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

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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).

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