

# There's Nothing Small About "Small Talk"

Most people think of small talk as polite but unimportant conversations. But for people who are shy and anxious in social situations, making small talk is an important way to practice your conversational skills.

This worksheet is designed to help you practice small talk with a variety of people and rate your comfort level. The more often you practice small talk, the more you will be comfortable in other types of social situations.

But first, here are some things to keep in mind when practicing your conversational skills.

- Make eye contact.
- Use open body language.
- Be positive.
- Find things in common to talk about.
- Try using compliments to open a conversation.
- Ask questions and also state your opinions.
- When you ask a simple question, you might get a one-word answer, so be prepared for two or three follow-up questions.
- Give details when you answer questions.
- Pay attention to social cues such as body language or facial expression to see whether to continue or stop a conversation.
- Be patient with yourself. If you are shy and find it hard to talk to people, you will need to practice making small talk every day until these conversations become easier.

## **Your Assignment**

Look for opportunities to start up conversations in the situations listed on the next page. Later, note the approximate duration of each conversation as well as your comfort level with 1=Totally at Ease and 10=Very Uncomfortable.

## Situations to Practice Social Conversations (Small Talk)

| Assignment   | Duration | Your Comfort Level (1-10) |
|--|----------|---------------------------|
| Start a conversation with a stranger waiting in line.                      |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with a relative you don't usually talk to.            |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with someone in a store.                              |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with a stranger about the weather.                    |          |                           |
| Start up a conversation in a grocery store.                                |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with a stranger about sports.                         |          |                           |
| Ask a customer service person on the phone how they are doing.             |          |                           |
| Talk to a server in a restaurant about something that might interest them. |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with someone who is walking a dog or with a pet.      |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with an older person and see if they need help.       |          |                           |
| Start a conversation with a co-worker.                                     |          |                           |
| Write other conversational challenges below:                               |          |                           |
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