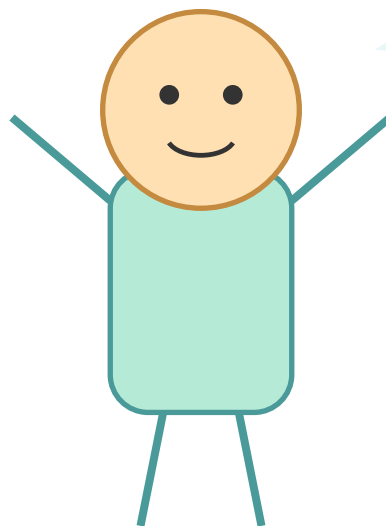


SPEAK UP, SHINE BRIGHT!

A Confidence & Communication Workbook for Kids

Build Confidence | Improve Communication | Overcome Social Anxiety



My voice matters!

I am brave. I can do this!

What is Social Anxiety & Shyness?

10 Physical Exercises

Speech & Communication Skills

Symptoms, Causes & Treatment

10 Cognitive Exercises

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What Is This Book About?

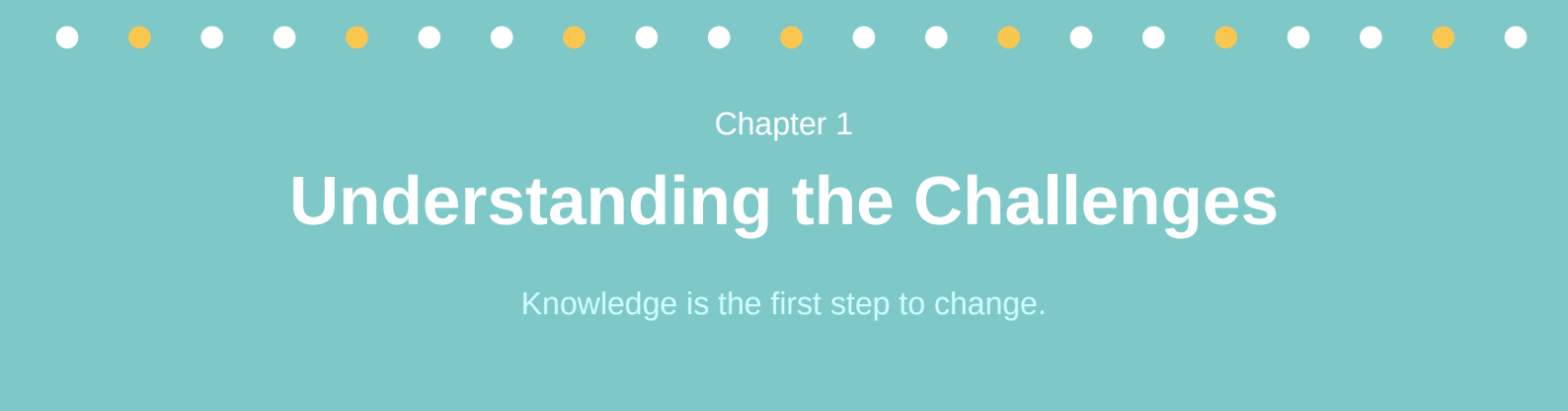
This workbook is designed for children aged 6-14 who struggle with shyness, social anxiety, communication difficulties, awkward moments, or fear of speaking up. It offers a safe, step-by-step journey to help every child find their voice, build genuine confidence, and connect with others more easily.

How To Use This Workbook

Work through chapters in order, or jump to the section you need most.
Use with a therapist, parent, or caregiver for best results.
There are no wrong answers. This is YOUR safe space to explore.
Complete the physical and cognitive exercises daily for lasting change.

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Chapter 1

Understanding the Challenges

Knowledge is the first step to change.

Read, reflect, and complete the exercises in this chapter at your own pace.

Social Anxiety & Shyness in Children

What It Is

Social anxiety is an intense fear of social situations where a child worries about being judged, embarrassed, or humiliated. Shyness is a milder version of this discomfort. Both are very common and highly treatable.

Symptoms

- Racing heartbeat
- Sweaty palms
- Stomach aches
- Trembling voice
- Blushing
- Feeling frozen
- Avoiding eye contact

Causes

- Family history / genetics
- Overprotective parenting
- Bullying or teasing
- Stressful life events
- Temperament (born sensitive)
- Social skill gaps

Treatment

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Gradual exposure practice
- Social skills training
- Relaxation techniques
- Supportive adult coaching
- Positive reinforcement

Therapist Tip:

Discuss each symptom with your child. Validate their experience before moving to exercises.

Communication Difficulties in Children

What It Is

Communication difficulties include problems with speaking clearly, expressing thoughts, understanding others, or connecting in conversation. These can stem from speech delays, anxiety, or simply lacking practice.

Symptoms

- Mumbling or speaking too softly
- Losing track mid-sentence
- Avoiding conversations
- Difficulty starting a chat
- Trouble finding words
- Fear of being wrong
- Interrupting often

Causes

- Limited social exposure
- Anxiety or fear of judgement
- Speech or language delays
- Learning differences
- Low confidence
- Modelling (how adults speak)

Treatment

- Speech therapy
- Conversation coaching
- Reading aloud daily
- Storytelling practice
- Listening games
- Safe low-pressure practice

Therapist Tip:

Discuss each symptom with your child. Validate their experience before moving to exercises.

Awkward Social Moments

What It Is

Awkward moments are situations where social interactions do not go as expected, causing embarrassment or confusion. All children experience these. The goal is not to avoid them, but to recover quickly.

Symptoms

- Saying the wrong thing
- Silence when words are needed
- Misreading social cues
- Laughing at wrong time
- Forgetting what to say
- Tripping or spilling
- Body reacts with blush/sweat

Causes

- Overthinking before speaking
- Lack of social experience
- High self-consciousness
- Sensory sensitivities
- Anxiety or depression
- Neurodevelopmental differences

Treatment

- Recovery scripts
- Self-compassion practice
- Humour skills
- Reframing the moment
- Debrief with trusted adult
- Gradual social exposure

Therapist Tip:

Discuss each symptom with your child. Validate their experience before moving to exercises.

Physical Exercises

Your body is your confidence tool. Train it well.

Read, reflect, and complete the exercises in this chapter at your own pace.

Physical Exercises for Confidence & Communication

1 Power Pose

Stand in a strong, open posture for 2 minutes before a social situation to boost confidence hormones.

Steps:

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Put hands on hips or raise arms in a V shape.
3. Lift your chin slightly and look straight ahead.
4. Hold for 2 full minutes while breathing slowly.

Why It Helps: Reduces cortisol and increases testosterone, making you feel calmer and more confident.

2 Box Breathing

A powerful breathing technique used by athletes and soldiers to control anxiety instantly.

Steps:

1. Breathe IN for 4 slow counts.
2. HOLD your breath for 4 counts.
3. Breathe OUT slowly for 4 counts.
4. HOLD for 4 counts. Repeat 4 times.

Why It Helps: Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing panic and steadying your voice.

Physical Exercises for Confidence & Communication

3

Tongue and Jaw Warm-Up

Loosen your mouth muscles before speaking to improve clarity and reduce stammering.

Steps:

1. Open your mouth wide, then close. Repeat 5 times.
2. Move your jaw side to side slowly, 5 times each.
3. Stick tongue out and move it up, down, left, right.
4. Say the sounds BA, DA, GA, MA, PA clearly 10 times.

Why It Helps: Warms up the articulators so words come out clearly and confidently.

4

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tense and release muscle groups to melt physical anxiety before social events.

Steps:

1. Clench your fists tightly for 5 seconds, then release.
2. Tighten your shoulders up to your ears, hold, release.
3. Scrunch your face tightly, hold 5 seconds, then relax.
4. Work down your body: stomach, legs, feet. Tense and release.

Why It Helps: Releases stored tension in the body that feeds social anxiety and nervous speech.

Physical Exercises for Confidence & Communication

5

Mirror Practice

Practise speaking and expressions in front of a mirror to build body language awareness.

Steps:

1. Stand in front of a full-length or bathroom mirror.
2. Greet yourself: say your name and smile naturally.
3. Tell a 1-minute story while watching your expressions.
4. Practise different tones: excited, calm, serious, friendly.

Why It Helps: Builds awareness of facial expressions and body language which are 55% of communication.

6

Voice Projection Exercise

Practise speaking louder and clearer without shouting so your voice is always heard.

Steps:

1. Stand against one wall of the room.
2. Imagine speaking to someone at the opposite wall.
3. Say your name and one sentence in a clear, strong voice.
4. Walk closer and keep the same projection level.

Why It Helps: Trains the voice to carry without strain, reducing the mumbling linked to social anxiety.

Physical Exercises for Confidence & Communication

7

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

A sensory grounding exercise to stop social panic and bring you back to the present moment.

Steps:

1. Name 5 things you can SEE around you right now.
2. Name 4 things you can TOUCH and notice how they feel.
3. Name 3 things you can HEAR in your environment.
4. Name 2 things you can SMELL or like the smell of.
5. Name 1 thing you can TASTE or imagine tasting.

Why It Helps: Interrupts the anxiety spiral by engaging all five senses and anchoring the nervous system.

8

Confident Walking Practice

The way you walk signals confidence to others and to your own brain.

Steps:

1. Stand tall with shoulders back and head up.
2. Walk slowly and purposefully, not rushing.
3. Make brief eye contact with people as you pass.
4. Practise this walk for 5 minutes daily in any space.

Why It Helps: Body language directly changes brain chemistry. Walking confidently makes you feel confident.

Physical Exercises for Confidence & Communication

9

Diaphragm Breathing for Speech

Learn to breathe from the belly to give your voice power, depth, and steadiness.

Steps:

1. Place one hand on your chest, one on your stomach.
2. Breathe so that only your stomach hand rises. Chest stays still.
3. Exhale slowly while making a steady HMM sound.
4. Practise reading a sentence aloud on one long breath.

Why It Helps: Diaphragm breathing prevents the shaky, high-pitched voice that comes with anxiety.

10

Energy Shake-Out

Shake tension from your body before walking into a social situation or speaking moment.

Steps:

1. Stand and shake your hands loosely for 20 seconds.
2. Shake your arms, then your whole body like a wet dog.
3. Roll your shoulders forward and back 5 times each.
4. Take one deep breath in, then let it out with a loud HA!

Why It Helps: Discharges adrenaline from the body, preventing the freeze response in social situations.

Cognitive Exercises

Change your thinking, change your world.

Read, reflect, and complete the exercises in this chapter at your own pace.

Cognitive Exercises for Confidence & Communication

1 Positive Self-Talk Swap

Replace unhelpful thoughts with realistic, kind ones to change how you feel and act.

Steps:

1. Write down a negative thought you often have about yourself.
2. Ask: Is this thought 100% true? What is the evidence?
3. Write a balanced, kinder version of that thought.
4. Say the new thought aloud 5 times with conviction.

Why It Helps: Challenges cognitive distortions that feed social anxiety and low confidence.

2 Worry Time

Contain worrying to one specific time so it does not take over your whole day.

Steps:

1. Choose a 10-minute worry slot each day (e.g. 4 pm).
2. When a worry appears, tell yourself: I will think about this at 4 pm.
3. At worry time, write the worry down and one possible action.
4. When time is up, close the notebook and do something fun.

Why It Helps: Teaches the brain that worries can wait, reducing constant background anxiety.

Cognitive Exercises for Confidence & Communication

3 Best Friend Test

Treat yourself with the same compassion you would offer a good friend.

Steps:

1. Think of a situation that made you feel embarrassed or worried.
2. Ask: What would I say to my best friend if this happened to them?
3. Write down those kind, supportive words.
4. Now read them to yourself and let yourself receive that kindness.

Why It Helps: Self-compassion breaks the shame cycle that keeps social anxiety going.

4 Brave Ladder

Build courage gradually by facing small fears first and working up to bigger ones.

Steps:

1. List 5 social situations from least scary to most scary.
2. Start with the easiest one this week. Plan exactly when and how.
3. After doing it, tick it off and celebrate the bravery.
4. Move up to the next step only when you feel ready.

Why It Helps: Gradual exposure is the most evidence-based treatment for social anxiety in children.

Cognitive Exercises for Confidence & Communication

5 Thought Detective

Investigate your own unhelpful thinking patterns and catch them in the act.

Steps:

1. Name the thinking trap: Am I mind-reading? Catastrophising? All-or-nothing thinking?
2. Write the thought and label it: This is a catastrophe thought.
3. Find the facts: What is actually most likely to happen?
4. Write a realistic prediction and compare it to the worry.

Why It Helps: Metacognitive awareness helps children notice and correct distorted thinking.

6 Visualisation for Success

Mentally rehearse a successful social moment before it happens.

Steps:

1. Close your eyes and take three slow breaths.
2. Picture yourself walking into the social situation calmly.
3. Imagine speaking clearly, smiling, and the other person responding well.
4. See yourself leaving feeling proud. Hold that feeling for 30 seconds.

Why It Helps: Mental rehearsal activates the same brain regions as actual practice.

Cognitive Exercises for Confidence & Communication

7 Gratitude and Strength Journaling

Train your brain to notice positives, which builds resilience and confidence.

Steps:

1. Each night, write 3 good things that happened today.
2. Write 1 thing you did well socially, even if it felt small.
3. Write 1 strength or quality you showed today.
4. Read back last week's entries to see your progress.

Why It Helps: Gratitude journaling shifts brain focus from threat to resource, reducing anxiety baseline.

8 The Evidence Board

Build an evidence file of all the times you WERE brave, clear, or confident.

Steps:

1. Get a notebook or poster. Title it: My Confidence Evidence.
2. Write or draw any time you spoke up, tried something new, or recovered from awkward.
3. Add to it every day, no matter how small the win.
4. Look at it before challenging social situations for an instant confidence boost.

Why It Helps: Contradicts the negative self-narrative by creating a concrete record of competence.

Cognitive Exercises for Confidence & Communication

9

Cognitive Defusion

Learn to see your thoughts as just thoughts, not facts that define you.

Steps:

1. Notice a scary thought e.g. Everyone will laugh at me.
2. Say out loud: I notice I am having the thought that everyone will laugh at me.
3. Imagine the thought as a cloud passing across the sky. Watch it drift away.
4. Return your attention to what you are actually doing right now.

Why It Helps: Cognitive defusion from ACT therapy reduces the power scary thoughts have over behaviour.

10

Goal Setting for Social Courage

Set one small, specific social goal each week and track your progress.

Steps:

1. Think of one social skill you want to improve this week.
2. Make it SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.
3. Example: I will say hello to one new person at school on Tuesday.
4. After the week, write what happened and plan next week's goal.

Why It Helps: Goal-directed behaviour builds self-efficacy and creates momentum in social development.

Speech & Communication Skills

Your voice is powerful. Let the world hear it!

Read, reflect, and complete the exercises in this chapter at your own pace.

Finding My Voice — Speech Practice

Complete each prompt. Then practise saying your answers aloud. Speak clearly and at a steady pace.

My name is ____ and one interesting thing about me is:

If I could talk to anyone in the world I would say:

A story I love telling is about the time:

When I feel nervous speaking I remind myself:

Therapist Tip:

Record your child reading these aloud on a phone. Play it back to celebrate their voice!

Social Scripts: What Can I Say?

Practise these magic phrases in the mirror or with a trusted adult.

Meeting Someone New

Hi, my name is _____. What is yours?

Nice to meet you! Do you want to sit together?

I like your _____. That is really cool!

When I Feel Left Out

Can I join in too?

Is there room for one more?

I would really love to be part of this.

When I Make a Mistake

Oops! I did not mean that. What I meant was _____.

Sorry about that. Can we start over?

That came out wrong. Let me try again.

When I Feel Nervous Speaking

I am a little nervous but I want to share something.

Give me a second to think, please.

I know this. Just give me a moment!

My Speaking Body Language Checklist

Tick what you practised this week. Great communication is more than just words!

- ☐ I made eye contact when talking to someone
- ☐ I stood or sat tall when speaking
- ☐ I spoke loudly enough to be clearly heard
- ☐ I spoke at a steady pace without rushing
- ☐ I listened without interrupting
- ☐ I smiled or nodded to show I was engaged
- ☐ I asked a question to keep the conversation going
- ☐ I used a polite greeting to start a conversation
- ☐ I said thank you and goodbye when leaving
- ☐ I introduced myself to someone I did not know

Therapist Tip:

Praise each tick. Even one is worth celebrating. Ticking builds the habit of noticing progress.

Awkward Moments Toolkit

Everyone trips up. It is what you do NEXT that counts.

Read, reflect, and complete the exercises in this chapter at your own pace.

Overcoming Awkward Moments Toolkit

Everyone has awkward moments. Here is what to do when they happen:

Take a Breath

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold 4, out 4. Calms your body in seconds.

Laugh It Off

A small laugh shows confidence. Say Ha! That was funny! and move on.

Ask for Help

Say I did not understand, can you explain? It is brave, not weak.

Try Again

Say Let me rephrase that or What I meant was... You can always retry.

Remember Everyone Feels This

Even adults feel awkward! It always passes. You are not alone.

Write It Down Later

Write what happened and what you would do differently next time.

Ground Yourself

Name 5 things you can see. It brings you back to the present moment.

My plan for awkward moments:

When I feel awkward, I will...

.....

My Awkward Moment Story

Write about a time you felt awkward. Sharing it takes away its power!

What happened:

How I felt in that moment:

What I did or said:

What I could do differently next time:

What I learned about myself from this:

Therapist Tip:

Normalise awkward moments by sharing one of your own. Modelling resilience is powerful therapy.

Confidence Challenges & Growth Journal

Small brave steps every day add up to big changes.

Read, reflect, and complete the exercises in this chapter at your own pace.

7-Day Confidence Challenge

Do one challenge each day. Tick when done and note how it felt!

☐

Day 1: Say good morning or hello to 3 different people today.

How it felt: _____

☐

Day 2: Give someone a genuine compliment and watch their face light up.

How it felt: _____

☐

Day 3: Raise your hand to answer a question in class, even if unsure.

How it felt: _____

☐

Day 4: Start a conversation with someone you do not know very well.

How it felt: _____

☐

Day 5: Tell a short story or joke to your family at dinner.

How it felt: _____

☐

Day 6: Ask a question in a group setting such as class or a club.

How it felt: _____

☐

Day 7: Introduce yourself to someone new with a handshake and a smile!

How it felt: _____

My Growth Journal — Week 1

What was my most confident moment this week?

Something new I tried that felt hard at first:

A kind or brave thing I said to someone:

One thing I want to do more of next week:

How I feel right now:

☐ Sad

☐ Okay

☐ Good

☐ Happy

☐ Amazing

My Growth Journal — Week 2

A social situation I handled better than before:

A word or phrase I practised speaking clearly:

Something awkward happened and I dealt with it by:

I am proud of myself for:

How I feel right now:

☐ Sad

☐ Okay

☐ Good

☐ Happy

☐ Amazing

Letter to My Future Self

Dear Future Me, right now I am working on...

By the time you read this, I hope you have...

Something I want you to always remember is...

You have come so far. Here is what I want you to know:

How I feel right now:

☐

Sad

☐

Okay

☐

Good

☐

Happy

☐

Amazing

You Are Braver Than You Believe!

Every confident person was once a nervous beginner.
Keep practising. Keep growing. Keep shining.

Certificate of Completion

This workbook was completed by:

.....
Date: _____

Signed by therapist / parent: _____

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