

Blushing Fact Sheet



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This is a handout to explain and give some tips about how to help you with your blushing problem.

*Wishing you every success,
Ailish*

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Key points for learning to cope with blushing:

1. *Understanding is the first step towards coping.* It is important to accept that blushing involves not only bodily response but a particular pattern of thoughts which increases concern about blushing.
2. *Becoming less concerned with your own behaviour and others' reactions will decrease concern with blushing.*
3. *There are effective strategies for coping with blushing.* These include practicing **relaxation techniques, building self esteem, resolving underlying causes, developing positive and self accepting 'self talk'**.
4. *Learn to relax, it will help you to be calmer.* Like any skill learning to relax takes practice and dedication.
5. *Calming images can be used as a place to retreat to in your mind.* Use the same image each time you practice relaxation.

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6. *Recognise the part played by negative and sometimes automatic ways of thinking in making yourself feel bad about the prospect of blushing.* Keep a record of your thoughts associated with blushing to identify and characterise your pattern of thinking.
7. *How realistic are your thoughts?* Look for more helpful and realistic alternatives. Remember that it is not other people who are telling you you look silly or incompetent – it's you! It is your own thoughts that create unpleasant feelings; work on changing them.
8. *Avoid over-generalising from one situation to another.*
9. *Avoid thinking in all or nothing or absolutist terms.* Start afresh and test out each situation as it happens.
10. *Distraction techniques can be used to cope with blushing.* Instead of concentrating on your own thoughts and/or imagined thoughts of others concentrate on other mental images or objects, or carefully monitor the appearance of people around you.
11. *Be positive about yourself and others' reactions.* Recognise your strengths and that blushing is only one aspect of you that other people might notice. Avoid putting thoughts into other people's heads and do not feel that you are responsible for any comments they might make.
12. *Take control of your life.* Set short and long term goals and work towards changing your life at your own pace. Monitor your change and congratulate yourself on making positive changes and improvements.

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Monitoring change and progress:

This can be used to provide a record of the situations in which blushing occurs, your thoughts when blushing, blushing frequency, intensity and duration. It can be used to give you better insight into your inner thoughts and feelings and you can use it to realise the positive thoughts you need to start telling yourself instead of the negative ones.

Record example:

Severity rating: 1 = not particularly severe. 2 = Moderately severe. 3 = Somewhat severe.
4 = Very severe 5 = Extremely severe

Day	Date	Situation	Severity (1-5)	Time lasted	Thoughts
Mon	27th	Reception area. Praised by boss for getting work done well	4	7 min	I wish she hadn't singled me out
wed	1st	On bus and acquaintance called out to me	5	5 min	Everybody is looking at me
Fri	3rd	In supermarket asked by stranger for price of something in my basket	2	1 min	What does he think of me

Positive self talk for a difficult situation:

- I can cope with this
- I will be positive
- I will think rationally
- I will not worry; it won't help
- I will manage the situation

Positive self talk when blushing:

- It's not the worst thing that could happen me
- This is a good chance for me to practice coping
- I will just pause and be positive
- I can handle this challenge
- I am going to stay and confront this
- I love myself

Positive self talk when you succeed:

- It's getting better
- I'm proud of and pleased with myself
- I can do it and I will
- It's not so bad after all
- When I control my thoughts I control my blush