

# Social Anxiety Programme

This programme from SilverCloud<sup>®</sup> by Amwell<sup>®</sup> is designed for individuals who are experiencing mild to moderate anxiety in social situations. The programme aims to help users manage and reduce symptoms of anxiety, and their causes.

The programme aligns with NICE guideline CG159.<sup>1</sup>

## Therapeutic concepts

### Psychoeducation

The Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) cycle is introduced in relation to social anxiety. Goal setting, recognising a setback and developing a relapse plan are also illustrated.<sup>2</sup>

### Behavioural techniques

Users are encouraged to test negative predictions and assumptions, and negative self-images and self-impressions through behavioural experiments that manipulate safety behaviours and self-focused attention.<sup>3</sup>



### Cognitive techniques

A variety of cognitive coping techniques are introduced, such as noticing and reflecting on unhelpful thinking patterns; addressing dysfunctional negative beliefs; attention training to shift the focus of attention and reduce self-focus.<sup>3</sup>

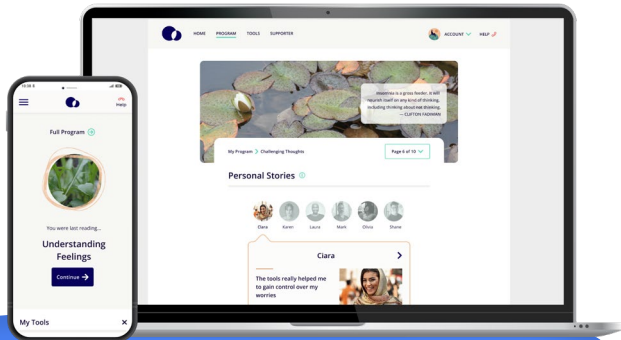
### Relaxation & breathing exercises

These exercises can be helpful to ground or relax the user.<sup>4</sup>

## How it works

The *Social Anxiety* programme offers CBT that has been specifically developed to treat social anxiety disorder.<sup>5,6</sup>

In keeping with the principles of CBT, which endorse a structured outline and a goal-oriented focus, each module contains social anxiety-specific information, activities, homework suggestions, personal stories and summaries.<sup>7</sup>



The programme is available 24/7, allowing users to access content at a time and place that suits them. It can be accessed using a phone, tablet or computer and can be tailored to suit the needs of the individual.

### References:

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2013). Recommendations: Social anxiety disorder: Recognition, assessment and treatment: Guidance. NICE.
2. Houghton, S., & Saxon, D. (2007). An evaluation of large group CBT psycho-education for anxiety disorders delivered in routine practice. *Patient education and counseling*, 68(1), 107-110.
3. Warnock-Parkes, E., Wild, J., Thew, G. R., Kerr, A., Grey, N., Stott, R., ... & Clark, D. M. (2020). Treating social anxiety disorder remotely with cognitive therapy. *The Cognitive Behaviour Therapist*, 13, e30.
4. Priyamvada, R., Kumari, S., Prakash, J., & Chaudhury, S. (2009). Cognitive behavioral therapy in the treatment of social phobia. *Industrial psychiatry journal*, 18(1), 60.
5. Beck, J. S. (2011). *Cognitive behavior therapy*. New York: Basics and beyond. Guilford Publication.
6. Clark, D. M., & Wells, A. (1995). A cognitive model of social phobia.
7. Maerov, P. J. (2006). Demystifying CBT: Effective, easy-to-use treatment for depression and anxiety. *Current Psychiatry*, 5(8), 26.

## Summary of programme modules:

- **Getting Started** The user is introduced to CBT and explores how it can help to understand social anxiety. Two key tools of the programme – the Mood Monitor and the CBT Cycle – are also introduced.
- **Understanding Social Anxiety** Helps the user to better understand their social anxiety, exploring how to use CBT to manage their symptoms.
- **Noticing Feelings** Focusing on the emotions of social anxiety, the user can begin to build their own CBT cycles and track the impact of lifestyle choices on their mood.
- **Reducing Self-Focus** Teaches the user to refocus attention away from the self in social situations, helping break social anxiety cycle.
- **Challenging Your Fears** Helps the user complete behavioural experiments to overcome their anxiety in social situations, focusing on the roles of avoidance and safety behaviours.
- **Bringing It All Together** Prepares the user for coming to the end of the programme, focusing on helping them stay well in the future.

### Additional modules:

- **Video Feedback** The user reviews videos of their social interactions to gain more understanding of themselves in social situations.
- **Image Rescripting** A supporter helps the user reinterpret a socially distressing memory to help bring a new perspective and more control.
- **Spotting Thoughts** The user is introduced to thinking traps and encouraged to identify their unhelpful thoughts.
- **Challenging Thoughts** Helps the user to identify alternative ways of thinking.
- **Managing Worry** The user learns new ways to understand and manage their worries.

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