

# Dr. Ali's Social Confidence Cheat Sheet

[BraverWithAnxiety.com](http://BraverWithAnxiety.com)

## Key Takeaways

- Social anxiety is not failure. It's proof that connection matters to you.
- Confidence is built through experience, not something you're born with.
- Anxiety is not the enemy—it's like an overprotective but well-meaning friend.
- Shifting attention outward, instead of inward, is key to managing anxiety.
- Safety behaviors (like avoidance) maintain anxiety, while coping behaviors (like small steps forward) build confidence.
- Awkwardness is normal. The goal is not to avoid it but to navigate it.

## Mindset Shift

*"What if social anxiety isn't proof you're failing, but proof that you care about connection?"*

- **Instead of fighting anxiety, work with it.** Accept that anxiety is part of human connection.
- **Your brain is not broken.** Social anxiety amplifies perceived threats, making neutral situations feel high-stakes.
- **Confidence isn't "no fear."** It's learning how to act even when afraid.

## Action Steps

### 1 Skills for Managing Social Anxiety

- **The "Nose Trick"** – Instead of direct eye contact, look at the nose/eyebrows to reduce intensity.
- **Use Your Environment** – Comment on surroundings to start conversations naturally.
- **Open-ended Questions** – Instead of "Do you like sports?" ask "What do you do for fun?"
- **The "Yes, And" Technique** – Build on what people say instead of shutting conversations down.

### 2 Navigating Social Anxiety in the Moment

- **Shift Attention Outward** – Anxiety makes you focus on yourself. Instead, focus on your surroundings.

- **Use Predict-Do-Reflect** – Before a situation, predict how bad it will be. Do it. Then reflect—was it as bad as expected?
- **Small Wins Matter** – Start with low-stakes social interactions (e.g., saying hi to a cashier) and build up.

### 3 Building Confidence Over Time

- **Create “Quests” to Challenge Yourself** – Intentionally put yourself in slightly awkward situations to build confidence.
- **Separate Thoughts from Reality** – Anxiety convinces you others are judging you, but most people are too busy thinking about themselves to care.
- **Embrace Imperfection** – Social confidence comes from experiencing awkward moments, not avoiding them, and learning you can deal with the situation.

*“Awkwardness isn’t the enemy—it’s the bridge to connection.”*

## Coping vs. Safety Behaviors

### ● Safety Behaviors (Keep Anxiety Strong)

- ⊘ Avoiding eye contact
- ⊘ Rehearsing conversations excessively
- ⊘ Leaving social events early

### ● Coping Behaviors (Build Confidence)

- ✓ Practicing small talk in low-pressure situations
- ✓ Staying in conversations slightly longer than comfortable
- ✓ Accepting that awkward moments happen to everyone

## Summary

- Confidence isn’t about eliminating anxiety—it’s about learning to show up despite it.
- Take one small, intentional risk today.
- Learn more about [social confidence here](#).