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Tips for Wellbeing Series No 4

Social Anxiety How to be more relaxed in social situations

What is social anxiety?

Almost everyone gets a little anxious or embarrassed at times, although some people are more shy than others. Sometimes, though, anxiety can be so intense it stops us from doing things that we enjoy doing, or interferes with our daily lives.

This extreme anxiety may be felt in particular social situations, or in a range of situations, such as: at parties, meeting strangers, going to new places, shopping centres, or performing.

It may result in worried or negative thoughts, and in physical symptoms such as sweating, rapid or constricted breathing, rapid pulse, trembling, or blushing.

What can be done about it?

- > Consult a counsellor or doctor.
- > Learn relaxation techniques such as meditation, mindfulness and/or breathing exercises.

Some examples:

- > 5 Breaths Take a breath, noticing it going into your lungs, then when exhaling, let the muscles of your shoulders go soft and say a soothing word such as 'relax'. Repeat 4 times.
- > Counting Count each breath until you reach 10. Then go back to 1 and count again. Or

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- > Notice any anxious thoughts leading up to and during situations. Try some strategies to create more helpful thoughts, such as:
 - Write down what the situation is and what the anxious thoughts are.
 - In another column, write down the thoughts you would find more helpful in this situation. This may beoohlp&5-3.3 (n)-0.7 (d)-0.&)-111 Td[Te500)-36.1].3 q0 0 t1-0.7 (d)61(2)-3.3 (n)-0.7 (t)296.1-9.6 (n)