

## Where can I get further help?

---

If you are concerned about your confidence, make an appointment to see your GP or take a look at the Trust's website to see what services we offer and contact details. If you cannot get online please contact our Customer Services team on 0800 587 2108 for more details

Website – [www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk)

Follow us on Twitter to get updates on what we're doing: [@allofusinmind](https://twitter.com/allofusinmind)

Like us on Facebook for the latest local health news, information and events: search for [allofusinmind](https://www.facebook.com/allofusinmind)

## Booklets available in this series:

---

- Anger – How do I manage it?
- Baby Blues – How can I best deal with them?
- Bereavement – How can I cope?
- Healthy Living – What should I do?
- Healthy Sex – How can I be sure?
- Low Moods – How can I feel better?
- My body, my health – Check it out!
- Pain – What can I do to help myself?
- Self Harm – How can I help myself?
- Shyness – How can I manage it?
- Sleep – How can I get some?
- Stress – How do I manage it?
- The end of life – How can I prepare for it?
- Worries – How can I best deal with them?

### Your feedback is welcome

We invite you to share any comments, compliments, concerns or complaints you have about the Trust. Please speak to a member of staff or contact our customers services team on 0800 587 2108, who can also provide help in understanding this information, including in other formats.



Do you ever feel embarrassed talking in a big group, don't like meeting new people or avoid social situations as you think you will look silly or foolish? Don't worry, everyone at different times have felt insecure, unsure and scared in different situations.

How we feel about ourselves affects our self-confidence and this can change throughout our lives. For example losing a job or a close friend can affect our self-confidence and make individuals feel bad about themselves.

We want you to find this booklet uplifting and helpful. However it is not intended to be a direct substitute for talking to a healthcare professional such as your GP.

## Step one: Are you confident?

---

Think about your confidence and the situations in which you feel most confident. Keep a diary for two weeks, noting down times when you made a decision that affected how you felt and your confidence. For example turning down an invite to a party, ask yourself:

- Why did I turn down the invite to that party?
- What did people think about me when I did this?
- How did this make me feel?

Then look at the notes you've made and use them to change the way you think. Look at each negative thought you've had about yourself and write down how you could have thought differently. Try to put these into action when a similar situation arises in the future.

By writing things down you might start looking at your thoughts and feelings in more detail than you have done before. It is normal to feel anxious about this and you may find it useful to speak with a healthcare professional about it before you carry on.

## Step two: Do something

---

### Breathe

If you feel scared or sad try slowly breathing air into your body and with each exhale feel the anxiety leaving you. Close your eyes and imagine you're in a safe and positive place such as a favourite holiday destination. This will relax you and ease your anxiety.

### Write

While trying to think positively, write a list of your good points. Ask those closest to you to help as they're likely to include things that you've not even realised. You can include anything on the list such as comments about the way you look, your personality traits, the things you do, your skills, past successes or your relationships with people.

Build on this list over a couple of weeks and keep looking back at it; especially when you are going somewhere that makes you anxious such as a party or job interview.

### Challenge

Set yourself a new challenge or goal. For example go to a local support or activity group. Taking part in these may help you build self-confidence and feel more in control of your life.

Set small, achievable goals. If you don't fulfil them don't give up! Think about why this was and try again or set a different goal. By being proactive you become emotionally stronger which in turn makes you more confident.

““ *I prefer familiar places and people where I feel safe* ””

## You can also challenge yourself to think more positively by:

- Not comparing yourself to others
- Getting into the habit of thinking positive things about yourself
- Accepting compliments
- Spending time with positive, supportive people
- Being helpful and considerate to others
- Engaging in work and hobbies that you enjoy

## Keep yourself healthy

Maintain a healthy lifestyle and try to avoid relying on caffeine, alcohol or drugs to cope. These may seem to help short term but will ultimately create long term problems. Instead find support within your friends or family to try and build your confidence.

And it might sound like a cliché, but its true; exercise is a great way to bring down your everyday stress levels and improve your overall wellbeing. It doesn't have to be hard; try going for a walk, swimming or just stretching. Anything that gets your body moving and your blood pumping will be good for your wellbeing.

## Sleep

Try getting enough sleep, this is around 7-8 hours a night, if we don't get this it can have a massive impact and may make us feel more irritable and negative. You can find out more about how to sleep easier in our leaflet 'Sleep – how do I get some?' available on [www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides](http://www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides)

## Appearance

Sometimes our own appearance can be the last thing on our mind when we have important things to do. Set some time aside for yourself; even if it's only five minutes a day and take the time to have a shave, put make-up on or think about what outfit to wear. You will be surprised how this will change the way you carry yourself and interact with other people.

## Support

Keep people around you who help you feel positive. It is also important to think about the people in your life that make you feel bad i.e. those who are critical or negative. Tell them how this makes you feel or limit the amount of time you spend with them.

In turn, make others feel good! By looking for the best in others you bring out the best in yourself.

## Support groups

You might want to join a local support group; meeting new people who are dealing with confidence issues may help you deal with your anxieties. If this seems too daunting at first, ask someone to go with you. Talk to your GP about support groups in your area or visit your local library which may have more information about them.

## Prepare

Before you go to a group, party or put yourself in a situation where you'll be meeting people, think about some questions you could ask people and topics you could talk about. These could be about a TV programme you've watched, a recent holiday or a hobby you have.

## Work

Work gives you a steady routine, a salary and helps you build friendships. If you have been out of work for some time you might prefer to find a short-term position or volunteer as this can help build confidence.

“ “ *I'd like to go and speak to that person and make friends but I don't know what to say* ” ”

## Step three: Talk to a healthcare professional

---

If you feel that your lack of confidence is starting to have an impact on your life, then talk to a health care professional such as your GP. You will be able to talk openly with them and they can help you decide how is best to help you move forward.

““ *I have things to say, but when it comes to saying them I just freeze and look stupid* ””

““ *I want to go for that promotion at work but with all the other people applying why would they choose me?* ””

## Notes

---