

SOCIAL ANXIETY GROUP 2017

The purpose of the social anxiety group is to equip clients with a set of skills that will help them manage their social anxiety better, to have better control over it.

The social anxiety group is for those people who have the main features of social anxiety, that is, a fear and expectation of negative evaluation, anxiety about scrutiny by others and a fear of making a mistake in a public situation. They have an inordinate fear of embarrassment.

In the course of the sessions in our group we help clients to understand the nature of anxiety, the various symptoms of it and how it is evoked. It also deals with panic symptoms and the role of hyperventilation in them. The course teaches clients the skills of relaxation and breathing control, how to deal with panic symptoms (if they have them), to identify situations where they are most likely to feel anxious and why they become anxious. The course will also help the client to recognise the unhelpful and often irrational thoughts and beliefs he/she has that instigate or increase anxiety in social situations and then to dispute and change them. Because a particular set of thoughts is central to the problem of social phobia this aspect of the treatment is emphasised and occupies several sessions. Some general stress management and problem-solving strategies will also be taught.

There is a big educational role in this approach, the idea being that an understanding of what is happening gives a large measure of control over symptoms. Rather than feeling like a helpless victim at the mercy of forces the client doesn't understand, the approach teaches him/her the skills necessary to master them.

The sessions themselves involve discussion of a new topic or aspect of the problem, describing one's own experiences and then small group (2-4 people) practice of skills covered in the discussion. At the end of each session the client is asked to do various things before next session. For example, he/she may read material to be discussed in the next session, record particular examples of anxious experiences that occur during the week and/or practice the skills taught in the previous session. The idea is that the client doesn't get better without practicing what he/she needs to do to overcome the problem.

The Social Anxiety Group is run once a year. It commences in July and runs on a Wednesday from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm for 10 weeks.

One of the group leaders will ring you, prior to the group commencing, for a pre-group meeting to determine if the group would suit your needs and give you a chance to ask any questions you might have. If you decide to attend there will be a one off standard fee payment of \$120 or concession fee payment of \$60.