

CBT Worksheet: Managing Social Anxiety & Self-Conscious Thoughts

Goal: Use this worksheet to challenge anxious thoughts and build more balanced, compassionate ways of thinking in social situations.

Situation

Describe a recent social situation where you felt self-conscious or anxious:

Example: "I was at a team meeting and had to introduce myself."

Automatic Thoughts

What were you thinking in that moment?

(Try to write down your first thoughts, even if they seem irrational.)

Example: "Everyone thinks I sound nervous." "I'm embarrassing myself."

Emotions & Physical Sensations

What emotions did you feel?

(You can circle or write them down)

- Nervous
- Embarrassed
- Ashamed
- Judged
- Insecure
- Other: _____

What did you feel in your body?

Example: Sweating, fast heartbeat, blushing, tense muscles

Evidence For & Against the Thought

Thought: _____

Evidence That Supports This Thought

(What makes you believe it?)

Thought: _____

Evidence That Does NOT Support This Thought

(What contradicts it?)

Tip: Use facts, not feelings. What would a friend say?

 **Alternative (Balanced) Thought**

Based on the evidence, what’s a more realistic and helpful way to look at this situation?

Example: “Even if I was nervous, people probably didn’t notice or didn’t care. Everyone gets anxious sometimes.”

 **Re-rating Emotions**

How intense are your emotions now (0–100%)?

Before: _____% → After: _____%

 **Coping Strategy Toolbox**

What can you do differently next time?

- Practice self-compassion
- Focus on the topic, not yourself
- Prepare ahead (but don’t over-rehearse)
- Grounding (deep breathing, 5 senses)
- Positive affirmations
- Other: _____

Reminder: It’s normal to feel self-aware sometimes, but your thoughts are not always facts. With practice, you can build confidence and ease in social situations.

🙄 Common Cognitive Distortions Behind Self-Consciousness in Social Settings

These thinking patterns often make people feel judged, awkward, or “on display” in social settings:

1. Mind Reading

“They think I’m boring.”

You assume others are having negative thoughts about you without any real evidence.

2. Fortune Telling

“I’m going to say something stupid.”

Predicting that things will go badly before they even happen, fueling anticipatory anxiety.

3. Personalization

“Everyone noticed when I messed up.”

Believing that everything others do or say is a direct reaction to you.

4. Magnification (aka Catastrophizing)

“If I blush, they’ll think I’m weird and I’ll never be taken seriously.”

Exaggerating small mistakes or symptoms of anxiety into disasters.

5. Labeling

“I’m so awkward.”

Turning a single behavior or moment into a fixed identity.

6. All-or-Nothing Thinking

“Either I’m confident and perfect or I’m a complete failure.”

Viewing social success or failure in extremes with no middle ground.

7. Mental Filtering

“They looked away while I was talking—that means they’re not interested.”

Focusing only on small negative cues and ignoring neutral or positive ones.

8. Emotional Reasoning

“I feel anxious, so I must be making a fool of myself.”

Believing your emotions reflect objective truth about the situation.

9. Should Statements

“I should always come across as smart and composed.”

Rigid self-expectations that set you up for failure or self-criticism.
