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

e.g. I paused while answering a colleague.

Facts: what actually happened

e.g. They waited and the conversation continued.

My interpretation / what I cannot know

e.g. I cannot know exactly what they thought.

One useful action or learning point

e.g. No repair needed; practise allowing a normal pause.

My endpoint for this review

e.g. One brief review now.

Activity I will return to

e.g. Return to making dinner.

If replay returns: my response

e.g. Notice the replay and return to the activity without checking again.

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Using this resource

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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).

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