



WORK-RELATED COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (WCBT)

COUNSELOR TRAINING MANUAL

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SESSION 1

SESSION OVERVIEW

Orientation (20 minutes)

Introductions (20 minutes)

Psychoeducation (50 minutes)

- Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Social Anxiety
- Three Components of Anxiety
- Negative Cycle of Anxiety
- Defining Avoidance

Treatment Overview (15 minutes)

Homework and Practice (15 minutes)

ORIENTATION



Beginning the Group

- Distribute all group materials, including: nametags, workbooks/handouts, pens, and other available resources
- Describe the purpose of the group- to reduce social anxiety and to improve employment outcomes.
- Take a few moments to discuss why members have been placed in this group, and what the intended outcome is for group members.



Setting the Tone

- The first session will set the tone for future sessions, so it is important that group leaders be mindful of the type of classroom atmosphere they create.
- Leaders should be extremely welcoming during this first session and should convey the sense that they will be partnering with, rather than teaching, group members.
- Since many people with social anxiety are fearful of evaluative situations, group leaders must avoid seeming critical, which could lead to lower rates of member participation and retention.
- **Tip:** When possible, group leaders should physically set up their classroom so as to deemphasize their power and authority.
 - Example: if sitting at a large, boardroom-style table, it is best if group leaders sit in the middle of the table versus at the head. Or, if in a classroom with desks, group leaders might sit at desks themselves, or arrange the desks in a circle so that no one is in the front of the room.

Group leaders should be:

-  collegial, motivational, and disarming
-  facilitators... use questions to engage group members

Group leaders should not be:

-  authoritarian, judgmental, or critical
-  teachers

Why are we here? - Introduction to Social Anxiety

- Use easy to follow language to provide a definition of social anxiety, and discuss how it can relate to employment problems.
 - Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) involves a persistent fear of one or more social or performance situations in which the person is exposed to unfamiliar people or to possible scrutiny by others (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Individuals with social anxiety disorder fear that they will act in a way (or show anxiety symptoms) that will be embarrassing and humiliating. Social Anxiety Disorder is a common psychiatric disorder.
 - Lifetime prevalence: epidemiological studies using DSM-IV estimate 12.1% (Kessler et al., 2005).
 - Relation to other disorders: Alcohol abuse or dependence (34.8%), depression (37.2%), PTSD (13.3%), and other anxiety problems (56.7%) commonly go along with social anxiety. In many cases, social anxiety comes before these other problems develop (Heimberg et al., 2002).

- Relation to work/school problems:
 - Over 90% of people with Social Anxiety Disorder report significant impairment in one or more areas of occupational functioning (Turner et al., 1986).
 - Approximately one in five individuals with Social Anxiety Disorder have turned down a job offer or promotion as a result of social fears (Stein et al., 2000).
 - Individuals with Social Anxiety Disorder also report impairments in work performance and productivity, including increased absenteeism relative to non-anxious controls (Davidson et al., 1993; Schneier et al., 1994; Wittchen et al., 2000).
 - Occupational success in individuals with Social Anxiety Disorder is also limited by their lowered educational achievement, scholastic difficulties, and early school dropout (Davidson et al., 1993; Magee et al., 1996; Mogotsi et al., 2000; Stein & Kean, 2000).
 - Service jobs are on the increase; competencies required in these settings are especially difficult for persons with social anxiety.

Anxiety Recognition Classroom Exercise





Just before members form pairs, complete the following exercise:

Before starting introductions, ask group members to “sit with” their anxiety for a few moments and allow themselves to consider what they are feeling and thinking. *Briefly* point out the cognitive, behavioral, and physical aspects of anxiety. Leaders might say, “Before we start introducing each other, could we all just sit back for a moment and close our eyes? How are you feeling physically right now? Do you feel warm? Is your heart beating fast? Do you have butterflies? What kinds of thoughts are going through your mind right now? Okay, can we all take a minute to simply sit with our anxiety and observe our feelings?” This *brief* exercise helps group members recognize to the range of feelings and emotions that accompany them when they are anxious or nervous.

INTRODUCTIONS

- Introductions are an important part of the first session, as they serve to “break the ice” and further establish the tone of the class. However, introducing oneself to a group of strangers can be uncomfortable and highly anxiety-inducing for people with social anxiety. Group leaders should acknowledge and normalize this discomfort.
- Introduction Exercise:
 - Leaders inform the group members that introductions will begin.
 - Leaders form a pair and introduce each other based off of memorized introductions about each other.
 - Include the following in the introduction providing a model for group members:
 - Name
 - Where the leader is from
 - Hobbies
 - One positive attribute
 - Ask group members to form pairs and introduce each other in a similar fashion.
 - Normalize the anxiety that members may experience and state that a central component of this group involves practicing social interactions that are challenging.
 - Member Introduction Guide (5 min - Show worksheet with the following:)
 - Name
 - Where the group member is from
 - Activities they enjoy
 - One positive attribute
 - Ask for volunteer pairs to introduce each other.
 - Avoid simply going around the room, as members who must wait until the end for their turn may experience considerably more anticipatory anxiety than those who go first. Also avoid calling on group members, as some may wait to speak until called upon. If no one volunteers, leaders should call on a pair that appears to be most comfortable with the exercise.
 - After all pairs have presented, ask members about their experience, including thoughts and sensations of anxiety.
 - Congratulate members for completing their first exposure exercise, which involves practicing situations that typically make them feel anxious. Encourage members that they completed this exercise despite feeling nervous.
 - Briefly state that a large component of the class will include exercises like this, which involve approaching situations they often avoid due to anxiety.

Group leaders should:

-  Normalize group members’ anxiety
-  Be friendly and peer-like when introducing themselves
-  Encourage participation without forcing it in a supportive way
-  If a person is too anxious to speak, you can encourage them to speak later and offer them another chance toward the end of the exercise

Group Ground Rules

- Ground rules are established collaboratively and written into a computerized worksheet that can be printed out and placed on the wall and members individual folders, but the following sections outline areas that these rules must be sure to cover.
- To build camaraderie and establish a non-authoritarian relationship with group members, it's helpful to refer to the group as "us" and "we". For example, "We've made some great progress today, and I think this practice has really helped us to see things differently".
- Group members and leaders can sign or initial the rules, thus making it a sort of contract that everyone agrees to abide by.

Group Leaders Present Overview of Ground Rules:

- Attendance and Promptness
- Commitment to Practice Goals
- Group and Individual Participation
- Confidentiality
- **Attendance & Promptness**
 - Encourage attendance at every session. When one person is missing from the group, everyone in the group suffers. When a person is missing, he/she will have less opportunity to work on their own social anxiety. Further, since the group heavily relies on teamwork and feedback from all members, other group members will miss out on that person's help and support.
 - Encourage promptness. Late arrivals are disruptive to the group and when everyone is on time, more can be accomplished. However, it is better to arrive late than to miss it entirely. They should also ask members to notify them in advance if they will be late or absent from a session.

Group leaders should:

- 👍 Emphasize that, for the group to be successful, group members need each other
- 👍 Use words like "us" and "we" when referring to the group

- **Practice Goals**
 - **Group members will have practice goals to work on outside of class. These goals are a way for members to practice what they have learned in the real world. The group will work together to come up with ideas for good practice goals, but each individual will ultimately decide which goals are best for him/her.**
 - **Tip:** Group leaders should emphasize that members may not achieve all of their goals perfectly. The class will help members work through obstacles to taking steps toward their goals

Group leaders should:

- 👍 Emphasize that it is okay if members are not perfect in achieving their practice goals
- 👍 Encourage group members to create their own practice goals and to be open to suggestion from leaders and group members.

- **Group Participation**
 - Group participation is an important part of this class, but also normalize feelings of anxiety that often accompany participation. Engaging in social interactions takes practice before one feels comfortable, and by participating, group members are actually taking the most important steps to overcome their social anxiety.
- **Confidentiality**
 - Explain each group member's responsibilities regarding confidentiality. Group leaders should emphasize that certain topics discussed in the group may be sensitive in nature, and thus, should be handled with privacy and respect.
 - For example, group members may want to discuss their participation in the group with friends or family, which is acceptable, but when doing so, they must never use specific members' names. The group will be much more successful if people feel as though they have trust and respect of each other.
- Ask group members to nominate other group rules that they wish to add.

Exercise: Sharing of Individual Problems and Goals

- Open "Let's Brainstorm Practice Goals" Worksheet
- Each member will be asked to say a few words about the impact of social anxiety on his/her life and the things he/she would like to accomplish by attending the group.
- Group leaders will record each person's impact and goals statements on the computerized worksheet.
 - Although the overall focus of this group is to improve employment outcomes, sharing does not need to be limited to work-related impacts or goals. Improvements in one's social anxiety that are made in life domains other than employment (e.g. speaking at a party) are likely to improve employment outcomes as well (e.g. speaking at a job interview).

Tip: Leaders may sense anxiety and find it helpful to, again, validate and normalize. In fact, this may be a good opportunity to begin to mobilize group members by helping them to externalize their anxious feelings. This can be done by framing social anxiety as a force that has been inhibiting group members and keeping them from doing the things they would like to do. By attending the group, members are clearly showing that they've had enough, and that it's time for them to make a change.

- The following questions can be used as prompts:
 - What is an example of a recent situation in which social anxiety has affected your life?
 - What happens to you when you think about facing your feared situation?
 - What happens to you when you are actually in the feared situation?
 - What physical symptoms and thoughts do you experience in the feared situation?
 - What do you feel like after the feared situation has ended?
 - What would you like to be able to do that your anxiety keeps you from doing?
- The purpose of this exercise is twofold:
 - To begin to encourage open discussion about the personal impacts of social anxiety. For some group members, this may be the first time they've ever discussed this with anyone.

- To build group cohesion and trust. Leaders can facilitate this by pointing out similarities between group members and encouraging group members to talk to each other rather than to the leaders. Leaders should write what members say, so as to bring attention to common themes.

Tip: Anxiety-evoking situations are often influenced by the types of life situations the person has experienced. It is possible that persons belonging to vulnerable, low income populations may be less likely to experience anxiety when interacting with *peers, or when engaging in social interactions necessary to meet their survival needs*. Conversely, this population may be more anxious when dealing with *authority or in evaluative situations*. It is very important to be aware that one's social avoidance behaviors may be influenced by one's culture, socioeconomic status, and survival needs, particularly when considering practice goals.

Group leaders should:

- 👍 Validate and normalize feelings of anxiety
- 👍 Externalize social anxiety and encourage members to fight back against avoidance
- 👍 Encourage members to talk to each other rather than to the leaders when sharing

PSYCHOEDUCATION

The Cognitive-Behavioral Model of Social Anxiety

- Social anxiety is mostly a learned response that grows out of negative experiences and beliefs about oneself.
- Social anxiety often reveals itself during a negative interaction. During this interaction, symptoms of anxiety are present, and when the person is faced with subsequent interactions, his/her body remembers and starts to produce those same anxious sensations and thoughts. These sensations and thoughts lead to greater anxiety, often causing the person to begin avoiding these anxiety-inducing situations altogether, in an attempt to avoid the negative feelings that accompany them. As he/she becomes more and more avoidant, he/she also becomes more fearful of having to engage in any future interactions that may arise. Furthermore, his/her avoidance causes him/her to lose opportunities to practice social interaction, making it more likely that future interactions will be uncomfortable.
- Emphasize that social anxiety is a learned response, and that a major focus of this group will be learning new, more helpful responses to situations that can be anxiety provoking.

The Three Components of Anxiety

- Group leaders explain that anxiety is an emotion that consists of three main parts: what you think (cognitive), what you feel in your body (physiological), and how you behave (behavioral). When a person experiences anxiety, they most likely will exhibit symptoms in all three of these areas.
 - **Tip:** Group leaders should avoid jargonizing or intellectualizing class material by using language that is highly technical and likely to be unfamiliar to group members. For example, it may be best to altogether omit the words *cognitive*, *physiological*, and *behavioral* when discussing the components of anxiety. Consider alternatives such as *thinking*, *feeling*, and *acting*.
- Group leaders will open the 3 Components of Anxiety worksheet
- **The Physiological Component – How Your Body Feels**
 - When a person is in certain social situations that make him/her nervous or uncomfortable, he/she may begin to feel some physical sensations related to anxiety. Group leaders can ask for examples from the group and record them in the worksheet. Examples of physical sensations include:
 - pounding heart
 - shortness of breath
 - muscle tension
 - queasy stomach (butterflies)
 - dizziness
 - increase in body temperature (feeling flushed)
 - sweaty palms
 - These are the same symptoms a person would feel if he/she were in any type of dangerous situation; like being chased by a bear or walking on the edge of a cliff. In these kinds of dangerous situations, the body attempts to protect itself. Sometimes your body cannot tell the difference between grave danger (e.g. an angry bear) and the anxiety felt in social situations (e.g. talking to a stranger). Leaders should provide an example to the group that illustrates this concept. A group leader might use the following example:
 - “Imagine that you don’t have any money on you, you don’t have a cell phone, and you don’t have any place to stay. It’s late, it’s dark, and it’s cold outside. You are in an unfamiliar neighborhood and you don’t know anyone who lives in this area. You see a group of people step out of a dark building and start walking towards you. You are by yourself.”
 - Ask what types of physical sensations they may feel in this situation. Explain that these sensations are natural because this situation is, indeed, a potentially dangerous one. Social situations however, are usually not dangerous, although they may feel threatening, uncomfortable, or scary.
 - To further illustrate this point, group leaders should describe a situation that might feel threatening, but in fact, is not, for example, a job interview. During a job interview, one might feel his/her heart pound and his/her face get really hot and he/she might have butterflies or tense muscles. This is because his/her body has tricked itself into feeling as though it is in real danger. However, everyone knows that, while job interviews can be scary and the stakes can be high, they are not dangerous.
 -

- **The Behavioral Component – What You Do**
 - When people are anxious, they often do things they might not do if they felt completely comfortable. For example, a person who is in a social situation that makes him/her nervous might stutter, tremble, laugh a lot, be fidgety, or have trouble making eye contact with others.
 - Furthermore, because anxiety can be very uncomfortable, people often try to avoid situations that make them anxious. In fact, avoidance is often a very big part of social anxiety.
 - Ask members for examples of how they have behaved when anxious and record responses in the worksheet.
 - Examples might include:
 - You have heard from some acquaintances that the caseworkers at the Department of Human Services are impatient and mean. You worry that they won't treat you well, so you decide to skip your appointment.
 - You are working at your new job at a department store. There is a customer who looks like he has a question. You are worried that you won't know the answer. Instead of stopping to help the customer, you duck into the back room.
 - You are eating at a cafeteria where you don't know anyone. You are nervous about having to strike up a conversation with someone you don't know, so you go to a table in the corner and eat by yourself.
 - You are going to the coffee hour at church, but find yourself sitting to the side, reading a bible, and not socializing with others.
 - You are sitting in a meeting with your supervisor and co-workers and you have an idea that you think might really help the company, but you worry that others might think your idea is stupid and may laugh at you. You choose to stay quiet and not share your idea.
 - Highlight that using drugs or alcohol to cope with anxiety-provoking situations is a form of avoidance and is fairly common among people with social anxiety. When a person uses drugs or alcohol when anxious, he/she is avoiding handling an uncomfortable situation in a sober state of mind. While this might help alleviate his/her anxiety at that moment, it also makes him/her more likely to feel as though he/she can only handle those situations if he/she has consumed drugs or alcohol.

Group leaders should:

- 👍 Explain that drug and alcohol use can be a form of avoidance
- 👍 Emphasize that a big part of making progress is reducing avoidance

- **The Cognitive Component – What You Think**
 - When a person is anticipating or is in a situation that makes him/her nervous, he/she will have many thoughts going through his/her mind, sometimes without even being aware of them. In fact, a person’s mind is likely to be very busy, which makes it difficult to get through the situation with ease.
 - **VIDEO:** Play the video that depicts how anxious thoughts can play like a tape through your mind when one is feeling anxious.
 - After the video, group leaders should explain that the voice was representing the types of thoughts that often go through one’s mind when feeling anxious or nervous. These thoughts can lead us to doubt ourselves and our abilities and can lead us to assume others view us negatively. Further, these assumptions can lead us to want to avoid certain social situations.
- Ask group members for examples of thoughts that come into their mind when they are anxious and the leader writes them in the worksheet.
 - To help generate ideas, group leaders can describe a situation that would likely cause anxiety. For example, a “What if I asked one of you to give an unplanned speech right now? What kinds of things started going through your head?”
- Group leaders should explain that these types of thoughts are called *anxious thoughts*. *Anxious thoughts are negative thoughts about oneself, others, or the world that are often not based on concrete evidence.* They are usually accepted as truth, although in reality, they are often not correct. Part of the focus of this group will be to help members recognize their anxious thoughts, evaluate the evidence, and consider alternatives.
- Acknowledge that an anxious person’s mind may appear to go blank, however, if you look deeper, there are usually underlying thoughts.

Group leaders should not:

- 👉 Intellectualize or jargonize material they present to the group

Negative Cycle of Anxiety

- **VIDEO:** Group leaders will play a video that presents an example of how the 3 components of anxiety amplify one another and feed into a negative cycle of anxiety.
 - Leaders will open the Negative Cycle of Anxiety worksheet and ask group members to identify what John’s physical sensations, thoughts, and behaviors were in the example and write them in the worksheet.
 - Leaders will then clear the Negative Cycle of Anxiety worksheet and will ask for one volunteer to describe a recent social situation where they felt anxious.
 - The leader will elicit the individual’s physical sensations, thoughts, and behaviors during this situation, as well as how they amplified one another and fed the negative cycle.

The Consequences of Avoidance

- Refer back to the 3 Components of Anxiety worksheet and review the examples of avoidant behavior. Ask group members what Jane’s avoidance behaviors were.
- Complete the Cost/Benefit Analysis of Avoidance worksheet to help group members fully understand the consequences of avoidance.
 - First, ask group members to think of the reasons they engage in avoidant behavior, or the benefits.
 - Next, ask the group members to think of costs of avoiding. This list should be longer and should encompass a variety of reasons. The Cost/Benefit Analysis may look something like this:

<u>Costs</u>	<u>Benefits (Temporary)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keeps me from getting what I want ○ Keeps me from trying new things ○ Makes it harder for me to get over my anxiety ○ Makes my anxiety worse ○ Makes me feel bad about myself ○ Makes me feel less able to cope with my anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduces my anxiety ○ Provides immediate relief

- Ask participants to identify the consequences of avoiding from the video on the negative cycle of anxiety and from the example completed in group.
- Emphasize that an important part of managing one’s anxiety is reducing avoidance behaviors.

TREATMENT OVERVIEW

- Here, group leaders should very briefly outline the three main components of the group. Group leaders can explain that each of these components will help combat the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors associated with social anxiety and as a result, group members will hopefully see their anxiety reduced.
- **Challenging Your Thoughts**
 - Challenging thoughts addresses the anxious thoughts associated with social anxiety and involves becoming more aware of anxious thoughts, questioning them, and then testing them out to determine whether they are true.
- **In-Session Exposures**
 - In-session exposures involve acting out or role playing anxiety-provoking situations.
 - In-session exposures address the “what you do” components of anxiety. Members will learn to allow the body’s natural coping processes to bring down anxiety levels, rather than coping with anxiety by avoiding, escaping, withdrawing, using drugs or alcohol, or employing other maladaptive coping strategies.
 - These exposures will serve as practice for real-life interactions.

- Practice Goals/Homework
 - Group members will learn a lot about managing their anxiety in class, but in order for it to make a difference in the real world, they will need to set practice goals to complete outside of class.
 - Group members will set their own practice goals, however they will receive significant input from group leaders and group members.
 - Every effort will be made to design exercises that are progressively more challenging, moving from easier to more difficult.
- End by building members' expectations by stating that this will pay off. Three quarters of the people that participate in this type of class become more successful with people. Also urge members to continue to attend.

Tip: Group members will likely have a number of questions or concerns. Address concerns in a supportive manner, emphasizing that exposure and practice can start out small, and once mastered, will increase in level of difficulty. Assure group members that with practice, their confidence and their ability to handle feared social situations will grow.

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Review the overview of the treatment
2. Login to computer program and gain familiarity
3. Complete 3 Components of Anxiety worksheet with an example from the week

END OF SESSION ONE

SESSION 2

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (20 minutes)

Group Ice-Breaker- Present on what you hope to gain from this class (20 minutes)

Psychoeducation - Social Anxiety in the Workplace (20 minutes)

Cognitive Restructuring (40 minutes)

Intro to Anxious Thoughts

Challenging Anxious Thoughts

Developing a Helpful Response

Practice Goal/Homework (20 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one group member to share their homework with the rest of the group. Choosing one group member (versus calling on all group members) reduces the time spent on homework review, while still reinforcing the importance of homework completion.
- Group leaders use the Homework Question Guide to facilitate the homework review
- The group member will share an anxiety provoking situation that occurred this week and the 3 components of anxiety (physical sensations, thoughts, behaviors) that occurred.
- Answer any questions that group members have about the homework. Also, as this is a new skill, some group members may have experienced difficulty identifying each of the 3 components. Provide suggestions/guidance when necessary.

Tip: As group members discuss their homework experiences, it can be useful to ask the group if other members experienced similar experiences. Doing so will serve to capture themes, and will also build cohesion among group members.

GROUP ICE-BREAKER- Present on what you hope to gain from this class

- This will be the group members' first official in-session exposure. Even though it is an exposure, it will be called an "ice-breaker" as group members are still unfamiliar with the concept of an exposure and an ice-breaker may seem less anxiety provoking.
- Reinforce that trying new things can be difficult and that it is expected that they may feel nervous and unprepared this first time.
- One group leader will role-play how to present a 2 minute speech on what he/she hopes to gain from the group
- One group member will volunteer (or be chosen) to present for 2 minutes on what he/she hopes to gain from the group. Group leaders ask the group member to stand up in front of the group during their speech.
 - Each session a different group member will complete an exposure in front of the group so that by the end of treatment, each member has had the opportunity to present once.
- Group leader will open the Before and After Ice-Breaker Worksheet and ask the group member the before-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - Aside from being distressed, what are you worried will happen?
 - What are your behavioral goals?
- After the volunteer completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - What actually happened?

- What did you learn?

Tip: this is the first in-session exposure and the participants have not answered these types of questions before, thus it may be difficult for them to answer the first time. Encourage them that today's session will focus more on these types of questions and that the reasons for asking will make more sense soon.

- Break remaining group members into pairs and ask them to each present for 2 minutes on the topic to their partner. If there is an odd number of group members left, one person can pair with a group leader.

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Relating Social Anxiety to the World of Work

- The purpose of this section is to make a strong link between Social Anxiety Disorder and how it can and does affect finding employment and keeping employment.
- Leaders ask members “How does social anxiety come up in the work place?” and prompt members to provide examples of how they have noticed social anxiety in the workplace, and how it may have affected their productivity at work, or their ability to gain and keep employment.
- Leaders then ask members, “What are the sources of social anxiety in the workplace?” Members will provide examples of situations that make them anxious, and leaders can add to this list as well.
 - Examples might be:
 - Evaluation from a supervisor
 - Social activities (e.g. lunch, chatting during break time) with coworkers
 - Sharing an opinion or an idea with a supervisor/coworker
 - Completing a new activity that you have never done before
 - Performing a new activity in front of coworkers/customers
 - Submitting a resume or going to a job interview
 - Networking
 - Asking for a raise or a promotion
 - Asking for a day off work
- **EXERCISE:**
 - Lead the group members through the following example (or a similar example of your choice): “Roy’s boss asked him to learn the role of cashier, which would be a new skill and could lead to a promotion. Roy was nervous about learning the register because of the thought, “What if I mess up in front of the customers and they think I am stupid.” This thought led him to avoid completing the cashier training and eventually his boss asked him why he was so behind on learning the new skill. Roy felt even more anxious when his boss reminded him that he had not completed the task, which led to the thought, “My boss must think I am stupid.” Roy began avoiding eye contact with his boss when he saw him. The final outcome was that Roy never learned to work the cash register and he was never promoted to cashier.
 - Open the Negative Cycle of Anxiety Worksheet (same one used in Session 1). Provide examples of thoughts, physical sensations, and behaviors in the above situation and plug them into the worksheet
 - Example thoughts: “I won’t be able to learn how to use the register,” “I will screw up in front of the customers,” “My boss will think I’m stupid”

- Example physical sensations: Shakiness, increased heart rate, blushing
- Example behaviors: Avoid training opportunities, avoid conversations with the boss, become quieter in meetings so as not to draw attention to himself
- Point out that Roy's behaviors likely significantly contributed to the final outcome of him not getting promoted.
- Ask the group to generate a possible alternative behavior and discuss how it may have led to a different outcome.
 - Example: Roy could have done the training even though he was anxious. He may have struggled with it at first and even needed to ask for extra time and help, but eventually he may have learned it and been promoted.
 - Example: Roy could have begun practicing on the register on his own without customers or coworkers present until he gained more comfort and then started practicing using the register in front of others. This might have led to reduced anxiety when he had to perform the action in front of others.

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING: CHALLENGING OUR THOUGHTS

Introduction to Anxious Thoughts

- The rest of this session is devoted to training group members in skills needed to begin challenging their anxious thoughts, and breaking the negative cycle of anxiety.
- Structured exercises and practice goals are used to help group members achieve several goals:
 - Develop an awareness of the frequency of their own negative thinking
 - Develop the skills for identifying whether their thoughts are true or not
 - Develop an awareness of the connection between the occurrence of negative thinking and anxiety
 - Re-conceptualize their thoughts as predictions to be tested rather than facts to be accepted
 - Develop the skills for challenging and changing their own thoughts
- How Anxious Thoughts Influence Emotions and Behavior
 - Remind members of how thoughts, physical sensations, and behaviors all influence one another in the negative cycle
 - Provide a brief, concrete example of how anxious thoughts can influence the amount of anxiety that we feel, our behavior, and the consequences of our behavior
 - Explain that events do not cause our emotions and behaviors, but rather, our thoughts about the events do.
 - If a person can change their anxious thoughts, they can change their emotions and break the cycle of anxiety.
 - We can challenge our anxious thoughts by questioning what our thoughts are saying to us and whether there is evidence or truth to support those thoughts.
- Anxious Thinking Styles
 - When we are anxious, our brain becomes very alert and begins to look for all possible dangers in our environment. This can be very helpful if we are in actual danger.
 - Provide the group with an example.
 - One possible example is walking down a dark alley alone at night. It would be very helpful to think about all the possible dangers that could be present in that alley and to try to avoid those dangers, right?

- Say to group: However, sometimes we are anxious in situations that feel dangerous but are actually pretty safe and helpful, like a job interview. How might it be better to think of a job interview as not full of dangers?
 - Common types of anxious thoughts/Anxious Thinking Styles
 - Jumping to Conclusions
 - Thinking that negative events are more likely to happen than they really are.
 - To know if you are jumping to conclusions, ask yourself how many times the things that you are most worried about in social situations have actually happened.
 - Examples: “I will freeze and have nothing to say at my job interview” or “Every employer will reject me because they can tell I am anxious”
 - Disaster Thinking
 - Thinking that if a negative social encounter happened, you would be unable to cope with it.
 - Examples: “If I made a mistake at work, I could never show my face again” or “If I am not selected for this job, I will not be able to cope.”
- Tip:** For many group members, disasters have happened in their life (i.e. going to jail, going without food, being the victim of a crime), however, the focus here is on the group members’ assuming that social anxiety will lead to a disaster. The emphasis should be on the group members’ ability to cope despite anxiety.

Challenging Anxious Thoughts

- When you are feeling anxious stop and ask yourself
 - “What am I saying to myself?”
 - “What is going through my mind right now?”
- Once you’ve discovered an anxious thought, question it!
 - Are you certain about this?
 - Is there another possibility?
 - What is my evidence?
 - Answers to the second set of questions should provide much more helpful thoughts than your original anxious thoughts. This questioning approach is not a cure for negative anxious thinking, but it should help you start to gain control over your emotional responses and help you start to respond to situations more thoughtfully.
- Develop a Helpful Response
 - Use the answers to the challenging questions to develop a new response to the anxious thought.
- **VIDEO:** Leaders will show a video of a therapist and a client role-playing how to challenge anxious thoughts and generate alternative ways of thinking
- **EXERCISE:** Challenging Anxious Thoughts
 - Open Example of Challenging Anxious Thoughts Worksheet

- Ask the group to generate a list of anxious thoughts that they would experience if they were to find themselves in this situation. Give examples such as:
 - 6 month job evaluation
 - Job interview
- Open Challenging Anxious Thoughts Worksheet
- Explain: “This is a list of questions that you can use to challenge your anxious thoughts. They are presented in a general form so that you can apply them to a range of situations and so that you may adapt them in the way that works best for you. You may come up with other questions that work even better for you.”
- Here’s how it works. Let’s say that I had the anxious thought, “The boss must think I’m so incompetent.” This is an example of jumping to conclusions. I could ask myself the following questions:
 - “Do I know for sure the boss thinks I’m so incompetent?”
 - “What evidence do I have that the boss thinks I’m so incompetent?”
 - “Could there be other explanations for his calling me into his office?”
 - “How many times has the boss called me into his office? And how many of those times have I been in trouble? Has he ever called me in for a good reason?”
 - “What is the likelihood that he is so sure I’m incompetent that my job is really in trouble?”
 - “If it is actually true that he thinks I am incompetent, could I cope with that?”
- Ask the group to answer the questions just posed and emphasize that it is the answers to the Challenging Anxious Thoughts questions that are really important. Record group members’ responses and explain that these are what we call helpful responses, that is, responses based on logic and evidence that counters the content of the anxious thought.
- Pose the question to the group: “What would be the benefit of challenging these anxious thoughts in this situation?” Each of the negative emotional, physical, and behavioral reactions originally elicited from the group should be reviewed, and the group should be prompted to consider whether these consequences would be less likely to occur or, at least, to occur in lesser degree.

Tip: It is very important for group leaders to communicate that disputing anxious thoughts is an ongoing process that takes practice. If a group member seems stuck or unable to effectively answer one of the disputing questions with regards to a particular anxious thought, it may be helpful to move on from that question and try a different one. The process of disputing anxious thoughts will be difficult, especially at first, because it requires group members to carefully examine thoughts that they not only have never examined before, but likely were not even previously aware of.

Group leaders should:

- 👉 Acknowledge similarities in thoughts between group members

Helpful Responses

- A helpful response is a statement that summarizes the key points that a member “discovers” as he/she works through the process of challenging anxious thoughts. It is based on logic and evidence rather than on negative emotion, distorted thinking, and pessimistic predictions. It is often a summary of the answers to the challenging questions. Engaging in the thought challenging process and deriving a workable helpful response before entering a feared situation allows the anxious person to more easily counter his/her anxious thoughts in the situation. It also provides a focus for thought debriefing after the situation has run its course, an important part of the cognitive-behavioral treatment of social anxiety.

A helpful response may be . . .	
A statement of the “final answer” to the disputation of a specific anxious thought.	<i>“Blushing does not equal incompetence.”</i>
A summary of the answers to the disputations of several related anxious thoughts.	<i>“I have no reason to expect the worst.” “It’s OK to be anxious.”</i>
A reminder to stay focused on the task, to think helpfully, and to cope with whatever transpires.	<i>“If there is really a problem, I’ll just let my boss know that I will do my best to fix it.”</i>
A suggestion that certain behaviors are acceptable in the situation.	<i>“Remember that it is OK to talk about the weather and current events.”</i>
A statement of the person’s goals in the situation.	<i>“My goal is to sit down at a table in the cafeteria where others are sitting and ask how their weekends were.”</i>
A reminder that the member should be on the lookout for certain types of anxious thoughts to which he/she may be vulnerable.	<i>“When I think ‘I can’t cope with this,’ I must remember that it is just my anxiety talking.”</i>
A reminder about the truth of the situation.	<i>“I need to work on improving my eye contact, but even if it’s not perfect, it doesn’t mean the interview was a complete failure.”</i>

- In addition to its content, it is also important to focus on the form of a helpful response. If a person is to use it effectively in a feared situation, a helpful response should be brief enough to be easily remembered and repeated without becoming a distraction. It should be specifically related to the situation of concern rather than stating some broad generality (e.g., “I’m a nice guy and people like me!”). It should also be realistic, suggesting that positive or neutral outcomes are possible, but not naively so.
- Consider the person who has an upcoming job interview and reports the anxious thought, “I will never get this job.” This thought is not likely to encourage him/her to put his/her best foot forward. However, it would be just as inaccurate to substitute the thought, “I will certainly get this job, without question.” A truly helpful response might state that there is no way to know whether or not he/she will get the job, but he/she can put forth his/her best effort and it *may* work out. However, if he/she does not go on the interview, he/she will surely not get the job!
- The group member does not have to believe the helpful response (especially early in the group), but he/she must be willing to entertain the logical possibility that it is accurate. If the member can endorse the notion that there is a small possibility that the helpful response is accurate, it becomes possible to reexamine the helpful response and anxious thought after the feared event has transpired and to make a judgment about the relative utility of each.

- The introduction of an alternative viewpoint should make it more difficult for the member to simply accept the reality of his/her anxious thoughts.

Common Rational Responses
The “Nonequation” Response “Looking nervous does not equal [≠] looking foolish.” “Not getting this job ≠ Never getting a job.” “Blushing ≠ Looking stupid.” “Feeling anxious ≠ Looking anxious.”
Other Rational Responses “It’s okay to pause in the middle of a conversation.” “I don’t have to be perfect to be hired.” “Making mistakes makes me look more human to others.” “I’m only responsible for 50% of this conversation.” “I don’t have to know the answer to every question.”
The “I Can Cope” Response Another approach to helpful responses is to focus on what negative event might actually happen. When a group member states that some outcome would be “awful” or that he/she “could not stand it,” it may be worthwhile to consider responses such as, “The worst that could happen is that I will eat lunch alone, and I can cope with that.” Depending on the severity of the negative outcome, an alternative might be, “The worst that could happen is that I might get fired, though it is very unlikely. Even if the worst happened and I was fired, I could find a way to cope. I have coped with hard times before.”

- Pass out the Challenging Questions card to group members. Review what was just learned and discuss how to use this wallet sized card.
- **EXERCISE:** Reverse Role Play- Members as Leaders
 - One group leader presents a personal example of a situation in which he/she felt socially anxious. The goal is to demonstrate that anxious thoughts exist and that alternative ways of viewing situations are possible.
 - The group leader describes the situation, and then presents a list of the anxious thoughts that occurred to him/her. Group members are asked to help the group leader evaluate the validity of these thoughts by asking questions about each anxious thought and examining the answers. Helpful responses to each of the thoughts should be generated as well.
 - Example:
 - “Every year JVS has a fundraiser that is attended by 600 – 700 people and is one of the most important public relations and fundraising events of the year. My assignment for this fundraiser is to greet the guests and network with them. While I have met some of the guests previously, the majority of them I do not know. I typically feel a sense of dread in anticipation of working this event, often days before it takes place.”
 - After describing the situation, the group leader creates a list of anxious thoughts that occurred to him/her, leaving space next to each one for more writing later. Anxious thoughts might include:
 - “I won’t remember the people I met before and will embarrass myself.”
 - “I won’t appear polished as I meet with new guests.”
 - “I will look awkward and make a poor impression on guests.”

- “I will fail at this task.”
- In response to these anxious thoughts, group members are encouraged to evaluate the situation by questioning the accuracy of the thoughts. These questions might include:
 - How many people have you talked to before at Strictly Business?
 - Have you been able to greet some of them?
 - Did the majority of the greetings go well?
 - Was it so terrible when it did not go well?
- After group members have questioned each of the leader’s anxious thoughts, leaders should create a Helpful Response, or summary statement for each anxious thought and alternative perspective.
- Examples of Helpful Responses/Alternative Perspectives:
 - “I will probably remember some of the people I met before, and there will be others I won’t remember, but I doubt anyone would be offended if I didn’t remember them. Besides, they might not even remember me!”
 - “I don’t have to be perfect when I meet the guests.”
 - “I’ve gotten through this before and I will be able to get through it again.”
- Ask members if they were in this situation, and they were able to pay attention to their thinking and counter it with more positive self-talk, do they think it might help?
- The primary goal of this exercise is for group members to understand that both anxious thoughts and alternative thoughts exist. However, it is not necessary, or even likely, that members will strongly accept the validity of the helpful responses at this early point.

Group leaders should:

- 👍 Gently transform anxious thoughts from questions into statements
- 👍 Openly address skepticism while encouraging members to reserve judgment about Treatment

- **EXERCISE:** Eliciting Anxious Thoughts Regarding Group Treatment
 - *Because most group members will have mixed feelings about participating in a group, this presents a common ground for a group exercise on anxious thoughts.*
 - Group leaders ask group members to consider their own thoughts about being in the group, focusing on negative thoughts related to their ability to participate successfully in the group.
 - Open Challenging Anxious Thoughts Worksheet
 - Leaders then ask members to volunteer some of these thoughts out loud. If members appear to have trouble coming up with thoughts, leaders might suggest that members look for thoughts that begin with, “I’m going to . . .,” or “He/she will think . . .” Leaders may ask struggling group members to consider the following questions:
 - What doubts do I have about whether this program will work for me?
 - What worries do I have about the in-session exposures?
 - What doubts do I have that I’ll be able to make real, lasting change?
 - What doubts do I have that the leaders will really be able to understand me?
 - Examples of anxious thoughts might include:
 - I won’t be able to talk in front of the group.

- If I speak up, I'll sound stupid.
 - My problems are worse than everyone else's.
- As in the previous exercise, the group should question the thoughts that have been listed and then consider helpful responses.

Tip: If group members are having trouble identifying their anxious thoughts, leaders can ask, "Then what would happen?" or "What would that mean?" to prompt further responses.

Tip: It is not uncommon for other thoughts to emerge in the midst of discussion of one anxious thought. If this happens, acknowledge the new thought, then defer it to later discussion by saying something like, "So this seems like another important anxious thought you've had. Can we make note of this thought and discuss it later?" When examining anxious thoughts, it's best to stay focused on a single thought at a time.
- As group members offer helpful responses, group leaders should reinforce/acknowledge one or two of the group member comments by saying something like, "That is just the sort of skill we are working on here in the group... see this is the kind of thing most of you can do... we are just practicing this strength you already have with a goal of getting more skill in this area..."

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Prepare for a 3 minute ice-breaker on your last job or a job that you want
2. Login to computer program and gain familiarity
3. Complete the Self-Monitoring of Anxiety and Thoughts worksheet/card
 - Record a brief description of the anxiety provoking situation.
 - Write down the anxious thoughts that occurred to them.
 - Rate the anxiety associated with that thought on a scale of 0 – 100.
 - Explain to members that 0 means feeling calm and 100 means feeling terror.
 - Write down how they behaved after the anxious thought came into their mind.
 - Complete one sample worksheet in class
4. Complete the Challenging Anxious Thoughts worksheet
 - Members choose at least one anxiety provoking situation from the self-monitoring sheet and the associated anxious thoughts
 - For each anxious thought, members ask themselves each of the challenging questions and write the answers
 - Members develop an effective helpful response based off of the answers to the challenging questions
5. Online Video Exposure Practice: Let's Practice-Video Exposure 2
6. Complete a job-related video practice (3x per week)
7. Share video with group
8. Group members encouraged to provide constructive feedback on shared videos

Tip: It is important to instruct members about when to record their thoughts. It is always best to fill out the form as soon as possible after the conclusion of the target event. If this is not possible, members should make every effort to complete the form prior to retiring for the

night. This is especially important for members who tend to play situations over and over again in their minds. Delayed recording by these members may be particularly vulnerable to distortion.

Tip: Official exposures will begin in Session 3. It is a common for anticipatory anxiety to be high before exposure and for members to consider avoiding coming to Session 3, as they are aware that more personalized exposures are beginning. They may also feel an urge to self-medicate during exposure using various medications and/or substances. However, group members have already completed exposures in session through the ice-breakers (and hopefully online in the video practice) for two sessions. Leaders may remind the group members that they have already begun facing their anxiety and succeeding in exposing themselves and that exposure to items on their hierarchy will be very similar. Reinforce the group members' previous success and any gains they have made through exposure thus far.

Leaders close the session by asking the group to comment on what they learned today and how it might help them. Reinforce the positive comments and members efforts and participation.

END OF SESSION 2

SESSION 3

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (10 minutes)

Group Ice-Breaker- Present on a job you had or want (15 minutes)

Building an Avoidance List (25 minutes)

Individual In-Session Exposures (50 minutes)

 Designing an Exposure

 Complete the Exposure

 Processing an Exposure

 Facilitating an Exposure

Setting Exposure-Based Practice Goals (15 minutes)

Practice Goal/Homework (5 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one group member to share their Challenging Anxious Thoughts homework with the rest of the group. Choosing one group member (versus calling on all group members) reduces the time spent on homework review, while still reinforcing the importance of homework completion.

- Group leaders facilitate exposure review
 - What was your behavioral goal for homework?
 - Reinforce their effort/validate difficulty of doing homework.

Tip: If group member is having difficulty identifying a behavioral goal, consider asking them, “What do you hope to be able to do or accomplish during this exercise?”
 - What were you anxious about happening?
 - What were they testing?
 - If completed, what did you learn?
 - What actually occurred?
 - If feared outcome did not occur, what does that suggest about predictions/anxious thoughts?
 - If not completed, what were they worried about happening?

- The group members will share an anxiety provoking situation from their challenging anxious thoughts worksheet that occurred this week and share what they were anxious about happening, what actually occurred, and whether they created a helpful response.

- Answer any questions that group members have about the homework.

Tip: As group members discuss their homework experiences, it can be useful to ask the group if other members experienced similar experiences. Doing so will serve to capture themes, and will also build cohesion among group members.

Tip: Due to the large amount of material that must be covered in Session 3, brevity should be emphasized in this component. To be able to get through the rest of the material in the time allotted less time will need to be spent on this component than in previous or subsequent sessions.

GROUP ICE-BREAKER- Job Talk

- One group leader will role-play presenting a 3 min speech about their last job.
- One group member will volunteer (or be chosen) to present a 3 minute speech on their last job or a job that they want. Group leaders ask the group member to stand up in front of the group during their speech.
 - Each session a different group member will complete an exposure in front of the group so that by the end of treatment, each member has had the opportunity to present once.
- Group leader will open the Before and After Ice-Breaker Worksheet and ask the group member the before-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - Aside from being distressed, what are you worried will happen?
 - What are your behavioral goals?
- After the volunteer completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - What actually happened?
 - What did you learn?
- Break remaining group members into pairs and ask them to each give a 3 minute speech to their partner. If there is an odd number of group members left, one person can pair with a group leader.

Tip: Due to the large amount of material that must be covered in Session 3, brevity should be emphasized in this component. To be able to get through the rest of the material in the time allotted less time will need to be spent on this component than in previous or subsequent sessions.

BUILDING AN AVOIDANCE LIST

Introduction to the Avoidance List

- Each group member will create their own, personalized avoidance list that is specific to the types of situations that trigger anxiety for them and that they typically avoid.
- It is a list of anxiety provoking situations that are placed in order from most anxiety provoking to least anxiety provoking.
- It is best if the items on the list have these qualities:
 - Specific-it is best if the avoidance list item is specific in terms of the context in which the exposure will take place, for example:
 - Location: at home, at work, at a store
 - Other types of people who would be present: a family member, a stranger, or a coworker
 - Behaviors: making eye contact
 - Duration: 5 min vs. 30 min
 - Testable- Is the item on the list something that the person could try this week? For example, if the person listed “going back to school” as an item, it would be a good future exposure, but might be difficult to test this week. A more testable item might be something like, “calling a community college to ask about submitting an application.” Both items touch on the same fear of going back to school, but one is something they could do this week.
 - Variety- It is helpful for group members to complete exposures in a variety of situations. If they want to practice job interviews, it would be more helpful to practice with male and female interviewers than to only practice with male interviewers. Adding variety to the list allows the member to learn that they can do this exposure in lots of different contexts.

- Anxiety Scale
 - Members will rate each item on their hierarchy using the Anxiety Scale which goes from 0 (no anxiety at all) to 100 (terror/most anxiety I have ever felt).
 - Rating the items will help members place the items in order from easiest to hardest. The ratings also provide the member and the leaders with an indicator of “how bad” the group member expects this exposure to be. This prediction can then be tested during the exposure (i.e. were they as anxious as they thought they would, or was it as terrible as they predicted?).
- **VIDEO:** Leaders will play a video of a therapist and client role-playing how to build an avoidance list

Building the Avoidance List

- Group members are given a blank Avoidance List worksheet and are asked to list their own situations that they fear. Leaders will circulate around the room to help each member identify situations and rate the associated difficulty.
- Leaders encourage members to add job-related anxiety provoking situations to the list as well. This worksheet will serve as a menu of exposure exercises for future practice, both in and outside of session.
- One of the leaders will collect the forms and photocopy them once completed (returning the originals to the members) so as to have record. The lists should also be entered into the computer system when possible.

In-Session Exposure to Avoidance List Items

- Group members will complete in-session exposures to the anxiety triggers listed on their list.
- Example: If the hierarchy lists “going on a job interview” as a trigger, the exposure might be to do a 5 minute role-play of a job interview with the group leader playing the role of the employer.
- Group leaders should inform members of the following:
 - Group members may have a desire to avoid coming to the session or to self-medicate, but they should resist these temptations.
 - Exposure starts out graduated. Group members will be exposed to less difficult situations at first.
 - Group members and leaders discuss all exposure situations ahead of time.
 - Group members will be learning new coping skills as they participate in exposures.

INDIVIDUAL IN-SESSION EXPOSURE

Complete the first in-session exposure using the following guidelines. For the first in-session exposure, one group member will choose an anxiety trigger from their list and will complete the exposure process from start to finish in front of the group. This provides a model for how all future exposures will be conducted. It also allows the group members to view one member taking steps towards his/her practice goals, which can build motivation and group cohesion.

- **VIDEO:** Group leaders will play a video of an exposure example.

DETAILS FOR COUNSELORS

Choosing an Exposure Activity

- Preparation for an in-session exposure begins by selecting a situation of relevance for the targeted group member. The situation may be suggested by the member and may represent something that

he/she wishes to work on in general or an upcoming situation with which the member is concerned. However, exclusive reliance on the member in selecting situations may be risky. Members may avoid suggesting situations because they are afraid to attempt them or because they believe they will fail. They may also simply not think of a particular situation that might be beneficial to confront. Alternatively, they may select a situation that is too difficult to confront at that particular time. Situation selection is a negotiated process, and often begins with the group leader making a suggestion and taking feedback from the group member.

- It is helpful for group leaders to develop a list of potential exposure situations from which they can pull ideas. They may even want to list out a handful of situations that may be helpful for each member, based on that member's stated goals, fears, or other events the person has shared with the group.

Tip: It is important to inform group members up front that all members will most likely not have the chance to complete an exposure today. However, whomever does not have the chance today will be first in line for next session.

- It is imperative that selected situations reflect the member's goals. Because the class is time-limited, it is unreasonable to hope that all anxiety-provoking situations will be confronted.
- Once a situation that is consistent with the member's goals has been determined, the exposure can proceed. For a member's first in-session exposure, it is important to select a situation that the participant rates at approximately 30-50 on a 0-100 Anxiety Scale. This situation should be one that is doable in session and that the member is willing to do. Thereafter, the member should progress up the list so that his/her most feared situation may be confronted before the end of the group.
- After the first exposure, the group member can do exposures from anywhere on the list, meaning that he/she does not need to progress up the list gradually. They may do an exposure to a trigger that is a 30 on the anxiety scale the first week, an exposure to a trigger that is an 80 the second week, and an exposure to a trigger that is a 45 the third week. While we would not want the first exposure to be a 100 on the anxiety scale, we do not want to reinforce that exposure to anxiety provoking situations must be gradual as our goal is to instill the belief that the group members can cope with any anxiety provoking situation that comes their way. Also, in day to day life, anxiety provoking situations do not pop up gradually- there is a great deal of variety in regard to how anxiety provoking each day can be.
- Setting Up for the In-Session Exposure
 - No matter whether a situation is suggested by the group member or leaders, the specific nature of the situation must be discussed. For example, it may be necessary to temporarily rearrange the furnishings of the room, obtain props, assign roles to other group members, choose a conversation topic, etc. A particularly important part of preparation is the determination of the behavior of other class members. Group leaders and members will often assume roles and must understand how to behave. For instance, in the example of a person approaching coworkers in the cafeteria, group members assigned to take on the role of the coworkers should be instructed on whether to act friendly and warm, or disinterested and aloof.
 - Some in-session exposures may require special preparation on the part of the target group member or leaders. A member whose exposure situation involves public speaking may need to develop notes or handouts ahead of time, and group leaders may try to obtain a podium at which the person can stand while speaking. The person with a fear of eating in front of coworkers may need to bring food to the session. If a person has a fear of writing in front of others, group leaders may try to obtain some forms or paperwork the person could fill out in front of the group.

Testing Feared Outcomes and Violating Expectations

- Before an in-session exposure, the target group member is asked the “before-exposure” questions, which ask the member to explicitly state what he/she predicts will happen during the exposure. This prediction is the person’s feared outcome. The purpose of these questions is to aid the member in determining the specific prediction they are making about what will happen when they confront the anxiety trigger. The purpose of the exposure is then to test whether this prediction is accurate (i.e. the predicted outcome happens) or not (i.e. the predicted outcome does not happen).
- Common feared outcomes:
 - That the member will not be able to perform in the desired manner and that the other people will have a negative reaction to his/her performance.
 - That a specific symptom of anxiety will be present, for example, that he/she will blush or sweat profusely and that this will be visible to others.
 - Tip: If this symptom does not occur, the member may experience some anticipatory anxiety but may soon realize that the situation is well in hand, and anxiety may subside. Although this sounds like a successful outcome, it is not. Rather, the member may trivialize the experience, saying to himself/herself, “I did all right, but I didn’t sweat. If I did sweat, it would have been terrible.” In this particular case, we have found it useful to elicit the specific symptom of anxiety feared by the member, for example, having the member wear a wool sweater, drink hot tea, spray water on their face, or engage in a brief period of exercise immediately before the in-session exposure.
 - That a specific anxiety-provoking event may occur during a situation.
 - Tip: If that event does not occur, the situation may lose its exposure value. For example, someone who is afraid of job interviews might believe he/she will perform fine if he/she is not asked to speak about his/her strengths, at which point he/she is confident he/she will freeze and his/her mind will go blank. As such, an in-session exposure simulating a job interview in which the person is not asked about his/her strengths may evoke little anxiety and may be of little benefit to the person. As a result, it may be helpful to instruct the person who is playing the interviewer to ask, specifically, about the group member’s strengths so that the member has the opportunity to face this situation.
- Creating new learning and new associations:
 - During exposure, the group member is like a scientist who is completing an experiment to see if their prediction is true. For example, a group member might predict that if he gives a 5 minute speech to the class, he will freeze and stutter, which will cause him to not be able to finish his train of thought. In this case, the exposure is designed to test out whether this prediction will actually occur. Thus, during the exposure, the group member must attempt to give a speech that is 5 minutes or longer and he is testing out whether he will freeze and stutter to such a large degree that he is unable to finish his train of thought.
 - After the exposure is complete is when the most pivotal new learning takes place. Perhaps the group member paused for a few seconds during the speech, and/or stuttered once or twice, but was still able to finish his train of thought. His predicted outcome did not come true! He experienced an entirely different outcome than expected! The group leader should help the member notice that the actual outcome was different than his predicted outcome. This new experience of giving a speech and experiencing a positive outcome is a new association with public speaking. Meaning, the group member had a

negative association with public speaking in the past, but now he has at least one experience of a positive association with public speaking. The more the member practices public speaking, the more new associations/experiences he will have and hopefully the new positive associations will become stronger than the past negative associations.

- The group leader should emphasize this new learning as much as possible. The goal of the exposure is not to do it perfectly, or to experience no anxiety. The goal is to create this new learning.

Before-Exposure Thought Challenging Exercises

- Thought challenging activities take place before and after each in-session exposure.
- Before an In-Session Exposure
 - The goals of thought challenging activities prior to in-session exposures is for the member to gain awareness of his/her thoughts and predictions, to develop alternative ways of viewing the situation, to test whether these thoughts and predictions are true, and to develop an approach to coping with negative thinking and the in-session exposure.
 - People generally experience a chain of many anxious thoughts when they enter an anxiety provoking situation. It is most helpful to test the thought/prediction that can be observed during the exposure.
 - Example of a Chain of Anxious Thoughts:
 She will be nervous speaking to a supervisor →
 The supervisor will know she is nervous →
 The supervisor will think badly of her →
 The supervisor will find reasons to fire her →
 She will lose her job →
 She will not be able to provide for her family.
- In this situation, it is most helpful to test the predictions that can be observed, which are that they will know she is nervous, they will think badly of her, and that they will not want to be around her. It is not helpful to test whether she will be nervous, because we already know that she will. She is testing whether feeling nervous will predict rejection. It is also not helpful to test the prediction that she will always be alone, as that is not possible to test in one day.

Setting Behavioral Goals

- The final step in preparation for in-session exposures is the definition of successful performance by the target member. An attempt is made to agree on a level of performance that the member may find acceptable but that is not tainted by perfectionistic standards or unrealistic expectations.
- Goals should be realistic and doable. Many members may desire to perform “perfectly” (i.e. not stumble over any words, not tremble or shake when speaking, not be rejected when asking someone on a date). However, in each of these examples, the members set unrealistic standards for themselves (or portray their belief that others hold extreme standards for them), and when they are unable to reach these standards, they will see themselves as having failed, proved their incompetence, humiliated themselves, and so on. This process of unrealistic goal setting and harsh self-criticism may be central to members’ failures in their previous self-exposure efforts.
- Goals should be stated in terms of concrete and specific events that can easily be monitored by the member, meaning that the member can control whether the goal is achieved or not and the member can actually do the goal within the timeframe of the exposure (i.e. making eye contact, speaking at a reasonable volume).

- The member's goal needs to be stated in terms of his/her own behavior, rather than the behavior of another person or the outcome of the situation, because we do not have control over other people's behavior. Thus, in an exposure where a person is exposing themselves to asking someone to join them for lunch, the goal should not be that the other person accepts the lunch invitation. There are many reasons why the person may not accept (i.e. they are busy), thus the goal should simply be that the group member asks them to lunch.
- Goals should be based on behavior, not emotions. Many members may set a goal that they will "not be anxious." However, we do not have control over whether we are anxious or not. We also know that during the first few exposures, the member will likely be anxious. A more realistic goal is that the member will complete the exposure whether they are anxious or not.
- RULE: The goal is to do what we're afraid of, not to do it perfectly. DOING is the goal. Have the member evaluate if they did it, not how it went.
- Examples of goals for in-session exposures include the following:
 - Share three pieces of information about yourself with a person you are meeting for the first time.
 - Ask five questions of someone you would like to know better.
 - Answer seven questions from the audience on the topic of your presentation.
 - Speak on a prearranged topic for six minutes.
 - Take five bites of food while conversing with someone at lunch.
 - Make small talk for five minutes with a supervisor at work.
 - Look up from your notes and make eye contact with your audience on five different occasions during your presentation.
- Two additional goals are added by the group leaders as a matter of standard practice:
 - Hang in there despite your anxiety.
 - Use your thought challenging skills.

Goals of Engaging Group Members in In-Session Exposures

When designing in-session exposures for group members, it may be helpful to keep in mind the following goals:

- Expose the member to an agreed upon dose of his/her anxiety experience.
- Help the member remain in the situation and continue performing despite high anxiety.
- Elicit relevant predictions for use during thought restructuring/new learning periods.
- Give the member an opportunity to practice challenging their thoughts while in a state of arousal.

It is of the utmost important to remember that designing in-session exposures may require creativity, and above all, the situations must be relevant to the member and reflect his/her goals.

First Exposures

- Group members may be extremely anxious and self-focused at the beginning of Session 3, thus the success of the very first list based in-session exposure may have a significant impact on the

future participation of the members. Therefore, we encourage group leaders to carefully consider which group member will be selected and to what situation he/she will be exposed.

- The selected member should be one who the group leaders believe will be able to handle the in-session exposure successfully. Also, it is probably wise to select someone who is a good “coping model,” that is, the person who is neither the least or the most impaired. Picking the least impaired member may set the bar too high for ones to follow, and picking the most impaired may increase the likelihood of an unsuccessful exposure.
- Explain that every group member will complete an in-session exposure at some point.
- Tip: If an exposure is short (i.e. 3-5 minutes), there may be time for the target member to repeat the exposure. Repeating an exposure exercise is helpful for creating new learning. Repeating an activity allows the target group member multiple chances to test whether their predicted outcome will occur or not. Testing the outcome multiple times aids the member in determining more realistic odds of whether the feared outcome will happen or not. If a member only practices the exposure once, they may believe that the only reason the feared outcome did not occur was because “they got lucky” or because of some specific circumstance.

Anxiety Level Recording

- Group members should be asked to provide an anxiety level (0-100) rating every so often during an in-session exposure. This is easily achieved by having a group leader (or another group member) simply ask for a 0-100 rating at approximately every 60 seconds or at significant times that the leader wants to document a noticeable change in anxiety levels during the exposure. A less invasive way to prompt for anxiety ratings is to hold up a visual sign that asks for a rating. Ideally, four to seven anxiety ratings will be obtained by the end of the exposure.
- The anxiety ratings are extremely useful during the new learning period that follows the in-session exposure as they provide concrete data that shows the actual pattern of the person’s anxiety. For example, the member may predict that their anxiety will continue to increase throughout the exposure, however, the actual data may show that their anxiety started high and then slowly decreased throughout the exposure.
- Asking for anxiety ratings may seem unnatural, interrupt the flow of the exposure, or even cause the member to lose his/her train of thought. It is important to be mindful of this, but also to remember that usually, the benefits of obtaining the anxiety outweigh the costs.

Exposure versus Social Skills Training

- In-session exposures are not primarily intended to teach specific behavioral skills, as in social skills training. Although there is undoubtedly some benefit that arises for group members in terms of skill acquisition, in-session exposures do not provide the repeated rehearsals that are the hallmark of social skills training, nor is there a systematic effort to provide specific feedback about the micro-level behaviors that are the focus of social skills training. Throughout the in-session exposure and its associated activities, the focus is on the physiological and subjective components of the anxiety response, and the in-session exposure is used primarily as a tool for providing affectively compelling information to the member that may result in changes in thoughts, affect, and behaviors. Many people with social anxiety may possess adequate behavioral skills but are inhibited by their maladaptive belief systems; therefore, a social skills training approach is unnecessary. Conversely, a member who carries on a delightful conversation with a role player but never once makes eye contact might benefit from feedback about this. This feedback can then be integrated into future exposures, when an additional goal might be to maintain eye contact over the course of the conversation.

- A more significant amount of social skills training may be required when the exposure exercises focus on work-related situations. Group leaders and group members may offer specific suggestions for improving responses to mock job interview questions, introducing oneself to a prospective employer, handling a conflict with the boss at work, etc. It is important for the group leader to be mindful of other vocational service programming that may also focus in this area. It is critical to avoid sending mixed messages to group members by suggesting work related social behaviors that are markedly different than those provided at the vocational service center.
- Some social skills training opportunities related to the vocational situation include:
 - Coping with negative feedback about job performance
 - Coping with comments that are perceived as disrespectful
 - Asking for assistance from a supervisor or co-workers
 - How to share personal strengths and shortcomings
 - How to greet a prospective employer
 - How to dress for a job interview/job
 - How to discuss previous jobs in a constructive way
 - How to collaborate with co-workers
 - Avoiding the use of drugs and alcohol at work
 - Appropriate eye-contact/body language

INDIVIDUAL IN-SESSION EXPOSURE

COMPLETE THE EXPOSURE EXERCISE

- Complete the agreed upon exposure exercise following the steps outlined above. A detailed example of a full exposure exercise is below.
 - Make sure to:
 - Complete “Before exposure” section of Exposure worksheet
 - Before Exposure:
 1. Anxiety Provoking Situation:
 2. What are your behavioral/coping goals?
 3. What is your anxiety level (0-100)?
 - Determine what the group member is worried will happen (predicted outcome)
 - Set specific behavioral goals
 - Set-up any necessary props or role-plays for the exposure, including other group members who will participate
 - Collect anxiety ratings throughout the exposure (at least pre, mid, and post)
 - Reinforce effort but do not reassure the patient that everything will be ok

PROCESSING AN EXPOSURE

Discuss New Learning

- After the completion of an in-session exposure, the group member should consolidate what they have learned during the exposure.
- Assessment of Goal Attainment

- To help the member stay focused on attainment of adaptive goals, group leaders should ask, “Did you accomplish your goals?” rather than more general questions such as, “How did you do?” The member may equivocate or state that he/she failed because he/she was anxious during the in-session exposure. Group leaders should then restate the agreed-on goals and evaluate whether or not these goals were met, regardless of the member’s state of arousal. Reinforce the notion that the target member was able to behave in a functional manner despite the presence of anxiety.
- Review the Actual Outcome versus the Predicted Outcome (were they the same or different?)
 - Ask the member what actually happened during the exercise. Did the thing they were worried about happening actually occur or not? If not, ask what they have learned by completing their goals? If the feared outcome did occur (i.e. they froze when giving a speech), ask how they coped? Were they able to get eventually start speaking again? Did they get through it without a disaster occurring?
 - For example, a group leader might ask, “Brian, you were worried that you will look stupid and everyone would laugh at you. What actually happened? Did the audience laugh at you?” After the member responds, it is useful to ask the role player(s) to weigh in on the matter (e.g., “Susan, did Brian look stupid to you?”). Then the reactions of the other group members can be surveyed. This order of questioning may be important, because members who are upset with their performances may be reluctant to contradict group leaders, other group members, or the role player(s) because of their social anxiety or a desire to just get the whole thing over with. Additionally, hearing the specifics of the member’s own reaction lets the others provide more specific feedback (especially if the thought was relatively specific, e.g., “I will mumble.”). Questioning thoughts and predictions one by one is much superior to asking in a more general way whether any of the member’s anxious thoughts turned out to be true.
- Ask the “After Exposure” questions on the Exposure worksheet, which are a list of questions for evaluating the evidence after completion of in-session exposures:
 - After Exposure:
 1. What actually happened?
 2. Did you accomplish your behavioral goal(s)? Yes or no?
 3. What was your maximum anxiety level (0-100)?
 4. What did you learn?
 5. Does anyone have any constructive feedback?
- Examine the Pattern of Anxiety Ratings
 - The primary goal is to discuss with members what happened to their anxiety when they experienced certain anxious thoughts, when they used their helpful responses or alternative coping statements, or when certain behavioral events occurred during the in-session exposure. This step is very important and should be included in the processing of most in-session exposures. Anxiety ratings may fall into a number of different patterns (see the next section), but most members will reveal an uneven pattern in which anxiety moves up and down over the course of the in-session exposure.
- POSSIBLE PATTERNS OF ANXIETY RATINGS
 - Anxiety ratings can take any possible pattern.
 - Ratings may continually go up and down (i.e. spike) because the member is continuously trying out more difficult behaviors.

- Ratings may also spike initially, when the member first tries a new behavior, and may eventually begin to come down as the member learns that the feared outcome has not happened.
- Ratings may remain high throughout the exposure. If anxiety ratings remain high, it may be a sign that the member is experiencing many anxious thoughts and is not actively challenging them. It may also simply mean that the member's body has remained aroused. It is ok if anxiety remains high, as long as the member is completing their behavioral goals and is actively assessing whether their feared outcome has occurred.
- Ratings may remain low throughout the exposure. If anxiety ratings never spike, it may mean that the exposure was not difficult enough and the next exposure should incorporate more difficult behavioral goals, or it may mean that the member was engaging in some avoidance behaviors throughout the exposure in an effort to keep their anxiety down. For example, the member may have been reassuring themselves in their mind that "it will all be over in five minutes," or they may have been avoiding eye contact with the other person so that they could avoid seeing the person's facial expression (i.e. avoiding seeing if the person seemed disinterested or rejecting in some way). Using safety signals like reassurance or avoidance during the exposure will block the member from learning whether their feared outcome will occur or not and will block their success in learning that they can complete their goals.
- Final Summary
 - Many things happen in a brief period before, during, and after an in-session exposure, and the member may come away from it with his or her head spinning. Similarly, it is possible that the member may have failed to understand or accept the lessons of an in-session exposure. It can be helpful for the member to summarize what he/she learned from the in-session exposure so that they can more easily apply this new learning to the next exposure.

FACILITATING AN EXPOSURE START TO FINISH

Sequence for Exposure Exercises

- Decide with the group member what the exposure exercise will be.
- Set specific behavioral goals.
- Ask the before-exposure questions and challenge the prediction (i.e. what is the anxiety provoking situation? What are your behavioral/coping goals? What is your anxiety level (0-100)?)
- Conduct the exposure exercise.
- Collect anxiety ratings during the exposure exercise.
- Reinforce the group member's effort during and after the exposure.
- Review the anxiety ratings with the group member.
- Review the group member's behavioral goals and whether the member completed them or not.
- Ask the after-exposure questions, review what actually happened during the exposure. Did what they worried would happen actually occur or not?
- Ask if the member believes the Helpful Response more, less, or the same amount as when they first began the exercise.

- Reinforce any new learning that has taken place.

Step by Step Example of an Exposure:

- Decide with the group member what the exposure exercise will be.
 - The member, George, has listed “giving a speech in front of multiple people” as a trigger on his list. Discuss with George whether he is willing to try giving a speech on a topic of his choice in front of the group for 5 minutes.
- Set specific behavioral goals.
 - Determine the goals with George. His goals might be to 1) continue speaking for 5 minutes, 2) make eye contact with at least 3 group members, 3) not use note cards
- Ask the group member what he/she is worried will happen (aside from being distressed)
 - Ask George what he is most afraid might happen while giving the speech. Help him determine what his specific prediction is. He may say a specific prediction right away, like, “I think I will freeze and not be able to speak after the first minute.” This is a very concrete and testable prediction. If George gives a vague prediction, like, “I predict I will be nervous,” help George to clarify why he would be nervous. Ask a follow up question like, “Why do you think you will be nervous, what do you think might happen? What is it about giving a speech that seems dangerous/scary?”
- Ask the before-exposure questions on the Exposure worksheet and challenge the prediction (i.e. what are the odds? How do you know that will happen? Would you be able to cope if it did happen?)
 - Ask George, what are the odds that you will freeze during the speech? How do you know you will freeze? Have you ever frozen during a speech before? If so, how many times? If you did freeze, how would you cope with it?
- Help the group member set a Helpful Response statement.
 - After asking George the challenging your thoughts questions, summarize his answers to the questions into a helpful response. If George has never frozen while giving a speech before, his helpful response might be something like, “I don’t have any evidence that I will freeze because I have never frozen before and have not given a speech in many years. If I did freeze, I could cope with it by waiting for the anxiety to pass before continuing the speech.”
- Conduct the exposure exercise.
 - Ask the group members to play the roles of audience members. You and George can decide whether they will play the role of positive audience members (i.e. smiling at George and nodding their head in approval) or neutral audience members (i.e. keeping a straight face, not giving any feedback to George). Ask George to stand in the front of the classroom and give a speech on a topic of his choice. Tell him that you will keep track of time and will notify him when the 5 minutes are up.
- Collect anxiety ratings during the exposure exercise.
 - Ask George what his anxiety rating is before the exposure starts (this is his pre rating). At several points during the speech (maybe every 60 seconds) ask George for his anxiety rating. Ask George for his anxiety ratings again at the end of the exposure (this is his post rating) and a few minutes after the exposure has ended. Keep a record of these ratings.
- Reinforce the group member’s effort during and after the exposure.

- Reinforce George for trying something new and for completing his behavioral goals. Avoid reassuring George that everything will be ok. For example, it would be helpful to say, “You’re really pushing yourself, great work!” but would be less helpful to say, “Nothing bad will happen, you will be fine.”
- Review the anxiety ratings with the group member.
 - Go over the record of George’s anxiety ratings with him. Help him to see any differences between his predicted anxiety level and his actual anxiety level. For example, let’s say George predicted that his anxiety would be high the whole time, yet his ratings show that his anxiety was high at pre but then began to go down towards the halfway mark and were fairly low by the end. Help George to learn that while his anxiety was high at first, it actually went down the longer he stuck with the exposure.
- Review the group member’s behavioral goals and whether the member completed them or not.
 - Ask George if he completed his goals. If he completed the goal of speaking for 5 minutes, ask him what he learned from the experience. He may have learned that he can speak for longer than he thought he could. If George did not complete his goal of making eye contact with 3 group members, ask him what got in the way. It is likely that an anxious thought came up, such as, “If I make eye contact, I will be more likely to freeze.” Use the challenging questions to help George to evaluate this thought and the likelihood that it will come true. Any goals that were not completed should be goals during the next exposure. We do not want to reinforce anyone for avoiding a goal.
- Use the After-Exposure questions on the Exposure Worksheet to review what actually happened during the exposure. Did the feared outcome occur or not?
 - Ask George if what he was worried would happen actually happened. Did he freeze? If not, ask George why he thinks it did not come true. Ask what he thinks would happen if he gave another speech in the future. Ask George what he has learned from this experience. Reinforce George for any attempts to think more objectively about his anxiety trigger (in this case public speaking). If George says, “Yes, my feared outcome did come true, I was anxious.” Remind George that the outcome he was testing was whether he would freeze, not whether he would be anxious.” If George’s feared outcome did come true and he did freeze, ask him how he coped. Sometimes the thing a person is worried about happening does actually occur, but it is often not as big of a “disaster” as the group member predicts it will be. Maybe he froze for 15 seconds but then continued speaking and finished the speech. Reinforce him for using coping skills to get through the tough moment!
- Ask if the member believes the Helpful Response more, less, or the same amount as when they first began the exercise.
 - Does George believe his helpful response that “I don’t have any evidence that I will freeze because I have never frozen before and have not given a speech in many years. If I did freeze, I could cope with it by waiting for the anxiety to pass before continuing the speech” more or less now?
- Continue to reinforce any new learning that has taken place.
 - The next time George is unsure about completing an exposure, remind him of this exposure and how his predicted outcome did not come true. Remind him of how he used

his coping skills to complete his behavioral goals. Give praise any time a group member tries something new and pushes his or herself to test out their predicted outcome.

Group Involvement in Thought Challenging

- Increasing the involvement of all group members will result in additional input that the target member must consider during cognitive restructuring before in-session exposures and additional feedback about his/her performance afterward. Members with social anxiety can often view other members' thoughts more helpfully than they their own, thus, members will become potent agents of thought challenging for their peers. Furthermore, their input is less likely to be discounted by the target member than input from the group leaders and all group members will benefit from involvement in the work of other members. For all of these reasons, group leaders should be continuously aware of the need to involve members in as many aspects of the group as possible.

Group leaders should:

- 👍 Encourage group bonding and cohesion.
- 👍 Involve group members in identifying anxious thoughts
- 👍 Recognize and support the members' cultural beliefs.

SETTING EXPOSURE-BASED PRACTICE GOALS

Practice Goal Procedures:

- Although specific assignments are given to each member each week, it is also important to encourage members to adopt a PRACTICE GOAL ATTITUDE. That is, they will make the most of treatment if they look for every opportunity to practice their skills and try to do something each and every day, large or small, to confront their anxiety. To underscore this point, we tell our members they will benefit most from DOING IT DAILY.
- Examples of “doing it daily” include:
 - Say hello and one other thing to a person you do not normally speak with.
 - Make a phone call that you would rather put off because you are anxious about it.
 - Give someone a compliment when you normally would not say anything.
 - Speak up one extra time in a group of people or at a meeting.
 - Ask someone a question that will help you get to know the person a little better.
 - Make an effort to do some small talk when others may be observing, such as pouring someone's coffee, putting change in a vending machine, unlocking a door, driving with someone in the car, writing a check rather than paying cash, and so forth.
- At the end of each session, a practice goal assignment for the coming week is discussed with each member. These assignments are negotiated with, rather than imposed on, the group member, and the member's agreement is considered a necessary part of the negotiation process. The member will typically complete a homework assignment based on whatever it is that he/she has done in his/her most recent in-session exposure. He/she should repeat this exposure as many times during the coming week as seems possible or practical.
- Specific goals for each practice goal assignment are also discussed and agreed on in the same manner and described for in-session exposures. In early sessions, the group leaders should

propose practice goal assignments and negotiate their exact nature with each member. In later sessions, group leaders should have proposals for possible practice goal assignments for each member in mind but should be able to begin the discussion of the practice goal by asking, “What do you think would be a good idea for you to work on this week for a practice goal?” Members who have embraced the treatment will often come up with assignments that are more challenging, creative, or personally meaningful than those envisioned by the group leaders.

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Prepare a 3 min talk about a new skill that one wants to learn (job related)
2. Complete the Challenging Anxious Thoughts worksheet
 - Members choose at least one anxiety provoking situation from the self-monitoring sheet and the associated anxious thoughts
 - For each anxious thought, members ask themselves each of the challenging questions and write the answers
 - Members develop an effective helpful response based off of the answers to the challenging questions
3. Choose an exposure to complete multiple times this week
4. Complete the Exposure Worksheet
 - Briefly describe the anxiety provoking situation/exposure exercise and the behavioral goals chosen
 - Write down the anxious thoughts that come up when thinking about doing the exposure
 - Answer the “Before exposure” questions regarding the predicted outcome
 - Challenge anxious thoughts and create a helpful response
 - Record Anxiety Ratings during and/or after the exposure
 - Answer the “After exposure” questions regarding the actual outcome and the similarities and differences between the actual outcome and the predicted outcome
5. Online Video Exposure Practice: Let’s Practice-Video Exposure 3
6. Complete a job-related video practice (3x per week)
7. Share video with group
8. Group members encouraged to provide constructive feedback on shared videos

END OF SESSION 3

SESSION 4

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (20 minutes)

Group Ice-Breaker- Present on a new job related skill (20 minutes)

Psychoeducation- Self-Defeating Behavior at Work (20 minutes)

Individual In-Session Exposures (45 minutes)

Practice Goal/Homework (15 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one group member to share their homework with the rest of the group. Choosing one group member (versus calling on all group members) reduces the time spent on homework review, while still reinforcing the importance of homework completion.
- Group leaders use the Homework Question Guide to facilitate the homework review
- The group member will share an anxiety provoking situation that occurred this week and the 3 components of anxiety (physical sensations, thoughts, behaviors) that occurred.
 - What was your behavioral goal for homework?
 - Reinforce their effort/validate difficulty of doing homework.
 - What were you anxious about happening?
 - What were they testing?
 - If completed, what did you learn?
 - What actually occurred?
 - If feared outcome did not occur, what does that suggest about predictions/anxious thoughts?
 - If not completed, what were they worried about happening?
- Answer any questions that group members have about the homework. Also, as this is a new skill, some group members may have experienced difficulty identifying each of the 3 components. Provide suggestions/guidance when necessary.

Tip: As group members discuss their homework experiences, it can be useful to ask the group if other members experienced similar experiences. Doing so will serve to capture themes, and will also build cohesion among group members.

GROUP ICE-BREAKER- A New Job Related Skill

- One group leader will role-play presenting a 3 min speech about a new job-related skill that they would like to learn and how this skill will benefit them.
- One group member will volunteer (or be chosen) to present a 3 minute speech on a new job-related skill that they would like to learn. Group leaders ask the group member to stand up in front of the group during their speech.
 - Each session a different group member will complete an exposure in front of the group so that by the end of treatment, each member has had the opportunity to present once.
- Group leader will open the Before and After Ice-Breaker Worksheet and ask the group member the before-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - Aside from being distressed, what are you worried will happen?
 - What are your behavioral goals?
- After the volunteer completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - What actually happened?

- What did you learn?
- Break remaining group members into pairs and ask them to each give a 3 minute speech to their partner. If there is an odd number of group members left, one person can pair with a group leader.

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Self-Defeating Behavior at Work

- Often times, employees with social anxiety disorder find that their thoughts and behaviors are triggered by events that happen at work. Most often, these triggers include:
 - perceived criticism
 - perceived unfair treatment
 - perceived disrespect
- When triggered, that person may find themselves behaving in unproductive ways such as becoming angry and arguing or walking out on a job. The goal of this discussion is to explore more productive ways of coping with such triggers and to discuss appropriate thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors.
- Group leaders introduce the purpose of the activity then ask group members the following two questions:
 - “How might you respond to criticism, unfair treatment, or disrespect when you are feeling your worst at work?”
 - “How might you respond to criticism, unfair treatment, or disrespect when you are feeling your best at work?”
- Open the Strategies for Behaving at Work worksheet. Leaders solicit 4 or 5 examples and place them into one of three categories: Emotional Aggressive, Strategic, and Passive Avoidant.
- Explain that Emotional Aggressive means doing things like getting confrontational or yelling; Passive Avoidant means doing things like walking away angry; and Strategic means doing things like asking questions and discussing the situation calmly. Leaders stress that Strategic behavior is the best route to take.
- Tip: Group leaders should also give examples of when they have acted strategically in employment situations if unsuitable examples are provided by the group members.
- Ask members, “How have these behaviors worked out for you?”
- Discuss the specific benefits of behaving strategically on the job.
- Tell members, “Here is a strategy you can use to cope with times when you are disrespected, criticized, or treated unfairly. This is much better than avoiding or lashing out or being aggressive.”

INDIVIDUAL IN-SESSION EXPOSURE

- Conduct in-session exposures using the guidelines described in Session 3.
- Ensure that group members that did not have the opportunity to complete an exposure in front of the group during the previous session are the first to complete an exposure this session.

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Prepare a 3 minute talk on how to respond to criticism at work
2. Choose an exposure to complete 3 times this week
3. Complete the Exposure Worksheet
 - a. Briefly describe the anxiety provoking situation/exposure exercise and the behavioral goals chosen
 - b. Write down the anxious thoughts that come up when thinking about doing the exposure

- c. Answer the “Before exposure” questions regarding the predicted outcome
 - d. Challenge anxious thoughts and create a helpful response
 - e. Record Anxiety Ratings during and/or after the exposure
 - f. Answer the “After exposure” questions regarding the actual outcome and the similarities and differences between the actual outcome and the predicted outcome
4. Online Video Exposure Practice: Let’s Practice-Video Exposure 4
 5. Complete a job-related video exposure practice (3x per week)
 6. Share video with group
 7. Group members encouraged to provide constructive feedback on shared videos

END OF SESSION 4

SESSION 5

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (20 minutes)

Group Ice-breaker- Respond to Critical Feedback at Work (20 minutes)

Psychoeducation- Asking for Help Finding a Job (20 minutes)

Individual In-Session Exposures (45 minutes)

Practice Goal/Homework (15 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one new group member (not a group member who has previously shared homework) to share their exposure worksheet and experiences with the rest of the group. (Do not review the speech preparation homework and video exposure here).
- Group leaders use the Homework Question Guide to facilitate the homework review
- The group member will share the exposure that they set for the week, their initial anxious thoughts and feared outcomes, the answers to the challenging questions, the effective helpful response that they developed.
 - What was your behavioral goal for homework?
 - Reinforce their effort/validate difficulty of doing homework.
 - What were you anxious about happening?
 - What were they testing?
 - If completed, what did you learn?
 - What actually occurred?
 - If feared outcome did not occur, what does that suggest about predictions/anxious thoughts?
 - If not completed, what were they worried about happening?
- Ask all group members to briefly share whether they completed their exposure assignment and whether their feared outcome occurred or not.
- Answer any questions group members have about the homework.

GROUP ICE-BREAKER- How to Respond to Critical Feedback at Work

- Group leaders will role play a mock situation where an employee is given critical feedback at work.
- Group leaders facilitate a brief discussion about what the group members prepared for responses to critical feedback
- One group member will volunteer (or be chosen) to pair with the group leader during the exposure. The group leader will play the role of the employer from the vignette. The group member will be asked to respond to the group leader's critical feedback as if they were the employee in the vignette. Group leaders ask the group member to stand up in front of the group during their speech.
- Group leader will open the Before and After Ice-Breaker Worksheet and ask the group member the before-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - Aside from being distressed, what are you worried will happen?
 - What are your behavioral goals?
- After the volunteer completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:

- What actually happened?
- What did you learn?
- Break remaining group members into pairs and ask them to each play the role of the employer and the employee from the vignette. Thus, each group member will complete an exposure where they respond to the critical feedback. If there is an odd number of group members left, one person can pair with a group leader.

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Asking for Help Finding a Job

- Many people with Social Anxiety Disorder find it difficult to ask others for help finding a job. In terms of employment, this puts a potential employee at a disadvantage for several reasons. By not asking for help, a person limits their social networking opportunities, excludes potential job references, may not learn of open positions, and misses out on learning “inside” information about positions they are applying for.
- **EXERCISE:**
 - Create a Pros and Cons of Asking for Help List. Group leaders open the link to the following worksheet:

Pros of Asking for Help	Cons of Asking for Help

- Group leaders ask group members to fill in each box with ideas. Once each column is full, leaders ask members which of these options seems most effective and productive for getting ahead in the work place. It will become clear that asking for help will aid in keeping members gainfully employed.
- Next, ask the group, “Has anybody ever helped somebody else get a job before?” More than likely, at least one person will raise his or her hand. Ask, “How did it feel?” The group member will likely describe how good it felt to have helped another person gain employment. The group leader can then ask, “How do you think somebody else would feel if they helped you get a job?”
- This exercise helps demonstrate that most of the time, when one person helps another to gain employment, they feel good about having helped rather than burdened by having been asked for help.
- Brainstorm a list of people they could ask for help in finding a job
- Open list of tips for asking for help
- Leaders role-play asking one another for help finding a job
- Asking for Help Conga Line: Instruct group members to form two, parallel lines, where group members are paired facing one another. Ask them to role-play asking each other for help finding a job, by rotating down the line. Leaders will notify members as to when they need to ask for help from the next group member down the line.

Tip: One way to make asking for help easier is by showing group members how to offer something positive to say. For example, a group member asks his neighbor for help getting an interview at the same fast food restaurant where he works. He says, “Jim, I am applying for a job on the food line at your restaurant this week. Would you mind putting in a good word for me there? I know I can do a good job. I’m a fast worker, and as a cashier, I know you could use somebody who can get the burgers to you quickly.”

Tip: Some people with social anxiety appear to follow the belief that they “must stand on their own two feet” and therefore are reluctant to ask for help from others. However, for some socially anxious people this belief can serve as an “excuse” to avoid asking others for help. Group leaders may wish to discuss this issue briefly if a member rejects the idea of seeking help from others as a strategy for finding work.

INDIVIDUAL IN-SESSION EXPOSURE

- Conduct in-session exposures using the guidelines described in Session 3.
- Ensure that group members that did not have the opportunity to complete an exposure in front of the group during the previous session are the first to complete an exposure this session.

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Review resume and prepare for a 3 minute job interview
2. Complete exposure 3 times this week
3. Complete Exposure Worksheet
 - Briefly describe the anxiety provoking situation/exposure exercise and the behavioral goals chosen
 - Write down the anxious thoughts that come up when thinking about doing the exposure
 - Answer the before-exposure questions regarding the feared outcome
 - Challenge anxious thoughts and create a helpful response
 - Record Anxiety Ratings during and/or after the exposure
 - Answer the after-exposure questions regarding the actual outcome and the similarities and differences between the actual outcome and the feared outcome
4. Online Video Exposure Practice: Let’s Practice-Video Exposure 5
5. Complete a job-related video practice (3x per week)
6. Share video with group
7. Group members encouraged to provide constructive feedback on shared videos

END OF SESSION 5

SESSION 6

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (20 minutes)

Group Ice-Breaker- Impromptu Speeches (20 minutes)

Psychoeducation- Recognizing Your Strengths (20 minutes)

Individual In-Session Exposure (45 minutes)

Practice Goal/Homework (15 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one new group member (not a group member who has previously shared homework) to share their exposure worksheet and experiences with the rest of the group. (Do not review resume and job interview preparation homework and video exposures here).
- Group leaders use the Homework Question Guide to facilitate the homework review
- The group member will share the exposure that they set for the week, their initial anxious thoughts and feared outcomes, the answers to the challenging questions, the effective helpful response that they developed.
 - What was your behavioral goal for homework?
 - Reinforce their effort/validate difficulty of doing homework.
 - What were you anxious about happening?
 - What were they testing?
 - If completed, what did you learn?
 - What actually occurred?
 - If feared outcome did not occur, what does that suggest about predictions/anxious thoughts?
 - If not completed, what were they worried about happening?
- Ask all group members to briefly share whether they completed their exposure assignment and whether their feared outcome occurred or not.
- Answer any questions group members have about the homework.

GROUP ICE-BREAKER- Mock Job Interview

- Break group members into dyads and ask one member to play the role of the interviewer and one to play the role of the person being interviewed.
- Tell members that they will be completing an exposure where they will have to take turns interviewing each other for a job.
- Group leader will open the Before and After Ice-Breaker Worksheet and ask the group member the before-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - Aside from being distressed, what are you worried will happen?
 - What are your behavioral goals?
- For 3 minutes, the first group member in each dyad will interview their partner.
- After 3 minutes, the second member of each dyad will interview their partner
- After the volunteer completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - What actually happened?
 - What did you learn?

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Recognizing and Describing Your Strengths

- State that the purpose of the activity is to address the interview question: “Can you tell me about your strengths and weaknesses?” Leaders explain that we have found that persons with social anxiety often have difficulty with this request. Leaders should also stress that answering this question is a necessary skill to have for completing successful interviews and resumes. It can be very difficult for a person with Social Anxiety Disorder to identify personal strengths, let alone when in an anxiety-provoking situation. Therefore, a special effort to prepare for this question, and to prepare group members to highlight their strengths overall in an interview and on job applications, is a necessary part of this group.
- Leaders begin by passing out strengths list to each member with strengths written on them.
- Members are then asked to pick three strengths that they possess. Members share their selected strengths with the group and explain why they believe these may be true about them.
- This exercise not only provides a chance for members to recognize their strengths but it also serves as a good in-session exposure for many members.
- Next, weaknesses are discussed by opening the link to the “How to Discuss Weaknesses” worksheet.
- Leaders model how weaknesses can be appropriately discussed in a job interview. Leaders should remember that the main focus of this psychoeducational topic is on strengths so it is best to spend less time on the weakness component.
- Group leaders role-play modeling how to present three strengths and one weakness to a potential employer.

Tip: Leaders should role play a *realistic* potential job for the members in this section.

- Group members break into pairs and each role-play stating three strengths and one weakness to a potential employer.

INDIVIDUAL IN-SESSION EXPOSURE

- Conduct in-session exposures using the guidelines described in Session 3.
- Ensure that group members that did not have the opportunity to complete an exposure in front of the group during the previous session are the first to complete an exposure this session.

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Prepare for a speech explaining your biggest strength and biggest weakness at work
2. Choose an exposure to complete 3 times this week
3. Complete the Exposure Worksheet
 - Briefly describe the anxiety provoking situation/exposure exercise and the behavioral goals chosen
 - Write down the anxious thoughts that come up when thinking about doing the exposure
 - Answer the before-exposure questions regarding the feared outcome
 - Challenge anxious thoughts and create a helpful response
 - Record Anxiety Ratings during and/or after the exposure
 - Answer the after-exposure questions regarding the actual outcome and the similarities and differences between the actual outcome and the feared outcome
4. Online Video Exposure Practice: Let’s Practice-Video Exposure 6
5. Complete a job-related video practice (3x per week)

6. Share video with group
7. Group members are encouraged to provide constructive feedback on shared videos

END OF SESSION 6

SESSION 7

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (20 minutes)

Group Ice-Breaker- Biggest Strength and Weakness at Work (20 minutes)

Psychoeducation- Speaking to Supervisors and Coworkers (20 minutes)

Individual In-Session Exposures (45 minutes)

Practice Goal/Homework (15 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one new group member (not a group member who has previously shared homework) to share their exposure worksheet and experiences with the rest of the group. (Do not review strengths and weaknesses homework and video exposures here).
- Group leaders use the Homework Question Guide to facilitate the homework review
- The group member will share the exposure that they set for the week, their initial anxious thoughts and feared outcomes, the answers to the challenging questions, the effective helpful response that they developed.
 - What was your behavioral goal for homework?
 - Reinforce their effort/validate difficulty of doing homework.
 - What were you anxious about happening?
 - What were they testing?
 - If completed, what did you learn?
 - What actually occurred?
 - If feared outcome did not occur, what does that suggest about predictions/anxious thoughts?
 - If not completed, what were they worried about happening?
- Ask all group members to briefly share whether they completed their exposure assignment and whether their feared outcome occurred or not.
- Answer any questions group members have about the homework.

GROUP ICE-BREAKER- Your Biggest Strength and Weakness at Work

- One group leader will role-play presenting a 3 min speech about their biggest strengths and weaknesses at work.
- One group member will volunteer (or be chosen) to present a 3 minute speech on their biggest strengths and weaknesses at work. Group leaders ask the group member to stand up in front of the group during their speech.
 - Each session a different group member will complete an exposure in front of the group so that by the end of treatment, each member has had the opportunity to present once.
- Group leader will open the Before and After Ice-Breaker Worksheet and ask the group member the before-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - Aside from being distressed, what are you worried will happen?
 - What are your behavioral goals?
- After the volunteer completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - What actually happened?
 - What did you learn?

- Break remaining group members into pairs and ask them to each give a 3 minute speech to their partner. If there is an odd number of group members left, one person can pair with a group leader.

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Speaking with Your Supervisor and Coworkers

- When faced with a problem or conflict, or even a good idea or accomplishment, people with social anxiety often avoid these discussions with coworkers and supervisors. However, it is to their disadvantage to do this for several reasons. Supervisors may misread them as uncooperative or lazy. Coworkers may think they are mean or mistakenly believe that the anxious person does not like them. Their good ideas will go unheard and accomplishments will go unrecognized limiting advancement within the workplace.
- To aid this discussion in class, a cost/benefit analysis will clearly point out why it is beneficial to communicate with others in the workplace. To do this, group leaders begin by telling members, “Talking with supervisors and coworkers is very important in the work setting. Unfortunately, many people with social anxiety avoid doing this.”
- Leaders will open the link to the “Costs and Benefits of Talking with Supervisors and Coworkers” worksheet and ask members to state what they feel are the costs and benefits and
- For example:

Costs	Benefits
- Boss might get mad at me.	- Boss might help me solve my problems.
- Coworkers could think that I'm bragging.	- Coworkers might think my idea was pretty cool.
- I might say something stupid and be made fun of.	- I might say something smart and get recognized for it.

- Once the brainstorming is complete, group leaders will ask members to state which alternative works best in the workplace. It is important to note that there can be pitfalls when speaking up at the workplace but they are almost always outweighed by the benefits.
- Build an argument that establishing a relationship with coworkers and supervisors is a safeguard for maintaining a job.
- Group leaders then tell group members that they will perform a set of role-plays in order to demonstrate situations that commonly arise in the workplace where this skill will come in to play. Leaders can then identify and role-play common work interactions. Leaders will introduce each role play before beginning, and leaders will alternate positions as they go through each example. The examples to be role played are:
 - Providing a progress update
 - Sharing a problem

Tip: Leaders should role plan an average boss, not an extremely nice or mean boss for this scenario.

Tip: Leaders should keep these exchanges short, simple, and to the point.

- Group members break into pairs and each role-play speaking to the other as if they were a boss or coworker. Each role-play should last about 1-2 minutes.

- Leaders may suggest topics for discussion if the members have difficulty thinking of mock scenarios.

INDIVIDUAL IN-SESSION EXPOSURE

- Conduct in-session exposures using the guidelines described in Session 3.
- Ensure that group members that did not have the opportunity to complete an exposure in front of the group during the previous session are the first to complete an exposure this session.

PRACTICE GOALS/HOMEWORK

1. Choose an exposure to complete 3 times this week
2. Complete the Exposure Worksheet
 - Briefly describe the anxiety provoking situation/exposure exercise and the behavioral goals chosen
 - Write down the anxious thoughts that come up when thinking about doing the exposure
 - Answer the before-exposure questions regarding the feared outcome
 - Challenge anxious thoughts and create a helpful response
 - Record Anxiety Ratings during and/or after the exposure
 - Answer the after-exposure questions regarding the actual outcome and the similarities and differences between the actual outcome and the feared outcome
3. Online Video Exposure Practice: Let's Practice-Video Exposure 7
4. Complete a job-related video practice (3x per week)
5. Share video with group
6. Group members encouraged to provide constructive feedback on shared videos

END OF SESSION 7

SESSION 8

SESSION OVERVIEW

Practice Goal/Homework Review (20 minutes)

Extended Group Ice-Breaker: Exposure Grab-Bag (70 minutes)

Continued Practice (20 minutes)

Saying Goodbye (10 minutes)

PRACTICE GOAL/HOMEWORK REVIEW

- Choose one new group member (not a group member who has previously shared homework) to share their exposure worksheet and experiences with the rest of the group.
- Group leaders use the Homework Question Guide to facilitate the homework review
- The group member will share the exposure that they set for the week, their initial anxious thoughts and feared outcomes, the answers to the challenging questions, the effective helpful response that they developed.
 - What was your behavioral goal for homework?
 - Reinforce their effort/validate difficulty of doing homework.
 - What were you anxious about happening?
 - What were they testing?
 - If completed, what did you learn?
 - What actually occurred?
 - If feared outcome did not occur, what does that suggest about predictions/anxious thoughts?
 - If not completed, what were they worried about happening?
- Ask all group members to briefly share whether they completed their exposure assignment and whether their feared outcome occurred or not.
- Answer any questions group members have about the homework.

EXTENDED ICE BREAKER: EXPOSURE GRAB-BAG

- An Exposure Grab-Bag exercise serves as a light-hearted final task and accomplishment while allowing members to push themselves just a bit further in the classroom setting.
- Group leaders will place three “grab bags” on a table in the class room. One bag is labeled “Easy”, one is labeled “Medium”, and one is labeled “Hard”. In each of these bags, there are 10 or more exposure challenges written on slips of paper. These challenges meet the level of difficulty for the label of the bag. Next to each bag, group leaders will lay out prizes that vary in value to match the level of difficulty. Thus, the prizes for the “Easy” grab bag are less valuable than the prizes for the “Hard” grab bag.
- Group members will volunteer (or be chosen) one at a time to draw challenges from any of the grab bags. Group leaders ask the group member to stand up in front of the group during their speech. The group member has up to 30 seconds to prepare for his/her speech.
- The group member will present a 2 minute speech on the chosen topic.
- After the group member completes the exposure, group leaders ask him/her the after-exposure questions and record the answers in the worksheet:
 - What actually happened?
 - What did you learn?

- Group members may come up and draw challenges from any of the grab bags. Once they have completed a challenge, they may take a prize from next to the corresponding bag. Some ideas for challenges include: singing, charades, making phone calls, telling a joke, asking a group leader out on a date, giving a toast, saying a prayer, reading a passage from a funny book, interviewing a group leader for a job, asking silly questions, juggling, dancing, etc.
- Tip: Involve the group leaders in the challenges in a funny way.

CONTINUED PRACTICE

- Group members can fill out a “Practice Plan” that lists ways that they can continue to practice the skills they have learned in group.
- Group leaders open the Practice Plan Worksheet and pass out paper copies of the Practice Plan worksheets.
- Each member writes their own plan for how to keep practicing new skills

SAYING GOODBYE

- Following the final in-session exposures, it is important to recognize all of the hard work the members have put in, and successes that the group members have had.
- When saying goodbye, it is important to both instill a sense of closure for the group, as well as promote a sense of commitment to the treatment. Leaders should first review the member portfolios. At this time, if any items are missing, leaders can offer them additions as future references.
- Group members will then be offered time to share their feelings about the group ending. They can provide testimonials about what they learned or “got out of” the group. Members may also wish to provide feedback to leaders at this point as well.
- Leaders will encourage members to continue to commit to using the strategies learned in group, as well as commit to the immediate and follow-up measures.
- Finally, leaders will present certificates of completion to each group member to end the group.

END OF GROUP