



mindful hub

well-being, right now.

Mindful Visualization for Social Anxiety

Try the following thought exercise after 10 to 20 minutes of mindfulness meditation or another calming and centering exercise like yoga nidra (see mindfulhub.com for more information). During your mindfulness practice, pay particular attention to any negative thoughts you have. Practice detaching from these thoughts. Then work through the following *social situation visualization* to get a better idea of how and when feelings of social shyness emerge. Finally, use this visualization to reframe a real situation that has occurred in your own life.

Take a few deep breaths and visualize a social situation that makes you mildly to moderately uncomfortable. Do not use a situation that causes full-blown panic for this exercise. Let's use the example of attending a party with your partner, or a friend that you feel very comfortable with. Picture the room where the party is being held in detail. Using all your senses, picture the lights, and sounds. Is there music playing, are people laughing and talking? Can you smell food? Visualize yourself coming into the party with your friend or partner. What thoughts are going through your mind? Are your thoughts about yourself unkind? Take a moment to list them.

What physical symptoms of social anxiety does this scene evoke? Take a breath, scan your body, and list your physical symptoms.

What unproductive behaviors (behaviors that will not help you reduce your anxiety the next time you find yourself at a party) might you engage in?

As you picture yourself slipping into a social behavior pattern that keeps you stuck in anxiety, imagine that you remember mindfulness. You remember that you can take a deep breath, release the tension in your body, challenge your negative thoughts, and extend loving kindness to yourself and others. You remember that others in the room may also feel anxious. You feel safe in this social situation and connected to others.

With practice, this mindfulness exercise can help you tame social anxiety.

We wish you twenty minutes of mindfulness every day!