

6 your anxiety patterns

for you to know

When you understand the thoughts and situations that trigger feelings of anxiety within you, you can better help yourself to prevent and manage it. A behavior log can help you learn about your anxiety patterns.

Alex used to describe himself as a nervous person. He felt like he was more anxious than most people, and that made him very shy. He was always afraid he would say or do something when he was nervous that would make him look stupid or make people laugh at him. He thought he always had to be a little guarded to keep from doing or saying something embarrassing. There were only a couple of people with whom he felt comfortable enough to be himself. Alex would have liked to be able to relax enough to meet more people, but he didn't know how.

His counselor wasn't sure that Alex's nervousness was as much of a problem as Alex felt it was. She asked him to try keeping a behavior log to make him aware of the times and situations when he experienced anxiety. A copy of part of Alex's log is shown on the next page. Alex was surprised to realize that he was highly anxious only in certain situations with certain people—usually peers whom he perceived as smarter than himself. He realized that there were also many times when he felt confident, mainly with adults, but also with peers that he felt were at his intellectual level. This new knowledge helped give him the courage to better handle the times he did feel anxiety and to take small risks to meet new people.

Alex's Behavior Log

Day	Time	Situation	What I'm Thinking	My Anxiety Level
Saturday	6 p.m.	Meeting my parents' friends who came to our house. I have a 15-minute conversation with them.	These people are nice and easy to talk to.	low
Sunday	2 p.m.	At a baseball game with my dad. Run into some kids I know from school. Talk for 5 minutes.	These kids are in Student Council Club with me. I'm surprised they came over to say hi. Maybe they like me.	medium
Monday	4 p.m.	Watching my little brother after school. Helping him and his friends practice batting.	These kids are cute. I know a lot more than they do.	low
Tuesday	11 a.m.	Working on group project in chemistry class.	Everyone understands this stuff better than I do. They probably think I'm stupid.	high
Thursday	3 p.m.	Sitting on the bus with Nathan, the smartest kid in the school.	If I open my mouth and say anything, I'll sound dumb. I better just sit here and stare out the window.	high
Friday	7 p.m.	Having pizza at David's house.	I'm glad David is my best friend. He's fun, and we like the same things.	low

directions

The behavior log on the next page gives you a place to record observations about the times you feel anxious. Make as many copies as you need and use them to record information about your feelings of anxiety for at least one week.

activity 6 * your anxiety patterns

My Behavior Log

Name _____ Week of _____

Day	Time	Situation	What I'm Thinking	My Anxiety Level

more to do

After you have filled out the behavior log for a week, answer the following questions:

What was it like to pay attention to your feelings of anxiety by keeping this log?

Did keeping the log tend to make you more or less anxious? Why?

Look back over your log. Describe any patterns you notice over time.

Describe any new information you learned about yourself from keeping this log.

How can you use this log to help you understand and manage your feelings of anxiety?
