

## Where can I get further help?

---

If you feel shyness is affecting your life, 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/allofusmind)

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

## 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?
- Confidence – How can I get some?
- 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?
- 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.



Does the thought of talking in a big group or to someone you don't know make you start to blush, get butterflies in your stomach and sweat more than usual? Do you worry that others will notice this and think badly about you? Do you avoid these situations and find it hard to be social?

Everyone feels shy in certain social environments and many people will be anxious before entering a room full of people. But for some, it can be more extreme and can stop you doing things such as getting a job, making friends and enjoying hobbies.

This booklet offers advice on how to help you start overcoming your shyness.

We want you to find this book helpful, however it is not intended to be a direct substitute for a consultation with a healthcare professional, such as your GP.

“ I see bubbly and outgoing people sometimes and think why can't I be like that? Things are so much easier for them ”

## Step one: Think about you and your shyness

We put a lot of pressure on ourselves when it comes to what people think of us.

Did you know that one third of the people you meet like you, a third will not and the other third will not remember you?

### One third of the people you meet:



LIKE YOU



DON'T  
LIKE YOU



WILL NEVER  
REMEMBER YOU

Keep a diary for two weeks, recording your moments of shyness. By doing this you will learn to see situations and your reactions in a different light. You can keep a record of how you're feeling on the 'notes' pages at the end of this booklet, either for yourself or to show to someone else.

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 continue.

“ I feel lonely but the thought of being with other people is frightening ”

Write down information such as:

- What was the situation?  
*I was invited to my friends' party.*
- What did I think?  
*I'm not good at social situations.*
- How did this make me feel?  
*I started to feel nervous and had butterflies even though the party was two weeks away.*
- What did I feel was the underlying problem?  
*I didn't want to go to the party because I blush uncontrollably and people would stare.*

Use this diary to help yourself change the way you think. Look at each negative thought and think about the following:

- Were you "mind reading"?  
*e.g. she will think I'm stupid.*
- Were you "fortune telling"?  
*e.g. it will be a disaster, everyone will laugh at me.*
- Were you "personalising"?  
*e.g. people will think I am stupid.*
- Were you focusing on the bad things?  
*e.g. I found it really hard to get my words out at the meeting today.*

Thinking about this may help you to understand how these thoughts can be changed to be more realistic.

Being shy may mean that you focus on yourself and how you are feeling. You may fear that other people will notice how anxious you look or if you're blushing, shaking or stammering. Concentrating on yourself may make the symptoms worse. Remember that what you think other people might think of you are not facts, just your beliefs.

## Step two: Do something

---

### Distract yourself

Concentrate on what other people are saying and not on how you are feeling. When there is a break in a conversation, don't feel as though you should be the one to fill it if you don't want to. Silences in conversations are normal.

You may think that when you are feeling shy people will be able to notice or think you look nervous. Try to remember that this is not as visible as you think.

### Challenge yourself

Even if you are very anxious in certain situations it will start to fade after a while. Try to challenge the way you feel and use the following method to help yourself:

1. Make a list of all the situations that make you anxious.
2. Put them in order from what makes you feel most anxious to least.
3. Put yourself in the situations that make you feel the least anxious and keep yourself there until the feelings start to fade. You may have to do this a few times before you can move on to the next situation on the list.
4. Move on to the next one and tackle the situations one by one.

For example, you may find talking in a group of people really difficult, so try talking to one person that you don't know. Once you start to feel more confident, try talking to more people.

### Breathe

If you feel overwhelmed or anxious concentrate on breathing slowly.

Close your eyes and imagine you're in a safe and positive place, such as a favourite holiday destination or a comfortable room.

This will help to relax you, put your feelings into context and ease your anxiety.

## Health

Keep yourself healthy. Don't rely on caffeine, alcohol or drugs to ease your shyness. These may seem to help you feel brave in the short term but will ultimately create long term problems.

Instead find support within your friends or family and find ways to challenge your shyness.

Exercise is a great way to bring down your everyday stress levels and improve your overall wellbeing, including increasing self-confidence. It doesn't have to be difficult – try stretching, walking or swimming.

Why not read the "Healthy living – What should I do?" booklet available on our website – [www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides](http://www.swyt.co/selfhelpguides)

### Go explore

You might want to join a local self-confidence or assertiveness course. This will give you the opportunity to meet people who are going through a similar situation and help you find tools to overcome your shyness. If this seems too daunting at first, ask someone to go with you.

Find out what groups and activities are going on in your local community and get involved. Your local library or GP surgery may advertise what's going on in your area.

*I really want to have a relationship with someone but can't bring myself to speak to anyone*

## Step three: Talk to a healthcare professional

---

If you feel shyness is affecting your life, make an appointment to see your GP.

*I was asked to do a presentation at work and I was so nervous I nearly fainted. I've never felt so stupid*

*I don't go to parties as I can't talk to people and will end up sitting in a corner on my own*

## Notes

---

## Notes

---

## Notes

---

## Notes

---