



The Depression Support Group Association

Introduction

Alternatives to Depression

Since 1990, the Depression Support Group Association has been successfully helping people, whose lives have been distorted by depression, insecurity, loneliness, social phobia, low self-esteem and unsatisfying relationships.

It has helped them to find alternatives to depression and has opened the door to a fulfilling life. That process is moved forward by conveners who have had personal experience of depression. They conduct the groups in a friendly, sociable environment that helps members enjoy what life has to offer.

The Groups Available

The Shyness & Social Anxiety Programme

The Personal Relationship Programme

The Low Self-Esteem Programme

Individual Therapy

Taking Things Further

The Available Groups

Why a Group?

It is always easier to understand other people and help with their difficulties than it is to understand and help oneself. In our groups the members learn to apply this understanding to themselves. Through the support and encouragement from other members of the group, and the group convener, initiatives are seen as being possible, helping people to move from what their lives are to what they might be.

- ❖ In a group members learn they are not alone.
- ❖ They feel able to speak because they are in a friendly and accepting situation.
- ❖ Members can make social and supportive contacts with any other participants in the group.
- ❖ They come to learn how their emotional needs can be more fully met.

'Members become self therapists'

Group Setting

The groups have 5 to 9 members meeting weekly for one and a half hours. They have an informal seating arrangement promoting spontaneous dialogue (rather than a set time for each member to talk in turn). Members are encouraged to treat other members as they themselves would like to be treated.

The groups are open, new members joining as appropriate. The Association is self-financed and there is a fee of £15 per week for a group place (concessions for students and unemployed people). There are a few rules but regular attendance is desirable as is consideration for other group members.

Convener's Role

Conveners convening the groups have a background in psychotherapy and counseling and have had personal experience of depression.

The convening is non-directive but when appropriate, intervening, interpretive and protective.

The Support Groups

These groups address depression and depressive anxiety, dealing with apathy, loneliness, low self-esteem, isolation, frustration and stigmatisation. The groups help their members move away from depression and find viable alternatives.

There are also groups which focus on specific personal concerns.

- ❖ Shyness and social anxiety
- ❖ Personal relationships
- ❖ Low self-esteem

These groups are included in the appropriate programmes. These programmes were created as a result of experience with the specific concerns listed above.

Shyness & Social Anxiety Programme

Our experience is that a significant proportion of people who get in touch with us suffer from shyness and social phobia.

Shyness has its root in fear. When a horse comes to a fence and it can't jump over, it is frightened and shies away. The obstacle is visible, we, on the other hand, take our obstacles with us.

Our programme is designed to remove the fears that exist largely in our minds. It is tailor made for each individual but consists of three stages.

- ❖ A number of one-to-one sessions, focusing on our fears, when they have arisen, and how they can be overcome.
- ❖ When the time is right, the programme continues with participation in a series of small group meetings with others who have had similar problems of social anxiety that are learning how to cope with situations which previously would have frightened them *and they are learning to talk*.
- ❖ After a suitable period in the small group, the programme continues with social occasions in an enjoyable and supportive atmosphere where friendships and other relationships may be made with any or all of the other participants.

By the end of participation in this programme the fears and confusions that lie behind social anxiety will have been resolved so that participants can converse with others and make their way in their social and personal relationships with others.

Fees for one-to-one sessions are negotiated with the therapist on a sliding scale.

Low Self-Esteem Programme

Low self-esteem is frequently at the root of personal problems. The self-esteem programme is designed to provide positive help to participants in achieving a more confident attitude to life. We offer a therapy programme which is tailor made for each individual and consists of three stages.

- ❖ A number of one-to-one sessions focusing on self-consciousness, lack of confidence, self dislike (physical or otherwise), indecisiveness and how these obstacles can be overcome achieving a stronger sense of self and self-assurance.
- ❖ After the individual sessions, the programme continues with participation in a small group. The understanding gained in the therapy sessions can be applied with others who have had similar problems, but are in the process of overcoming them, in a supportive environment.
- ❖ There is then the opportunity to join a larger group of people who have been through the same programme, in a friendly and sociable atmosphere. Here members can make social and supportive contacts with any other participants in the group.

When the programme has been completed the experience and confidence gained can be applied to all life's situations.

Fees for one-to-one sessions are negotiated with the therapist on a sliding scale.

Personal Relationship Programme

This programme is designed to help people find what everyone wants: a loving, friendly and caring relationship.

Despite half the population being of the opposite sex, innumerable people have difficulties in finding or maintaining a secure and ongoing relationship.

Some people make repeated mistakes in their choice of partners; some find it difficult to meet potential partners due to shyness or lack of confidence; some repeatedly find difficulty in maintaining sexual relationships or suffer from sexual difficulties and confusions.

Our successful programme has evolved over a number of years. It helps participants to acquire insight and understand what is behind their difficulties. It brings together people who can benefit each other and also to alter previous patterns of behaviour and achieve successful outcomes.

- ❖ The programme begins with a series of one to one sessions with an experienced counsellor to help one to understand and resolve past pain and move on.
- ❖ After the individual sessions comes the opportunity to meet people, in a small, safe, sociable group. Here, the understanding achieved previously is applied and confidence gained.
- ❖ After a suitable period in the small group, the programme continues with social occasions in an enjoyable and supportive atmosphere where friendships and other relationships may be made with any or all of the other participants.

At the end of this programme participants should be able to make and maintain long lasting and loving relationships.

Fees for one-to-one sessions are negotiated with the therapist on a sliding scale.

Individual Therapy

For people who prefer individual therapy, there are a number of therapists to whom they can be referred who offer one to one help. Like our conveners, these therapists have personal experiences of depression and other conditions for which we offer help.

We offer a free assessment for those wanting to join a group, a programme or one-to-one help. (Starting therapy with one-to-one sessions may be particularly appropriate for those experiencing sexual difficulties and confusions).

The fees for the individual therapy are usually on a sliding scale and are arranged with the therapist concerned.

Taking Things Further

Whatever kind of help you may be interested in, the next step is to make an appointment for the free assessment we offer. This is an opportunity for us to look at which way we can best help and for you to ask any questions you would like answered.

You can contact us in the following ways:

❖ Please fill in the form on the following page and send it to:

DGSA
37b New Cavendish Street
London W1G 8JR.

❖ Or call us on **020 7328 8391** leaving your name, address, phone number and times which are convenient for you to attend an appointment. We will be in touch with you to confirm a date for your free assessment.



All information given will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ **Telephone:** _____

Occupation: _____ **Age:** _____

I am interested in: (please tick)

- ☐ The Support Groups
- ☐ The Shyness and Social Anxiety Programme
- ☐ The Low Self-Esteem Programme
- ☐ The Personal Relationship Programme
- ☐ Individual Therapy

I have been/am in therapy: (please give details)

I have had experience relevant to convener training:

(please state qualifications)

Please return the form to:

DSGA, 37b New Cavendish Street, London W1G 8JR

Telephone: 020 7328 8391