

ENGAGING IN SMALL TALK TO CONNECT & PRACTICE SOCIAL SKILLS

INFORMATION SHEET

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Small talk is the polite conversation that people often engage in when they meet, such as commenting on the weather, asking about someone's weekend, or making small observations about their surroundings.

Engaging in small talk can help people with social anxiety in several ways. For one, it provides a low-stakes opportunity to practice social skills. Small talk is generally non-threatening and low-risk, making it a good place to practice social skills without the pressure of a deeper conversation. Additionally, successfully engaging in small talk can boost confidence and make it easier to engage in more challenging conversations. Lastly, engaging in small talk can lead to the discovery of shared interests or experiences, which can help to build a sense of connection and rapport with others, and can eventually lead to more meaningful connections.

How can you engage in small talk? Here are some guidelines:

1. Ask open-ended questions: Open-ended questions invite the other person to share more about themselves and can lead to more interesting conversations. Examples include: "What do you like to do for fun?" or "What are you working on these days?"
2. Use active listening: Active listening involves paying close attention to what the other person is saying and responding with thoughtful questions or comments. This can help to show that you are interested in what the other person is saying and make the conversation more engaging.
3. Look for common ground: Finding shared interests or experiences can provide a natural starting point for conversation and help to build a sense of connection. For example, if you notice that the other person is wearing a t-shirt for a band you also like, you could comment on it and start a conversation about music.
4. Keep it light and positive: Small talk is not the time for heavy or controversial topics. Stick to light and positive topics, such as hobbies, travel, or movies.

Remember, small talk is a skill that takes practice. Don't be too hard on yourself if it doesn't go perfectly the first time. With time and practice, engaging in small talk can become more natural and enjoyable. Also, please note that this information is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.