or severe distress before planning more demanding work.

Worksheet starting pages

01 Social anxiety model

02 Social anxiety experiment

03 Social attention experiment

04 Social event preparation

05 Social event review

06 Video feedback worksheet

07 Social anxiety setback plan

Guidance and fictional examples follow this index. Individual website downloads also contain fillable fields; this complete toolkit is for printing.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Social anxiety model

What this helps with

This worksheet follows the main relationships in Clark and Wells' cognitive model of social anxiety. A social situation can bring up rules or beliefs, which shape a feared judgement. Attention then turns towards how you imagine you look to others. Anxiety and attempts to hide or prevent it can strengthen that self-image. The central oval is called "self as a social object" in the model: experiencing yourself as you imagine others see you, rather than relying on what you can observe.

How to use it

1. Start at the top with one recent, manageable social situation.
2. Add a rule or belief it brought up, such as "I must always sound interesting". Then write the judgement you feared.
3. In the centre, describe what you watched or pictured about yourself. This imagined view is not proof of how others saw you.
4. In the lower boxes, name anxiety and what you did to hide it or prevent judgement. These actions are called safety behaviours.
5. Follow each arrow and discuss whether the link fits. Safety behaviours can increase anxiety, while feelings and behaviour can feed your self-image. Anticipatory worry and replay afterwards can also matter; use the separate planning or post-event review sheet if helpful.

A fictional worked example

At a team lunch, Nia thinks, "I must always sound interesting." She fears colleagues will find her boring. She pictures herself bright red and watches her face for heat. To avoid saying the wrong thing, she rehearses sentences and says little. This makes joining in harder and can increase anxiety. The warm feeling and her silence then seem to confirm the picture of looking awkward. Her therapist helps her compare this impression with observable evidence, and plan a suitable attention and safety-behaviour experiment.

Keep in mind

Include real context. Bullying, racism, exclusion or an inaccessible setting may need practical action and support. Do not label necessary communication aids or chosen boundaries as safety behaviours. If this map feels overwhelming, complete it with a therapist rather than reconstructing every interaction.

Sources and attribution

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment, and treatment (pp. 69-93). Guilford Press.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Social anxiety experiment

What this helps with

A thought such as 'Everyone will think I am awkward' is difficult to test because you cannot read minds. A behavioural experiment narrows it to something observable and explores what happens when you change a habit that keeps anxiety going. The purpose is learning, not earning a perfect reaction. An ordinary pause or a mixed response can still help you find out whether you can participate and respond flexibly without all your usual precautions.

How to use it

1. Choose a safe interaction connected to something you want to do.
2. Specify an observable prediction and estimate its likelihood from 0-100%.
3. Choose one anxiety-related precaution to reduce, keeping genuine safety and communication needs.
4. Agree what you will observe, then take part without repeatedly checking your performance.
5. Record facts, any uncertainty and a practical next test. Re-rate the original prediction.

A fictional worked example

Owen predicts an 80% chance that asking a question in a small training group will make people laugh and the trainer dismiss him. He usually keeps quiet or apologises repeatedly. He plans to ask one relevant question without a long apology, then listen to the answer. The trainer answers; another person says they were wondering the same thing. Owen still feels hot and notices one person looking away, whose reason he does not know. He records both facts rather than guessing. He lowers his prediction to 40% and plans another question at the next session, allowing for different responses.

Keep in mind

Choose ordinary, respectful interactions. Do not disclose private information, break workplace rules or deliberately provoke people to test a belief. Keep disability accommodations. If the situation involves harassment, coercion or significant risk, discuss support and protection rather than treating it as an experiment.

Sources and attribution

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment, and treatment (pp. 69-93). Guilford Press.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Social attention experiment

What this helps with

Social anxiety can make you watch yourself while also trying to prevent signs of nervousness. This can use attention that would otherwise help you connect with the situation. A guided comparison lets you experience whether these strategies help or get in the way. You and your therapist plan two brief, similar interactions, changing attention and selected safety behaviours. The comparison explores their combined effect; it does not prove that any one habit causes all your anxiety.

How to use it

1. Agree two brief, similar conversations with your therapist and a willing participant.
2. Identify your usual self-focus and one or two safety behaviours. Predict their effects.
3. In the first interaction, notice the usual pattern without intensifying distress.
4. In the second, engage with the speaker and reduce the agreed habits. Do not force eye contact.
5. Compare engagement, what you remember and observable responses; discuss limitations and further practice.

A fictional worked example

With her therapist, Sara has two short chats about everyday interests with a consenting colleague. In the first she notices monitoring her voice and preparing each answer before the question ends. In the second she listens for the other person's meaning and allows a less rehearsed reply. She feels some nerves in both, but remembers more of the second conversation and asks a follow-up question. Her therapist helps her distinguish these observations from a new rule that she must focus outward perfectly. They note that the two conversations were not identical and agree to practise flexibly in another familiar setting.

Keep in mind

Use this as a therapist-guided exercise. Do not deliberately increase self-consciousness for a prolonged period or remove genuine access needs. Agree the participants and boundaries in advance. If the comparison becomes a performance test or causes marked distress, pause and review the method together.

Sources and attribution

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment, and treatment (pp. 69-93). Guilford Press.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Leigh, E., Chiu, K., & Clark, D. M. (2021). Self-focused attention and safety behaviours maintain social anxiety in adolescents: An experimental study. PLOS ONE.

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Social event preparation

What this helps with

Before a social event, planning can turn into repeatedly imagining mistakes, scanning old memories or trying to script every possible exchange. This often leaves you more preoccupied when the event arrives. This worksheet separates preparation with a clear purpose from anxious rehearsal that offers no new information. You will identify what you actually need, make room for uncertainty and choose one way to participate. The aim is enough preparation for the task, not a rule against preparing.

How to use it

1. Name the event and one personally meaningful reason for taking part.
2. List practical tasks with a clear finish, such as checking the time or preparing required notes.
3. Notice repeated rehearsals, imagined disasters and old memories that are not adding useful information.
4. Choose one modest participation intention and where to place attention when replay starts.
5. Afterwards, record what helped and what needs adjusting, without a lengthy performance review.

A fictional worked example

Before a friend's birthday meal, Imran spends an hour rehearsing how to explain his job. His useful preparation is knowing the venue, travel plan and any access arrangements. He completes those tasks, then notices that another imagined conversation is making him less available to the present. His intention is to ask one friend how their new job is going and listen to the answer. He allows a little uncertainty about what he will say next. At the meal there are pauses, but also a conversation about football. Afterwards he notes that repeated rehearsal was not necessary for every exchange to happen.

Keep in mind

Some events genuinely require rehearsal or advance information, and some people need predictability or communication support. Keep those needs in the plan. This is about reducing repetitive threat rehearsal, not attending unsafe events or forcing yourself into contact you do not want.

Sources and attribution

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment, and treatment (pp. 69-93). Guilford Press.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Social event review

What this helps with

After a conversation, your mind may replay a few uncomfortable moments while leaving out everything ordinary. The replay can feel like problem solving even when it produces no new action. This worksheet provides a short review with a clear endpoint. It helps you include observable information, recognise what remains unknown and decide whether anything needs doing. You are not trying to establish that the interaction was flawless or prevent every unwanted memory from returning.

How to use it

1. Choose one interaction and allow a brief review at a planned time.
2. Write what a camera or listener could have observed, separately from your interpretation.
3. Include the whole interaction, not only the moment that felt awkward.
4. Identify one useful action, if needed; otherwise leave uncertainty unresolved.
5. Close the review and return to a chosen activity when the replay reappears.

A fictional worked example

After giving an update, Beth repeatedly remembers losing her place. Her first conclusion is that the whole meeting was a disaster. In a brief review she records that she paused, checked one note, continued and answered a question. Nobody commented on the pause; this does not reveal everyone's private opinion. One useful action is to organise her notes more clearly next time. She then returns to cooking rather than asking colleagues several times whether she sounded foolish. The replay comes back while she washes up. She recognises it as the same review, lets it be there and continues with the task.

Keep in mind

Do not use the sheet to repeatedly prove that people approved of you. If there was a genuine mistake or hurtful behaviour, a proportionate repair may help. Ongoing bullying or discrimination requires support; it should not be dismissed as an anxious interpretation.

Sources and attribution

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment, and treatment (pp. 69-93). Guilford Press.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Video feedback worksheet

What this helps with

Feeling visibly anxious and appearing that way are not always the same. Carefully prepared video feedback can help you compare a feared impression with observable evidence. This sheet supports a therapist-led exercise; watching yourself without preparation can instead trigger criticism and checking. Agree exactly what question the recording should answer, ensure the relevant features can be seen or heard and view the interaction fairly. The exercise is about social predictions, not evaluating your attractiveness or producing a polished performance.

How to use it

1. Agree the clinical purpose, participants, consent, storage and deletion plan before recording.
2. Describe the specific feared impression and what you predict the recording will show.
3. Check that the recording could capture the feature being tested, without intrusive close-ups.
4. View with your therapist, attending to the whole interaction as you would to another person.
5. Compare prediction and observations, discuss feelings-versus-evidence, then agree how to use the learning.

A fictional worked example

With consent, Ali and his therapist record a brief practice conversation. He predicts that his voice will be inaudible for most of it and that every pause will seem very long. They check the sound before beginning and agree to delete the recording after the planned review. Before watching, Ali describes the predicted pattern. With guidance, he watches the whole exchange rather than searching frame by frame for flaws. His voice is audible and there are ordinary pauses from both people. He still remembers feeling intensely anxious. The distinction becomes useful evidence for a later conversation experiment, rather than something to check repeatedly.

Keep in mind

This requires therapist guidance and informed consent from everyone recorded. Never record people secretly or upload therapy recordings to public services. Agree secure handling and deletion. If appearance checking, shame or distress increases, stop and discuss whether another approach is more suitable.

Sources and attribution

Warnock-Parkes et al. (2017). Seeing is believing: Using video feedback in cognitive therapy for social anxiety disorder. Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 24, 245-255.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies

Using this resource

Social anxiety setback plan

What this helps with

Progress may mean speaking a little more freely, returning to a valued activity or spending less time replaying conversations. Anxiety can still rise around change, tiredness or unfamiliar groups. This worksheet helps you preserve the learning that made a difference and recognise when the old pattern is returning. It is not a promise to stay confident all the time. A setback is information about what support or practice is needed, rather than proof that earlier progress has disappeared.

How to use it

1. Describe concrete changes in participation and daily life, as well as how you feel.
2. Record the experiments and attention shifts that taught you most.
3. Identify early signs of renewed rehearsal, self-monitoring, avoidance or replay.
4. Choose a small response for each sign and a realistic practice rhythm.
5. Name who to contact if difficulties persist, and set a date to review the plan.

A fictional worked example

During therapy, Freya began contributing to familiar meetings without scripting every sentence. Starting a new role brings back hours of preparation and evening replay. Her early warning sign is cancelling informal chats, followed by repeated checks of whether she sounded competent. Her plan is to revisit one useful experiment, make a small contribution at the next manageable meeting and keep a short factual review afterwards. She asks a trusted colleague for practical induction information rather than repeated reassurance about her performance. If avoidance continues to grow, she will contact her therapist to review support. Her progress is measured by participation, not a permanently low anxiety score.

Keep in mind

Keep the plan flexible and realistic. Seek professional support if anxiety substantially restricts work, study, relationships or essential tasks. If the environment itself is unsafe or discriminatory, prioritise appropriate help and boundaries instead of increasing exposure to mistreatment.

Sources and attribution

Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia. In Social phobia: Diagnosis, assessment, and treatment (pp. 69-93). Guilford Press.

NICE (2013). Social anxiety disorder: recognition, assessment and treatment (CG159).

Original material informed by the sources above. No outside organisation endorses this worksheet.

Copyright Calm Breathing Therapies