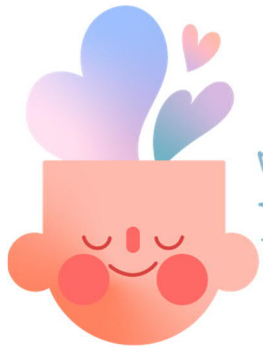




Counselling Workroom



No Worries!

It's just social anxiety~

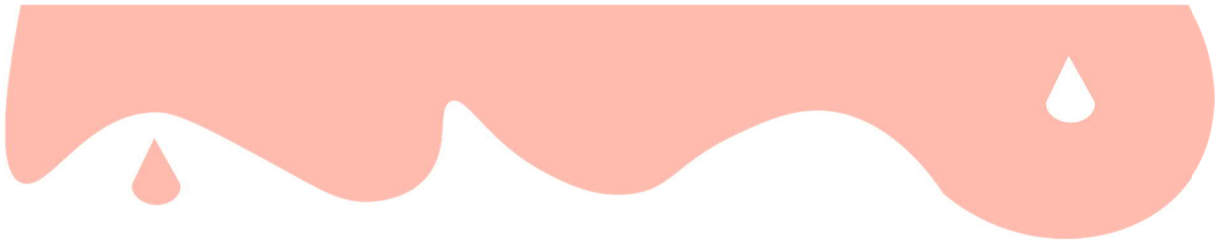
Do you have the similar thoughts as below?

"The classes will be resumed to be face-to-face mode next semester, it means that I have to face a lot of classmates and teachers. I am not familiar with them. They must dislike me..."

"Why they insist to use phone meeting but not communicate on Whatsapp, what if we all keep silent and it is so embarrassing..."

"I have been used to zoom presentation for the past two years, but now I have to face all classmates in the classroom during presentation, I am afraid that I will be speechless with pounding heart..."

"There will be lunch gathering during new semester. I really want to have a good time with everyone. But they are so outgoing, I will be so nervous and keep worrying that I cannot get along well with them. Finally, I will keep silent and look awkward..."



When we meet strange people, attend interviews or give public speech, we will inevitably feel nervous sometimes. Usually when the event is over, the anxiety will go away. However, if you find that the anxiety or fear is so overwhelming that ...

- You're suffered from intense and long-lasting physical discomfort, such as excessive sweating, hand tremors, trembling limbs, nausea, upset stomach and heart palpitations.
- You're worried about being criticized in social situations, and focus on others' words and body languages frequently; wonder how they think about you, worry and care that you will make a fool of yourself and be laughed at.

- Although you know that the level of anxiety is excessive and unreasonable, you still try all means to avoid being in the social situation; and you feel extremely hard to endure during the process if you cannot escape from it.

You may have certain level of **social anxiety**.



Social anxiety ≠ Staying home all the time, enjoy being alone, introverted, and shy

Most of the people with social anxiety do not really enjoy being alone or staying home, but they are afraid of connecting with the outside world. In fact, they are eager to hang out with friends and share with others.

When you also feel anxious in social situations, you can try the following methods to help yourself:

1. **Challenge your negative thoughts** 

When you have some self-defeating thoughts, such as “Other people must dislike me” “I am very dull, they must be reluctant to listen to me”, you can remind yourself that your thoughts may be incorrect and not always come true, how others actually think of you may not be the same as yours.

2. **Reduce your safety behaviours** 

It means that when you are in a social situation, you will do something to make yourself feel safe and in control, such as wearing earphones in public, avoiding eye contact, sitting in a corner, drinking alcohol, and leaving early. Although these behaviors make you feel better at that moment, they also prevent you from trying to participate in the social interactions, which in turn sustain and intensify your anxiety problems. You can try to decrease these safety behaviours step by step so that you have chance to face the anxiety in the social situation gradually.

3. **Relaxation exercises** 

You can try to do some relaxation exercises before or during the activity, such as taking deep breath for ten times, clenching and then relaxing your fist. They might help you alleviate stress and reduce physical discomfort caused by anxiety.

4. **Build up social confidence in social situations step by step** 

You can try to get along with those people who you are somehow more familiar with, for a short time in relaxed situations, such as taking the U shuttle together. When you have accumulated more confidence, you can try to have lunch with them. During the process, you can try to focus more on other people's words and attend less to the negative self-criticism in your mind. Remember that we don't need to be perfect, we all have chance to do some silly things in public, laughing it off together can also be a good moment.

If the social anxiety sustains and causes disturbance to you, do come and talk with us.
