

Social Interaction ^[1]

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Application 3

For people who struggle with social anxiety, behavioral change can only be achieved through constant exposure to social interactions. From this point forward 'learn by doing' will be your motto.

Given that you already know the basics of exposure therapy, this application should be 'a walk in the park'. Although social interaction might be your worst nightmare, it's also the key to your well-being. For starters, we don't want this experience to be way too uncomfortable for you.

The purpose of Application 3 is to turn social interaction into a frequent habit, without putting too much pressure on you.

When Should You Do it?

It mainly depends on your schedule. Most people choose to go out on Fridays and Saturdays. You can follow the same trend or choose another day that suits you. However, keep in mind that social interaction involves 2 or more people. At some point, you might have to compromise on the day because not everyone has the same schedule.

Where Should It Happen?

There are plenty of places where you can meet your friends and family. Since you don't want to put too much pressure on yourself, choose a place where you feel comfortable. As we have mentioned in previous articles, those who suffer from social anxiety tend to hesitate crowded, noisy places. Instead, they prefer quiet parks, small restaurants, or intimate cafes. Again, you have to convince others to agree with your preferred location. This shouldn't be too hard, since the inviter is usually the one who sets the location.

With Whom?

This is the most important aspect of all. You can choose the perfect date and location, but if you don't have right company, it's a wasted effort. Choose friends and close relatives. People you care about. People that make you feel comfortable. Remember that the whole purpose of this application is to build an active social life, based of meaningful interactions. However, it's

a step-by-step approach which means that you have to be patient. Eventually, you'll acquire all the necessary skills that will enable you to interact with any person.

Why Should You Do it?

To socialize! What you talk about doesn't really matter, as long as you engage in conversation. Perhaps the best way to answer this question is to read our article on social skills training. You can practice eye contact, small talk, body language, etc.

Some Help with Your Schedule

Use the table below to build your schedule and engage in social interactions. You should have at least 2 scheduled meetings per month. No. 1 is just an example. You can also use this table to plan specific exposure exercises.

#	When	Where	With whom	Why
1	Friday on June 15	In the park	My dad	Catch up on what's new. (small talk) I will greet him with a big smile and a hug.

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