Heterosocial Anxiety Intervention for Excessive Alcohol Users in College: 
A Bibliotherapy Approach

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

by

Joshua L. Medjuck

Dr. William O’Donohue/Dissertation Advisor

August, 2014
We recommend that the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

JOSHUA L. MEDJUCK

entitled

Heterosocial Anxiety Intervention for Excessive Alcohol Users in College: A Bibliotherapy Approach

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

William O'Donohue, Ph.D., Advisor

Holly Hazlett-Stevens, Ph.D., Committee Member

Anthony Papa, Ph.D., Committee Member

Jane Fisher, Ph.D., Committee Member

Meri Shadley, Ph.D., Graduate School Representative

Marsha H. Read, Ph. D., Dean, Graduate School

August, 2014
Alcohol use continues to grow at an alarming rate in college students despite serious health risks and numerous attempts to implement effective prevention programs. Many interventions are costly, time-consuming, and unappealing to young adults. Social anxiety is conceptualized as contributing to alcohol use but research has been unable to show a clear relationship between these two factors. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of a brief self-help book on alcohol use with college students reporting elevated drinking rates and heterosocial anxiety. The self-help book was written by the principal investigator and William O’Donohue, Ph.D. and utilized cognitive-behavioral techniques for reducing heterosocial anxiety, or anxiety caused by opposite sex interactions, in a casual and interactive format. Over 500 undergraduate students were screened for participation and 49 were randomly assigned to read the self-help book or a wait-list control condition. Participants completed several dependent measures at the beginning and end of a five week period. Results showed significant differences for the self-help group in terms of alcohol use, heterosocial anxiety, and heterosocial competence. The self-help group also demonstrated significant between group differences for heterosocial competence and heterosexual interactions. No significant changes were found in the self-help group for alcohol-related problems or binge drinking. Results, study limitations and implications for alcohol research with college students are discussed.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.................................................................................................................iv

LIST OF FIGURES................................................................................................................v

INTRODUCTION..................................................................................................................1

Overview.........................................................................................................................1

Existing Models of Alcohol Use and Anxiety.................................................................2

Adolescent Social Anxiety and Alcohol........................................................................3

Alcohol Prevention Programs with Adolescents.........................................................6

Efficacy of Self-Help Mental Health Treatments.........................................................7

Proposed Heterosocial Anxiety Bibliotherapy............................................................9

Treatment Development...............................................................................................12

CURRENT STUDY..............................................................................................................13

Methods.........................................................................................................................13

Participants......................................................................................................................14

Dependent Measures....................................................................................................15

Procedures......................................................................................................................18

RESULTS.........................................................................................................................19

Alcohol-Related Behavior............................................................................................19

Dating-Related Behavior..............................................................................................20

Pretreatment Equivalence.............................................................................................20

Statistical Significance in Completer Sample.............................................................21

Treatment Compliance.................................................................................................21
Question #1: Did the self-help book reduce alcohol use and/or alcohol-related problems? .......................................................... 22

Question #2: Did the self-help book reduce dating anxiety and/or increase heterosocial competence? .................................................. 23

Question #3: How did the participants evaluate the self-help book? ............................................................................. 25

DISCUSSION ................................................................................................................................. 26

Negative Results .......................................................................................................................... 31

Study Limitations ......................................................................................................................... 32

Implications for Future Research .................................................................................................. 33

Conclusions .................................................................................................................................. 34

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................................... 35

Appendix A. Daily Drinking Questionnaire .................................................................................. 54

Appendix B. Rutgers Alcohol Problem Inventory .......................................................................... 56

Appendix C. Dating Anxiety Scale for Adolescents...................................................................... 59

Appendix D. Measure of Adolescent Heterosocial Competence ............................................... 61

Appendix E. Survey of Heterosexual Interactions ....................................................................... 69

Appendix F. Social Interaction Anxiety Scale ............................................................................. 74

Appendix G. Credibility Questionnaire ......................................................................................... 75

Appendix H. Girl friend/Boy friend: Curing the Jitters (Self-Help Book) .................................... 77
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1  Correlations among dependent measures for study participants............45
Table 2  Means (standard deviations) and effect sizes for dependent
        measures in completer sample by treatment condition.......................46
Table 3  Multiple regression and effect size analyses for dependent
        measures at week 5.................................................................47
Table 4  Frequency of responses to Credibility Questionnaire.......................49
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Means for total drinks in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Means for total drinking hours in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Means for alcohol problems in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Means for heterosocial anxiety in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Means for heterosocial competence in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Means for heterosexual interactions in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Means for social anxiety in completer sample by treatment condition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Overview

The rate of alcohol consumption among college students is a major health concern in the United States as well as many other countries. According to a national survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, rates of binge alcohol use (i.e. five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days) in 2007 were 35.7% among persons aged 18 to 20 and 45.9% among 21 to 25 year olds (SAMHSA, 2007). Excessive drinking in college has been shown to lead to a number of adverse outcomes. It is estimated that 1,700 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are killed each year from alcohol-related injuries while 599,000 are unintentionally injured. Almost 100,000 students between the ages of 18 and 24 are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault or date rape each year. Approximately 25% of college students report missing class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams or papers, and receiving lower grades overall as a result of drinking (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005). Furthermore, excessive alcohol use can develop into alcoholism, or alcohol dependence, which leads to physical addiction to alcohol despite interfering with physical health, mental health, and social, familial, or occupational responsibilities (MedLine Plus, 2011).

An important question to consider is what motivates young individuals to drink alcohol, particularly in excessive amounts? Surely, there are a variety of motivations because this is a large heterogeneous group but it is critical to understand the functions of alcohol consumption in this population in order to develop more effective prevention and treatment programs.
Existing Models of Alcohol Use and Anxiety

A number of proposed models have linked the psychological processes underlying excessive alcohol use to anxiety. Conger (1956) developed a framework termed the Tension-Reduction Theory (TRT) stating alcohol consumption reduces anxiety and therefore provides negative reinforcement of drinking behavior. Subsequent theories have examined similar behavioral principles to TRT, most notably the Stress Response Dampening (SRD) model (Sher & Levenson, 1982), and the Self-Medication Hypothesis (SMH) (Khantzian, 1985). The SRD model argues that individuals may find alcohol consumption reinforcing because of its ability to dampen the stress response after they drink. Chutuape & de Witt (1995) argue for the following SMH assumptions: (1) anxiety precedes alcohol use; (2) alcohol use provides temporary relief from anxiety symptoms; and (3) alcohol use for relief of anxiety may lead to problematic use (Morris, Stewart, & Ham, 2005). Furthermore, the physiological and psychological effects of drugs may help buffer the distress caused by emotional instability. Subsequent research has also shown that alcohol abusers use to constrict or cut off emotions from awareness (Suh, Ruffins, Robins, Albanese, & Khantzian, 2008).

A paradigm proposed by Steele, Southwick, and Pagano (1986) called the attention-allocation model (AAM) contends that alcohol diminishes attention to anxiety cues. AAM posits that alcohol reduces effortful cognitive processing by limiting the range of perceivable cues and the capacity to process them. As a result, the remaining attentional resources are only used to target the most salient cues in the environment. A narrowing attentional focus on provocative environmental stimuli (i.e., social cues of the opposite sex) minimizes the salience of inhibitory cues normally triggering anxiety.
Lastly, there is a line of research focused on the impact of alcohol expectancies on anxiety symptoms. Alcohol expectancies refer to beliefs that people have about the effects of alcohol on a certain outcome or series of outcomes (Burke & Stephens, 1999). Several researchers have proposed a theory outlining alcohol expectancies as a moderating variable in the relationship between social anxiety and problematic drinking (Bruch, Rivet, Heimberg, & Levin, 1997; Tran, Haaga, & Chambless, 1997). The theory is based on the hypothesis that socially anxious individuals interpret drinking as adaptive when it is perceived as leading to positive social outcomes such as increased sociability but avoid alcohol when there is a belief that it will produce an aversive social outcomes like rejection or embarrassment (Eggleston, Woolaway-Bickel, & Schmidt, 2004; Morris et al., 2005).

**Adolescent Social Anxiety and Alcohol**

Much research has examined the relationship between social anxiety and drinking in adolescent populations attending college or university (e.g. Buckner & Schmidt, 2009; Eggleston, et al., 2004; Ham & Hope, 2005; Kidorf & Lang, 1999; Lewis & O’Neill, 2000). Social anxiety has been shown to significantly increase the risk of also having a diagnosis of alcohol abuse or dependence among college students (Kushner, Sher, Wood & Wood, 1994). However, other studies examining social anxiety and alcohol use in college students have reported non-significant (Bruch, Heimberg, Harvey, & McCann, 1992; Bruch et al., 1997; Buckner, Schmidt, & Eggleston, 2006) and inverse (Ham, Bonin, & Hope, 2007; Ham & Hope, 2005; Holle, Heimberg, Sweet, & Holt, 1995; Lewis et al., 2008) relationships between these two variables. These inconsistent findings suggest that individual elements associated with social anxiety may be
contributing to problematic drinking behaviors as opposed to the full spectrum of diagnostic criteria.

This study advocates a model in which one pathway to increased alcohol use is that it is reinforced by diminished heterosexual social anxiety. Within this model, heterosocial anxiety is viewed as a subset of social anxiety because fear of negative evaluation by the opposite sex remains an integral element of this construct. Thus, in contrast to generalized social anxiety, this model emphasizes that a fear of negative evaluation of same sex individuals is not as central to the phobic reaction but rather that anxiety is only triggered by potential sexual partners. I hypothesize that adolescent drinking behaviors adhere to an expectancy model predominantly based on negative reinforcement and that this population consumes problematic levels of alcohol in order to alleviate anxiety initiated by heterosocial encounters. In addition, settings in which heterosocial evaluation is more likely (e.g. parties, dances, etc.) are contexts in which problematic drinking is more likely to occur. This model suggests that alcohol prevention programs should tailor evidence-based interventions for social anxiety such as exposure therapy, cognitive therapy and social skills training (Chambless et al., 1996) to heterosocial contexts. One of the hallmarks of this approach would be to develop and promote heterosocial competence, or “the ability to effectively negotiate social situations that involve the other sex including acquaintanceships, friendships, romantic, and sexual relationships” (Grover, Nangle, Serwik, & Zeff, 2007, p. 491).

Several studies have evaluated the link between alcohol use and reduced heterosocial anxiety in college students and found promising results. A classic study by Yankofsky, Wilson, Adler, Hay, & Vrana (1986) specifically examined the effects of
alcohol on perceptions of negative feedback and negative self-evaluation in heterosocial interactions. Forty male college students were asked to socialize with a female confederate under two conditions: positive and negative feedback. Experimental subjects were asked to consume an alcoholic beverage preceding the negative feedback condition while control subjects were not given these instructions. All subjects completed rating forms before and after each condition to evaluate self-perceptions. In the sober condition, subjects’ perceptions of control and power were reduced when compared across the female encounters. However, subjects who consumed alcohol reported similar perceptions when receiving positive and negative interpersonal feedback. These results “demonstrate that negative interpersonal feedback diminishes perceptions of control and power and that alcohol attenuates this process” (Yankofsky et al., 1986, p. 31). If heterosocial anxiety stems from personal insecurities during other-sex interactions and alcohol helps protect against these perceptions then it makes sense that adolescents routinely engage in drinking during social events.

Expanding on Yankofsky et al. (1986) work, Corcoran and Michels (1999) investigated how alcohol expectancies influence consumption in a mixed-sex interaction. College students were instructed to interact with an unknown member of the opposite sex for 15 minutes. Participants were told to evaluate their partner after 4 minutes and then select an alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage before returning to socialize. The results revealed subjects with positive alcohol expectancies and subjects who perceived their partner as anxious were more likely to select alcohol. The authors concluded that individuals with positive alcohol expectancies chose to enhance their enjoyment of the situation by selecting an alcoholic drink. They also proposed that individuals who
perceived their partner as anxious chose alcohol to make the context more relaxing; thereby, implying that alcohol was perceived to have tension-reducing qualities.

Finally, a recent study examining the effects of alcohol outcome expectancies provided additional evidence that alcohol reduces tension in anxiety-provoking situations. Friedman, McCarthy, Bartholow, & Hicks (2007) investigated whether drinking-related cues reduce tension when alcohol use is absent. In one half of the experiment, the researchers exposed subjects to alcohol-related words and then asked them to meet with an opposite-gender stranger. The results showed that individuals with strong expectancies about alcohol reducing tension were more willing to convene with the opposite-gender confederate than subjects who viewed alcohol as having a different effect. These findings suggest that individuals who view alcohol as tension reducing are more likely to experience desirable interactions with the opposite sex when drinking compared to sober.

**Alcohol Prevention Programs with Adolescents**

Despite the alarming rates of alcohol use in college, few interventions have been effective at sustaining meaningful reductions in student drinking. Traditional information-based programs have little empirical support (Cuijpers, 2003; Moskowitz, 1989) but still receive attention as viable treatment options for college students (Larimer & Cronce; 2007; Lysaught, Wodarski, & Parris, 2003; Neighbors, Spieker, Oster-Aaland, Lewis, & Bergstrom, 2006). A meta-analysis revealed Project D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), the most widely used substance abuse prevention program for school-aged youths, to be largely ineffective at reducing substance abuse (West. & O’Neal, 2004). The large, multi-site Project MATCH tested whether alcohol treatment
outcomes could be improved by matching subgroups of participants to various treatment modalities and found that matching did not substantially enhance outcomes (Project MATCH Research Group, 1997). Furthermore, the majority of college-focused alcohol research suffers from numerous methodological limitations making it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the data (Larimer & Cronce, 2002).

The data from a number of studies have shown that heavy-drinking college populations demonstrate minimal improvements with most alcohol treatment programs (Agostinelli, Brown, & Miller, 1995; Carey, Scott-Sheldon, Carey, & DeMartini, 2007; Fromme & Corbin, 2004; Neal and Carey, 2004). Research has suggested that students most in need of alcohol interventions are the ones least likely to participate in designated programs (Black & Coster, 1996). Moreover, these individuals are most likely to experience alcohol-related problems on campus (Presley & Pimentel, 2006). Although some brief motivational interventions and skills-based programs have been successful at decreasing alcohol use in college students (Larimer & Cronce, 2007), other research suggests that these improvements are brief and subside with time. Intervention effects on consumption peak at immediate (4-13 weeks) and intermediate (14-26 weeks) follow-ups but rarely persist beyond 6 months (Carey et al., 2007).

Efficacy of Self-Help Mental Health Treatments

I will be drawing from a review on the efficacy of internet-based psychological interventions compiled by Stefanic (2008) that highlights many of the strengths associated with this treatment modality. Printed books and manuals along with other self-help interventions have shown promise as effective treatment approaches for a number of mental health problems (Andersson, Cuijpers, Carlbring, & Lindefors, 2007).
Alternative therapy modalities serve a vital role in disseminating empirically supported treatments to populations unable to gain access to in-person mental health services. Bibliotherapy offers a unique opportunity for consumers to receive state of the art psychological interventions without several of the drawbacks associated with traditional psychotherapy. Griffiths and Christensen (2006) contend that bibliotherapy allows clients to learn, review and strengthen skills at a fraction of the price of meeting with an individual therapist. Furthermore, self-help approaches circumvent the stigma attached to seeking out services in public settings where clients may be judged negatively by others for receiving treatment. This point is particularly salient in the college environment where students are highly concerned with social status and the opinions of peers.

Several studies have evaluated the effectiveness of self-help programs for the treatment of social anxiety, a variation of heterosocial anxiety. Andersson et al. (2006) found subjects improved on numerous social phobia measures compared to a wait-list control when combining two sessions of exposure and limited therapist contact/peer support with internet components covering psychoeducation, cognitive restructuring, exposure, communication skills, assertiveness training and relapse prevention. In a dismantling study, Carlbring et al. (2006) replicated the Andersson et al. (2006) research paradigm without the exposure component and acquired similar results suggesting that exposure may not be as critical to reducing anxiety as the self-help materials. Abramowitz, Moore, Braddock, and Harrington (2009) evaluated the efficacy of a popular CBT bibliotherapy against a wait-list control group for individuals diagnosed with social phobia. Participants had five brief reviews sessions with the therapist over an eight week period but did not receive active treatment outside of the bibliotherapy.
Results showed greater improvements on several outcome measures for the bibliotherapy group in comparison to wait-list. Taken together, these studies suggest that social anxiety is treatable via client-directed interventions such as bibliotherapy and offers an attractive alternative to traditional psychotherapy for individuals who may be interested in it.

**Proposed Heterosocial Anxiety Bibliotherapy**

Traditional treatments for alcohol use in college do not adequately evaluate the causes underlying excessive drinking and what factors serve to maintain unhealthy drinking patterns. As stated previously, this study hypothesizes that one of the main contributors to excessive drinking in college is anxiety caused by interactions between members of the opposite sex. Alcohol use is reinforced due to its anxiolytic effects in situations that require heterosocial competence – a skillset still developing in a large portion of the college population. Therefore, an intervention focused on reducing alcohol use through the development of heterosocial competence would be highly beneficial for college students. In order to address the need for an effective alcohol program for adolescents, William O’Donohue, Ph.D. and I developed a self-help book that promotes heterosocial competence to reduce problematic drinking.

Grover et al. (2007) outlined some of the core features of heterosocial competence which I will briefly review here. First and foremost, other-sex social interactions involve many of the same skills utilized within same-sex social interactions. The individual engages the other person or group by expressing interest in responses, replying with relevant information, and successfully navigating conflict (Kelly, 1982). Heterosocial competence also involves date initiation, or the act of pursuing a relationship for the purpose of forming a sexual bond (Wilkins & Matson, 2007). In the process of achieving
this goal, it is important to manage anxiety induced by demonstrating sexual feelings toward another person. Adolescents experimenting with romantic relationships often encounter anxiety as they explore new ways of connecting with the opposite sex (Glickman & LaGreca, 2004). Repeated exposure to heterosocial interactions in conjunction with relaxation techniques and cognitive restructuring are critical to reducing anxiety elicited in these situations. Lastly, heterosocial competence involves balancing emotional responses with interpersonal and communication skills. Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, and Reiss (1988) found that college students reported more difficulty managing interactions with romantic partners as opposed to intimate friends of the same sex. These results suggest the complex emotional dynamic inherent in romantic relationships remains a challenging issue for adolescents transitioning into adulthood. Skill development in this domain revolves around combining intimacy with established prosocial behaviors (i.e. eye contact, interpersonal distance etc.) in order to build rapport with the opposite sex.

Advancements in technology and social media have made traditional forms of heterosocial competence less relevant to the current generation of adolescents and young adults. A large portion of social interaction now takes place via electronic text as opposed to conversing over the phone or face-to-face meetings. The impersonal nature of electronic communication mitigates the need for interpersonal skills that have been developed through traditional heterosocial interactions in the past. An emerging facet of heterosocial competence involves interacting without electronic text and practicing interpersonal skills. This area deserves further attention as the heterosocial competence literature evolves and examines new ways of evaluating this construct.
The self-help book includes empirically supported cognitive-behavioral treatments for social anxiety but will be designed to target heterosocial anxiety. Moreover, the self-help book is presented in an interactive format catered to an adolescent audience. It is likely an intervention of this nature has more appeal to college students than traditional alcohol treatment programs because it is packaged as a guide to developing better cross-gender relationships as opposed to one reducing harmful drinking behavior.

Although in-person treatment has had some success in college populations, there are a large percentage of students who go untreated due to the stigma associated with receiving treatment for psychological difficulties (Masuda & Boone, 2011). Bibliotherapy offers an alternative to individual or group therapy by providing empirically-based interventions in a format that tailors to the specific needs of the student. Students can read the self-help book in the comfort and privacy of their own home and consume the information at a pace that is suited to their learning style. An effective bibliotherapy for alcohol use has the potential to help many more students than individualized therapy and therefore deserves close attention as an option capable of reaching this vastly undertreated population.

One of the most challenging aspects of targeting college populations for mental health interventions is engaging the audience in treatment. A major barrier to treatment in this group is the perceived lack of relevance of the information being communicated (Gogel, Cavaleri, Gardin, & Wisdom, 2011). Another major challenge for alcohol treatment programs in college is to present the interventions in a format that is relevant and appealing to the students. The self-help book developed for this study addresses
these essential criteria. Firstly, it is written at a senior high school reading level so students do not have difficulty comprehending the language or concepts being conveyed throughout the various sections. Secondly, the format is a combination of informational passages, how-to guides, quizzes, and subject-based vignettes. This design has been hugely successful at communicating information to adolescents in lifestyle magazines and there is evidence to suggest it is effective at delivering health materials as well (Cunningham, Rapee, & Lyneham, 2007). Lastly, the self-help book introduces a model that draws upon students’ strengths to promote heterosocial competence as opposed to focusing on inherent deficits or weaknesses. The language reflects a positive outlook on personal development and encourages students to embrace their strengths in order to overcome anxiety from heterosocial interactions.

**Treatment Development**

Due to the exploratory nature of the study and its categorization as Stage I research (Rounsaville, Carroll, & Onken, 2001), I chose to evaluate the preliminary effects of the self-help book on alcohol use and heterosocial anxiety versus no treatment. Rounsaville et al. (2001) outline Stage I research as being comprised of two sub-stages: 1) Stage Ia – Therapy Development/Manual Writing; and 2) Stage Ib – Pilot Trial. Stage Ia involves creating a treatment protocol that is amenable to evaluation through empirical research. The self-help book I authored with Dr. O’Donohue targeting reduced alcohol use via treatment of heterosocial anxiety fulfills the criteria necessary for this stage. Stage Ib requires the researcher to conduct a treatment efficacy trial by examining factors such as patient improvement and retention, treatment delivery feasibility, and overall effect size. The study is designed to meet these basic experimental criteria with the
expectation of conducting future Stage II research once certain requirements have been established for this particular treatment.

**CURRENT STUDY**

**Methods**

The study used a longitudinal, within- and between-groups design in which participants were randomized to either an experimental (self-help book) or wait-list control (self-monitoring) condition for four weeks. The self-monitoring group was viewed as a no treatment or placebo control because participants were not asked to modify their behavior and monitoring instructions were purposely vague and non-descriptive. Data were collected at three separate time points: Preliminary Screening (online or classroom); Week 1 (pre-treatment) and Week 5 (post-treatment). Students who qualified for participation following the Preliminary Screening were contacted to complete additional measures at Week 1. Following the Week 1 assessment, students were randomized to the experimental or control conditions and told they would complete telephone check-ins at Week 2 and Week 4 to ensure they were reading the self-help book or monitoring personal relationships. All participants were required to complete a final assessment at Week 5 and were then debriefed on the study procedures and rationale; all control participants were offered access to the self-help book at debriefing.
Participants

Recruitment was conducted from the undergraduate population at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). The researcher recruited participants by advertising the study in undergraduate psychology courses and through the psychology department’s online subject recruitment system (consisting primarily of undergraduate psychology majors). Participants had to meet screening criteria for binge alcohol use and elevated heterosocial anxiety using the Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ) and the Dating Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (DAS-A), respectively. The DDQ is a measure designed to assess drinking frequency and quantity. Binge alcohol use was assessed using standardized criteria: ≥1 episode of heavy drinking in an average week using gender-specific criteria (four/five or more standard drinks for women/men) (Carey, Carey, Maisto & Henson, 2006). One drink was defined as a 10–12 oz. can or bottle of 4%–5% beer, a 4 oz. glass of 12% table wine, a 12 oz. bottle or can of wine cooler, or a 1.25 oz. shot of 80 proof liquor either straight or in a mixed drink. Thus, this cutoff would result in college students who had some problems with excessive drinking.

The DAS-A is designed to evaluate anxiety in heterosocial situations. Elevated heterosocial anxiety was evaluated using population norms collected during the initial validation of the measure. The sample mean for adolescents in the validation study of the DAS-A was 41 (Glickman & LaGreca, 2004); therefore, I defined ‘high’ heterosocial anxiety as any score falling above this threshold. All participants were male or female and ≥18 years old, reported binge alcohol use and high heterosocial anxiety, and were willing and able to read a self-help book. For the sake of clarity and consistency, the
DAS-A was considered the primary measure of heterosocial anxiety and any reference to heterosocial anxiety data was collected using this scale.

Over the course of the Fall 2012 semester, 504 students were screened and 78, or 15% of the sample, qualified for participation in the remaining stages of the study. Out of the 78 students who qualified for participation, 49 were able to be contacted again and agreed to participate further in the study. There were no differences on measures of alcohol use or heterosocial anxiety between participants who chose to participate further in the study and those who were unable to be contacted again (t values between .16 to 1.29, p values between .20 to .87). Continuing participants were randomized to the experimental (N = 26) and control (N = 23) conditions via random number generator. Participation in the study was rewarded with extra credit for undergraduate psychology courses. I will conduct a raffle at the conclusion of the study and award a $100 gift certificate to one of the study participants.

**Dependent Measures**

The DDQ and DAS-A were provided to all participants at Preliminary Screening and Week 5; the remaining measures were provided to all participants at Week 1 and Week 5 (except for Credibility Questionnaire which was only administered at Week 5) *The Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ; Collins, Parks, & Marlatt., 1985)*. The DDQ is a self-report measure designed to quantify recent alcohol use. Participants are asked to report the typical number of drinks consumed during each day of the week and the typical number of hours you usually drink on that day. The DDQ has demonstrated adequate convergent validity (Collins et al., 1985)
The Rutgers Alcohol Problem Inventory (RAPI; White & Labouvie, 1989). The RAPI is a 23 item self-report measure designed to assess the frequency and severity of alcohol-related problems. Participants indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how often alcohol has impacted personal, social, and academic functioning over the past 3 years. The timeline will be adjusted to 1 month in order to account for changes at post-treatment. The RAPI has demonstrated excellent internal consistency (α = .91) and discriminant validity in non-clinical college samples (White & Labouvie, 1989).

The Dating Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (DAS-A; Glickman & La Greca, 2004). The DAS-A is a 21-item self-report measure designed to assess social avoidance and distress (SAD) and fear of negative evaluation (FNE) in adolescent dating situations. It contains three factors – FNE-Dating (fear of negative evaluation in dating situations); SD Date (social distress when interacting with real or potential dating partners); and SD Group (social distress when in a group of mixed-sex peers). The internal consistency of the scale was shown to be .94 (Glickman & LaGreca, 2004). The DAS-A was the primary measure used to assess heterosocial anxiety.

The Measure of Adolescent Heterosocial Competence – College Student Version (MAHC-CSV; Grover, Nangle, & Zeff, 2005). The MAHC-CSV is a 40-item multiple choice questionnaire modified from the original version to assess heterosocial competence in college students. Respondents are asked to read brief vignettes of heterosocial situations and select their response from four choices of varying competence. Higher values assigned to more competent choices and total scores range from 40 to 160. Internal consistency of the original scale was found to be .73 (Grover et al., 2005).
The Survey of Heterosexual Interactions (SHI; Twentyman & McFall, 1975). The SHI is a 20-item self-report measure designed to assess heterosexual avoidance through examples of heterosexual interactions. It asks subjects to indicate on a seven point Likert scale how capable they think they would be in coping with the situations presented. Internal consistency coefficients range from .89 to .91 for both the male and female forms of the SHI (Bruch & Hynes, 1987; Williams & Ciminero, 1978). Scores range from 20 to 140 and higher scores are indicative of less anxiety.

The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998). The SIAS is a 20-item self-report measure designed to assess fears caused by social interaction. It asks subjects to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how anxious they feel in various situations involving other individuals. The SIAS has been shown to have high levels of internal consistency and test-retest reliability as well as adequate discriminant validity (Brown et al., 1997; Mattick & Clarke, 1998; Osman, Gutierrez, Barrios, Kopper, & Chiros, 1998). The SIAS was my primary measure for evaluating social anxiety.

Credibility Questionnaire. This is a 10-item self-report measure modified from Yeater, Naugle, O’Donohue & Bradley (2004) to assess the bibliotherapy participants’ responses to the assigned reading. It asks participants to answer seven questions on a seven point Likert scale how much they agree with the helpfulness of the readings and its influence on heterosocial anxiety and alcohol use. One open ended question asks the participants to describe what they found most and least helpful about the readings and another inquires about how they would improve the book.
Procedures

Individuals who were interested and eligible for participation in the study were asked to come into the laboratory to undergo informed consent regarding the procedures of the study. Following completion of the remaining assessment measures, participants were provided with either the self-help book or no treatment. Participants in the experimental group were instructed to read the first-half of the self-help book during the first two weeks of the study and the remaining half of the book during the last two weeks. They were informed that they would be contacted by phone at Weeks 2 and 4 to answer questions about the assigned readings. Participants in the control condition were given different instructions. They were asked to monitor their personal relationships over four weeks. The control participants were also told they would be contacted by phone at Weeks 2 and 4 and asked questions about their personal relationships to ensure proper monitoring.

All participants were contacted by telephone at the end of Weeks 2 and 4. Standardized questions were posed to the experimental group as a manipulation check. Experimental group participants were asked if they had read the assigned chapters and finished the corresponding homework assignments. Any participants who had not read the assigned chapters or finished the homework assignments were reminded to complete them before advancing to the second half of the self-help book. Control group participants were also asked standardized questions to ensure equal treatment across conditions and reduce the influence of researcher contact on dependent measures. Each person was asked if they were regularly monitoring their personal relationships over the last two weeks. All participants responded in the affirmative to this question. No
questions regarding alcohol use or heterosocial anxiety were asked to either group as this may have influenced responding during the post-treatment assessment.

At Week 5, all of the participants were asked to complete the same questionnaires they completed at the preliminary screening and pre-treatment assessment points. In addition, the participants who used the self-help book filled out the Credibility Questionnaire to assess for feedback on the intervention. Following completion of the questionnaires, the participants were fully debriefed regarding the study’s purposes and procedures and thanked for their participation. At this point, all members in the wait-list control group were offered a copy of the self-help book for use.

Please note that data collected via the DAS-A and DDQ at the Preliminary Screening were analyzed as part of the Week 1 dataset. I conceptualized these constructs as fairly stable and deemed it not necessary to re-administer these measures again at Week 1 given the short period of time between assessment points.

RESULTS

Alcohol-Related Behavior

Out of the 504 participants screened for the study, the following breakdown represents situations participants reported drinking the most alcohol: parties (153 or 30%); bars/clubs (30 or 6%); concerts (1 or 0.2%); home (9 or 1%); meals (7 or 1%); multiple situations (160 or 31%); other situations (101 or 20%); and no response provided (43 or 8%). The same sample was asked how much alcohol they usually drink in these situations and reported anywhere from 0 to 15 drinks ($M = 3.49$). Finally, the
participants were asked how much alcohol they usually drink around the opposite sex when trying to “hook up” and reported anywhere from 0 to 15 drinks ($M = 2.15$).

**Dating-Related Behavior**

49 participants were randomized to the control and experimental conditions and 21 or 42% reported currently being in a relationship. The remaining 28 or 57% of participants denied currently being in a relationship. Length of active relationships ranged from .25 to 41 months ($M = 5.47$) and participants not currently in a relationship reported having anywhere from 0 to 5 dates over the previous month ($M = 1.25$). The range increased from 0 to 20 when participants not in a relationship were asked about their number of dates over the past year ($M = 3.00$). The number of dating partners over the past year for all participants ranged from 0 to 9 ($M = 1.96$).

**Pretreatment Equivalence**

There were no differences between the experimental and control group on any dependent measures at Week 1 (Table 2; $p’s > .05$). Groups did not differ significantly in age, $t(47) = -.32, p > .05$ ($M_{\text{experimental}} = 20.08, M_{\text{control}} = 20.26$) and ranged from 18-25 years old. Most individuals were of Caucasian ethnicity (36 Caucasian, 4 Hispanic, 1 African-American, 1 Asian, and 7 Other). The majority of individuals reported having some college education ($N = 35$). Other education responses included High school/GED ($N = 6$), 2-year degree ($N = 7$) or 4-year degree ($N = 1$). Gender distribution was the only demographic variable shown to differ significantly, $\chi^2 (1, n = 49) = 4.59, p < .05$ (17 males and 32 females)
Statistical Significance in Completer Sample

A total of 8 or 16% of participants dropped out of the study after Week 1 (6 experimental and 2 control). 5 participants did not conduct the first telephone check-in with the researchers and 3 participants did not complete the second telephone check-in. No significant differences were found between completers and non-completers in terms of, age, \( t (47) = .25, p > .05 \) (\( M_{\text{completers}} = 20.20, M_{\text{noncompleters}} = 20.00 \)), or any dependent measures at Week 1 (t-values between -1.48 to .36, p-values between .14 to .90). Gender distribution was shown to not differ significantly for completers, \( \chi^2 (1, n = 41) = 2.95, p > .05 \) (15 males and 26 females), and non-completers, \( \chi^2 (1, n = 8) = 2.00, p > .05 \) (2 males and 6 females).

Treatment Compliance

Telephone check-ins were conducted at Week 2 and Week 4 to ensure experimental participants were reading the self-help book and completing homework assignments. At the Week 2 check-in, a total of 17 or 85% of participants reported reading all of the assigned chapters and 15 or 75% of participants reported completing all the homework assignments. Participants who did not finish the readings or homework were reminded of this study requirement and asked to complete them before continuing the book. At the Week 4 check-in, a total of 17 or 85% of participants reported reading the remaining chapters and 15 or 75% of participants reported completing the remaining homework assignments. Participants who did not finish the remaining readings or homework were reminded of this study requirement and asked to complete them as soon as possible.
Question #1

**Did the self-help book reduce alcohol use and/or alcohol-related problems?**

A paired samples t-test analysis was used to evaluate the changes in alcohol-related measures across Week 1 and Week 5. All correlations between these variables are shown in Table 1. Total alcohol drinks, total hours spent drinking alcohol, and alcohol-related problems reported at Week 1 and Week 5 are shown in Table 2. A total of 20 participants completed the self-help book over the course of the study. The results demonstrated that participants in the experimental group reduced overall consumption of alcohol drinks from $M = 12.80$ at Week 1 to $M = 8.93$ at Week 5. This was a significant reduction in drinking at Week 5, $t(19) = 4.29, p < .05$, indicating a medium to large effect size ($d = .67$) for the intervention. In contrast, the control participants, or those individuals who did not read the self-help book, did not show a significant decrease in drinking over the same time period, $t(20) = 1.74, p > .05$. A total of 7 or 35% of experimental participants no longer met criteria for binge drinking at Week 5; however, 7 or 33% of control participants also did not meet criteria for binge drinking at Week 5 making this finding insignificant, $t(39) = -.11, p > .05$. There were no significant differences in terms of hours spent drinking alcohol, $t(19) = 1.13, p > .05, d = .23$, or alcohol-related problems, $t(19) = 1.11, p > .05, d = .18$, for experimental participants. Interestingly, the control group showed a significant decrease in alcohol-related problems at Week 5, $t(20) = 4.33, p < .05$, but not for hours spent drinking alcohol, $t(20) = 1.00, p > .05$.

To examine the effects of group assignment on total alcohol drinks at Week 5, I used a multiple regression analysis in which my main predictor was group assignment but
controlled for total alcohol drinks at Week 1, gender and dating status. I decided to control for gender and dating status in addition to Week 1 data for several reasons. Gender was included as a covariate because men consume more alcohol than women on average and must drink more than women to meet cutoffs for binge alcohol use. Dating status was also included as a covariate because I assumed that actively dating participants have regular heterosocial interactions and may respond differently to the intervention compared to single participants. Lastly, there was very little variation in other demographic variables for this college sample (e.g. age, ethnicity, education level etc.) and therefore variability at Week 5 was not expected to be influenced by these factors.

Results indicated that the experimental group was associated with a decrease in total alcohol drinks ($\beta = -0.15$, $p = .18$, $d = .42$). Although no significant difference was found between group conditions, the overall trend demonstrated a small-to-medium effect size on alcohol use and potential for modest behavioral change. The remaining alcohol-related measures were also analyzed using multiple regression to examine the effects of group assignment but none of them produced significant results (see Table 3).

**Question #2**

**Did the self-help book reduce heterosocial anxiety and/or increase heterosocial competence?**

As before, a paired samples t-test analysis was used to evaluate the changes in social behavior at Week 1 and Week 5. All correlations between these variables are shown in Table 1. Heterosocial anxiety, heterosocial competence, and heterosexual interactions reported at Week 1 and Week 5 are shown in Table 2. The experimental participants showed a significant decrease in heterosocial anxiety at Week 5, $t (19) =$
4.29, \( p < .05 \), representing a medium effect size \((d = .53)\). The same participants also demonstrated a significant increase in heterosocial competence, \( t(19) = -3.61, \ p < .05 \), with a similar effect size \((d = .55)\). Participants in the control group did not show a significant decrease in heterosocial anxiety, \( t(20) = .87, \ p > .05 \), and failed to produce a significant increase in heterosexual interactions, \( t(20) = .88, \ p > .05 \) and heterosocial competence, \( t(20) = -.53, \ p > .05 \). Experimental participants’ increase in heterosexual interactions at Week 5 just failed to meet criteria for significance, \( t(19) = -1.96, \ p = .06 \), \( d = .30 \).

Another question I was interested in answering pertained to the relationship between heterosocial anxiety, heterosexual interactions, and social anxiety. I included a standard measure of social interaction anxiety to assess whether our self-help book influenced this construct similarly to heterosocial anxiety and heterosexual interactions. The results demonstrated that social anxiety did not change significantly for experimental, \( t(19) = .49, \ p > .05 \) or control, \( t(20) = -3.83, \ p > .05 \) participants at Week 5. Interestingly, these data suggest social anxiety is a separate construct from heterosocial anxiety and avoidance and less responsive to our self-help book than anxiety derived from opposite sex interactions.

Finally, I used a multiple regression analysis to examine the effects of group assignment on heterosocial anxiety and heterosocial competence at Week 5 and controlled for the corresponding data at Week 1 as well as gender and dating status. Gender and dating status were selected as control variables once more because I did not want discrepancies in anxiety prevalence across these factors to confound my findings. Results indicated that the experimental group was associated with a non-significant
decrease in heterosocial anxiety (β = -.19, p = .16) but did produce a medium effect size (d = .44). However, the results showed that the experimental group was associated with an increase in heterosocial competence at the cutoff for statistical significance (β = .17, p = .05) with a medium-to-large effect size (d = .63). Furthermore, they also demonstrated an increase in heterosexual interactions at statistical significance (β = .19, p = .05) with another medium to large effect size (d = .62). These findings suggest participants saw the most change within these domains after using the self-help book. Social anxiety failed to produce significant results when analyzing the effects of group assignment (see Table 3).

Question #3

How did participants evaluate the self-help book?

Our credibility questionnaire was comprised of 10 questions (8 Likert rating scale; 2 open-ended) to assess experimental participants reaction to the self-help book. The Likert rating scale questions asked whether (a) the material was realistic, (b) the content was appropriate to your life, (c) the content reduced dating anxiety, (d) the strategies were useful, (e) friends should read the book, (f) the content reduced alcohol use, (g) the content reduced alcohol use in dating situations, and (h) most students would use the strategies. Table 4 shows the frequencies and percentages of selected responses to the self-help book as reported by participants in the experimental group. The results indicate that positive responses outweigh the number of neutral or negative responses to each question asked. Participants were more likely to agree than disagree that (a) the material was realistic, χ² (3, n = 20) = 10.00, p < .05; (b) the content was appropriate to your life, χ² (4, n = 20) = 21.50, p < .01; (c) the content reduced dating anxiety, χ² (4, n = 20) = 11.00, p < .05; (d) the strategies were useful, χ² (4, n = 20) = 18.00, p < .01; (e) friends
should read the book, $\chi^2 (3, n = 20) = 14.00, p < .01$; and (f) most students would use the strategies, $\chi^2 (4, n = 20) = 12.00, p < .05$.

**DISCUSSION**

The main goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a brief self-help book for college students at reducing alcohol use over a 1-month period. Our theoretical model underpinning the self-help book proposes that heterosocial anxiety, or anxiety caused by interactions with members of the opposite sex, is a major influence on drinking rates in this population. I believe this is the first study to empirically evaluate this assumption using a bibliotherapy intervention targeting heterosocial anxiety to decrease overall alcohol use. The results suggest that our self-help book is successful at reducing heterosocial anxiety and alcohol use in college students and warrants further research as an easily accessible, cost-effective resource for young adults who engage in problematic drinking.

Standard approaches for evaluating the relationship between alcohol use and social anxiety have primarily focused on sensitivity to other-oriented evaluation as predictive of drinking rates. Unfortunately, the literature has been unable to identify a reliable association between social anxiety and alcohol use in college populations and numerous studies have reported conflicting results. An important element often overlooked by these studies is the environmental context in which the social evaluation takes place. The current study attempted to investigate how heterosocial anxiety, a subset of social anxiety, may influence alcohol use in college students because of the unique environment found on college campuses. Preliminary results on drinking behavior in college students
demonstrated that alcohol use occurs most often at parties, a setting that involves heterosocial interactions. This suggests that heterosocial environments are more conducive to drinking as opposed to ones that involve same-sex individuals or no one else at all.

Our findings suggest that brief, self-administered, cognitive-behavioral interventions for reducing heterosocial anxiety and developing heterosocial competence can reduce alcohol use in college students when provided in a fun, interactive self-help book. Participants in the experimental condition who read our self-help book over one month showed significant decreases in alcohol use at post-treatment. In contrast, participants who were not provided with the self-help book did not report similar reductions in alcohol use. Although our regression analyses did not show a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of alcohol use at post-treatment, the observed trend of diminished drinking after exposure to the self-help book offers potential with replication using a larger sample size. The increased power afforded by more study participants may also produce shifts in outcomes such as alcohol-related problems and hours spent drinking. Although not a significant change, it was unexpected to see the control group demonstrate larger decreases in alcohol-related problems compared to participants who read the self-help book. Given the improved rates in drinking for experimental participants, I interpreted this finding as resulting from our small sample size or not allowing enough time for participants to accurately evaluate the impact of the intervention. Replication will help determine if the self-help book can create clinically relevant shifts in these domains.
It is important to note that the self-help book was largely based on normalizing anxiety and developing social skills in situations with potential partners of the opposite sex. Only a small proportion of the readings discussed the negative social consequences of excessive drinking and how to practice healthy alcohol use. Based on these results, I believe that focusing on heterosocial factors within a structured intervention can lead to improved drinking rates for college students. In addition, our approach is consistent with alcohol treatment research in college students suggesting that motivational and skills-based interventions are superior to alcohol education in reducing drinking (Carey et al., 2007; Larimer & Cronce, 2007).

Another important question posed by this study is how our self-help book influenced heterosocial anxiety and heterosocial competence in college students. I hypothesized that elevated heterosocial anxiety would contribute most significantly to heavy drinking in this population. Surprisingly, our data at Week 1 provided mixed results. The general college population showed a negative correlation between heterosocial anxiety and total alcohol use while our smaller sample of heavy college drinkers did not show this same relationship. These results suggest that college students drink less when they experience heterosocial anxiety just like individuals high in social anxiety who consume less alcohol than non-anxious peers (Eggleston et al., 2004; Ham & Hope, 2005). However, an interesting finding from the heavy drinking sample was the strong negative relationship between heterosocial competence and total alcohol use. This result shows that individuals lower in heterosocial competence are more likely to engage in alcohol use. In conjunction, these findings suggest that heterosocial competence may be more closely related to alcohol use than heterosocial anxiety and deserves further attention in alcohol
treatment programs for students. Experimental group results indicated medium to large effect sizes in heterosocial competence and heterosexual interactions suggesting that the self-help book produced similar shifts in both constructs. Furthermore, heterosocial competence and heterosexual interactions were the only variables shown to be significantly different between group conditions at post-treatment. This offers evidence that the self-help book is most effective at developing heterosocial skills as opposed to merely reducing anxiety caused by opposite sex interactions. It may be that improving self-confidence and cultivating proficiency in heterosocial situations are the key mechanisms to target within structured alcohol interventions for this population.

I believe the heterosocial model for college alcohol use is consistent with these combined results due to the characteristics underlying heterosocial anxiety and heterosocial competence. A major premise in the self-help book is that heterosocial anxiety is normal and everyone experiences it throughout development. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that all college students experience varying degrees of heterosocial anxiety when confronted with members of the opposite sex. In our sample, the lack of a relationship between heterosocial anxiety and alcohol use suggests that drinking does not serve a reliable function in this context. However, heterosocial anxiety often elicits avoidant behavior in order to remove aversive emotion and therefore precludes the need for alcohol. Heterosocial competence, on the other hand, is qualitatively different from heterosocial anxiety because it involves opposite sex interaction in order to be subjectively evaluated. It requires motivation to engage in interpersonal exchanges and increases the likelihood of encountering heterosocial cues that trigger anxiety. With desensitization to social feedback a well-documented phenomenon in the alcohol
literature (Steele & Josephs, 1988), individuals low in heterosocial competence appear more likely to benefit from drinking than others only experiencing heterosocial anxiety.

A third point of interest in the study was to examine how our self-help book influenced the overarching construct of social anxiety. As previously stated, the field has been largely unsuccessful at defining the relationship between social anxiety and alcohol use in college students. Our assertion that heterosocial anxiety is distinct from social anxiety and often conflated in alcohol research led us to hypothesize that social anxiety would be unchanged by our self-help book. The results demonstrated that social anxiety stayed relatively stable across time points and did not show significant change in the experimental and control conditions. When considering these findings in combination with the significant changes in heterosocial anxiety for experimental participants, I believe this provides evidence that social anxiety and heterosocial anxiety function in different ways. The self-help book was designed to reduce anxiety and increase confidence in heterosocial interactions – not all social situations. Young adults often experience anxiety in highly specific situations (e.g. dating) without generalizing this response to all social contexts. The factors contributing to anxious responding on a date are no longer relevant when conversing with a close friend or family member of the opposite sex. The self-help book likely created movement in heterosocial variables and not social anxiety because it targeted gender specific factors that lead to anxious responding. Although correlational in nature, the fact that alcohol use covaried more closely with heterosocial factors than social anxiety suggests this line of research deserves further examination.
Lastly, I wanted to evaluate how participants received the self-help book and elicit feedback on how to improve the materials in future iterations. Many participants provided positive verbal feedback about the readings during the final telephone contact and no major criticisms were reported. In addition, the data collected via credibility questionnaire showed that participants were more likely to agree than disagree with statements about the utility of the self-help book across different domains. The overall positive response was encouraging because it demonstrated that college students can initiate meaningful change through casual and interactive assignments in a traditional book format. A common theme for improving the material was providing more real-life situations to demonstrate the learning objectives being taught. Participants seemed to benefit most from readings that modeled target behavior via vignettes and everyday examples. Future studies might examine the additive effects of modeling on outcome measures for chapters that did not include this approach.

**Negative Results**

Although there were encouraging trends found throughout the data, several findings were unexpected and did not support hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the study. In the general college sample, heterosocial anxiety was negatively correlated with alcohol use and challenged the assumption that drinking levels would increase with elevated heterosocial anxiety. The control group reported larger decreases in alcohol problems over time in comparison to participants who had access to the self-help book. Furthermore, the regression analyses did not show statistically significant improvements in heterosocial anxiety for the experimental group when comparing the change across research conditions. These contradictory results suggest that more research is needed to
examine what factors are contributing to unfavorable outcomes for college students utilizing the self-help book. Research of this nature will help refine the theoretical model underlying heterosocial interventions for alcohol use and improve the overall efficacy of bibliotherapies targeting this population.

**Study Limitations**

It is important to note some of the limitations of this study and how future research in this area may address these issues. As previously stated, this study was classified as exploratory in nature and conducted with a small sample size to evaluate preliminary treatment effects. Although I was able to find a statistically significant change in certain domains for experimental participants, these analyses need to be replicated in larger samples and across academic settings. Furthermore, some constructs did not appear to be influenced by our self-help book which may have been due to limited statistical power resulting from our small sample size. Replication of this research in larger and more diverse college populations will be a critical step towards answering these important questions. Another limitation was the lack of long term follow-up to evaluate the impact of the self-help book on college drinking and other research variables. The intervention produced moderate effect sizes in some domains but I was unable to ascertain how long these improvements lasted in our sample. Future research would benefit from increasing the number of follow-up data points to evaluate long-term treatment effects and monitor behavioral change over time. Increased assessment could also be used to gather more detailed feedback on the self-help book for improvements in new editions. In addition, all data were collected via self-report measure and relied on perceived behavior as opposed to direct observation by the researcher. There may have been a selection bias in
the research sample because participants volunteered sensitive information about substance use and this behavior is typically underreported in the general population (Stein & Rogers, 2008). Lastly, it is possible that participants responded favorably at post-treatment assessment because of therapist allegiance effects. Replication across settings in future research will help control for this potential confound.

**Implications for Future Research**

The primary benefits of a self-help book for college drinking are its effectiveness, ease of access, and low-cost in comparison to other alcohol interventions commonly used on campuses. The Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) is a widely administered alcohol intervention listed on SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP) (DiFulvio, Linowski, Mazziotti, & Puleo, 2012; NREPP, 2013). BASICS requires students to attend two 1-hour interviews where they report detailed information about personal alcohol use and receive customized feedback from a trained motivational interviewer to decrease drinking rates. The training for BASICS can cost up to several thousand dollars depending on the level of instruction required by the therapist (NREPP, 2013). Many students may be discouraged by the cost, time, and interpersonal contact needed to successfully complete BASICS. The self-help book utilized in this study circumvents many of the barriers posed by programs like BASICS and now has preliminary research demonstrating its effectiveness. At 69 pages long, the self-help book is brief and highly disseminable for adolescents across the country. It is also very affordable considering the sizable effects it has on drinking rates and these trends can easily be scaled to a larger sample. A simple cost-benefit analysis of the self-help book suggests that its moderate effects on decreasing
alcohol use and minimal financial/social burden to students make it an appealing option for many college campuses. Future research examining the relative advantages of self-help books in comparison to traditional alcohol interventions for college students has great potential for improving healthcare delivery on campuses nationwide. Furthermore, the self-help book can be utilized in high school populations and therefore has broader implications for public health initiatives. Students in earlier stages of adolescence can still understand the readings and would likely benefit from developing heterosocial skills to manage anxiety and limit the risk of dangerous alcohol use. Replication studies evaluating the efficacy of the self-help book in younger populations would contribute to improving the intervention across schools and ages.

**Conclusions**

Overall, this study provides preliminary support for this bibliotherapy as a means to reduce alcohol use in college students. The overall objective of the self-help book is to limit the negative effects of anxiety by responding to it differently and developing effective coping skills (i.e. heterosocial competence). The self-help book may be most effective at developing heterosocial competence and promoting anxiety management instead of striving to eliminate it. Ultimately, an increased sense of social proficiency around the opposite sex may be the critical component to reducing problematic drinking in college students.
REFERENCES


Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2007). National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables. Retrieved on March 27, 2012 from http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k7NSDUH/tabs/Sect2peTabs1to42.htm#Tab2.1B


Table 1.

*Correlations among dependent measures for participants at preliminary screening (N = 504).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Drinking Hours</td>
<td>.81**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Heterosocial Anxiety</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td>-.15**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlations among dependent measures for experimental and control participants at week 1 (n = 49).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Drinking Hours</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alcohol Problems</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Heterosocial Anxiety</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Heterosocial Competence</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.66**</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Heterosexual Interactions</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-.30*</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Social Anxiety</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>-.58**</td>
<td>-.60**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p < 0.05. **p < 0.01.*
Table 2.

Means (standard deviations) and effect size for dependent measures in completer sample by treatment condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>$d$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Drinks</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>12.80 (4.88)</td>
<td>8.92 (6.43)</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>12.05 (5.59)</td>
<td>9.67 (8.85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Drinking Hours</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>9.45 (5.66)</td>
<td>8.05 (6.06)</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>10.71 (6.53)</td>
<td>9.62 (7.77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Problems</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>31.10 (4.93)</td>
<td>30.05 (6.21)</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>31.33 (6.86)</td>
<td>28.48 (6.98)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosocial Anxiety</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>57.70 (12.98)</td>
<td>50.45 (14.28)</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>60.05 (13.26)</td>
<td>58.05 (14.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosocial Competence</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>112.15 (10.85)</td>
<td>118.15 (10.67)</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>113.62 (14.45)</td>
<td>114.48 (16.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual Interactions</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>83.05 (21.44)</td>
<td>89.80 (23.03)</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>91.43 (21.22)</td>
<td>89.33 (19.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Anxiety</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>22.55 (11.44)</td>
<td>21.85 (12.27)</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23.86 (12.10)</td>
<td>24.43 (14.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.

*Multiple regression and effect size analyses for dependent measures at week 5.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$d$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **DV = Week 5 Total Drinks**  
  Week 1 Total Drinks | .69 | .00** | -    |
| Dating Status | -.18 | .10 | -    |
| Gender | .10 | .36 | -    |
| Research Group | -.15 | .18 | .42  |
| **DV = Week 5 Total Drinking Hours**  
  Week 1 Total Drinking Hours | .66 | .00** | -    |
| Dating Status | -.00 | .97 | -    |
| Gender | .12 | .30 | -    |
| Research Group | -.06 | .59 | .16  |
| **DV = Week 5 Alcohol Problems**  
  Week 1 Alcohol Problems | .80 | .00** | -    |
| Dating Status | -.17 | .05* | -    |
| Gender | .04 | .61 | -    |
| Research Group | .09 | .26 | .35  |
| **DV = Week 5 Heterosocial Anxiety**  
  Week 1 Heterosocial Anxiety | .52 | .00** | -    |
| Dating Status | .10 | .44 | -    |
| Gender | -.03 | .79 | -    |
| Research Group | -.19 | .16 | .44  |
| **DV = Week 5 Heterosocial Competence**  
  Week 1 Heterosocial Competence | .85 | .00** | -    |
<p>| Dating Status | .05 | .51 | -    |
| Gender | .11 | .19 | -    |
| Research Group | .17 | .05* | .63  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$d$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV = Week 5 Heterosexual Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Heterosexual Interactions</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating Status</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Group</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.05*</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV = Week 5 Social Anxiety</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Social Anxiety</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating Status</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Group</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.  * $p \leq .05$.  **$p < .01$.  


Table 4.

Frequency of responses to Credibility Questionnaire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Moderately Agree Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Slightly Agree Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree Freq. (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree Freq. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Was the material realistic?</td>
<td>8 (40)</td>
<td>9 (45)</td>
<td>2 (10)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was the content appropriate to your life?</td>
<td>2 (10)</td>
<td>12 (60)</td>
<td>4 (20)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did the content reduce dating anxiety?</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>7 (35)</td>
<td>8 (40)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Were the strategies discussed useful?</td>
<td>7 (35)</td>
<td>10 (50)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Should your friends read the book?</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>12 (60)</td>
<td>4 (20)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does the content reduce alcohol use?</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>6 (30)</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>6 (30)</td>
<td>2 (10)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does the content reduce alcohol use in dating situations?</td>
<td>4 (20)</td>
<td>5 (25)</td>
<td>5 (25)</td>
<td>5 (25)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Would most students use these strategies?</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>10 (50)</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Means for total drinks in completer sample by treatment condition

Figure 2. Means for total drinking hours in completer sample by treatment condition
Figure 3. Means for alcohol problems in completer sample by treatment condition

Figure 4. Means for heterosocial anxiety in completer sample by treatment condition
**Figure 5.** Means for heterosocial competence in completer sample by treatment condition

**Figure 6.** Means for heterosexual interactions in completer sample by treatment condition
Figure 7. Means for social anxiety in completer sample by treatment condition
Appendix A
Daily Drinking Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

For each day of the week, fill in both the number of drinks consumed and the number of hours you typically drink.

One drink will be defined as a 10–12 oz. can or bottle of 4%–5% beer, a 4 oz. glass of 12% table wine, a 12 oz. bottle or can of wine cooler, or a 1.25 oz. shot of 80 proof liquor either straight or in a mixed drink.

Please be sure to fill out the information regarding your gender, weight, and height.

QUESTION 1

For the past month, please fill in a number for each day of the week including the typical number of drinks you usually consume on that day, and the typical number of hours you usually drink on that day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Drinks</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weight        Gender   Height

QUESTION 2

In what situations do you drink the most? (e.g. parties, concerts, bars etc.)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

______
How much do you usually drink in these situations? (e.g. 4 beers; 4 glasses of wine; 4 shots of hard alcohol)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How much do you drink around the opposite sex when trying to “hook-up”? (e.g. 4 beers; 4 glasses of wine; 4 shots of hard alcohol)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
INSTRUCTIONS:
Different things happen to people while they are drinking ALCOHOL or as a result of their ALCOHOL use. Some of these things are listed below. Please indicate how many times each has happened to you during the last three years while you were drinking alcohol or as the result of your alcohol use.

How many times did the following things happen to you while you were drinking alcohol or because of your alcohol use during the last month?

1. Not able to do your homework or study for a test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Got into fights, acted badly, or did mean things.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Missed out on other things because you spent too much money on alcohol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Went to work or school high or drunk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Caused shame or embarrassment to someone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Neglected your responsibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Relatives avoided you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Felt that you needed more alcohol than you used to use in order to get the same effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Tried to control your drinking by trying to drink only at certain times of the day at certain places.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Had withdrawal symptoms, that is, felt sick because you stopped or cut down on drinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Noticed a change in your personality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Felt that you had a problem with alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Missed a day (or part of a day) of school or work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Tried to cut down or quit drinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Suddenly found yourself in a place that you could not remember getting to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Passed out or fainted suddenly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Had a fight, argument or bad feelings with a friend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Had a fight, argument or a bad feeling with a family member.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. Kept drinking when you promised yourself not to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Felt you were going crazy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Had a bad time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Felt physically or psychologically dependent on alcohol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Was told by a friend or a neighbor to stop or cut down on drinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>3-5 times</td>
<td>6-10 times</td>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C
Dating Anxiety Scale for Adolescents

This is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each item as honestly as you can. Read each item carefully, and decide how much the statement is characteristic or true of you.

Show HOW MUCH something is true of you, by using the following scale:

1 = Not at all characteristic of me
2 = Slightly characteristic of me
3 = Moderately characteristic of me
4 = Very characteristic of me
5 = Extremely characteristic of me

1. I am usually nervous going on a date with someone for the first time......................... 1 2 3 4 5
2. I am often afraid that I may look silly or foolish while on a date.............................. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I worry that I may not be attractive to people of the opposite sex........................... 1 2 3 4 5
4. It takes me a long time to feel comfortable when I am in a group of both males and females ........................................................................................................ 1 2 3 4 5
5. I enjoy dating............................................................................................................. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make while on a date............. 1 2 3 4 5
7. It is difficult for me to relax when I am with a member of the opposite sex who I do not know very well......................................................................................... 1 2 3 4 5
8. I think I am too concerned with what members of the opposite sex think of me....... 1 2 3 4 5
9. I feel nervous in dating situations............................................................................. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I often feel nervous when talking to an attractive member of the opposite sex ...... 1 2 3 4 5
11. I love to go to parties............................................................................................. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I tend to be quieter than usual when I’m with group of both males and females..... 1 2 3 4 5
13. I feel tense when I’m on a date with someone I don’t know very well.................. 1 2 3 4 5
14. I often worry that the person I have a crush on won’t think very much of me........ 1 2 3 4 5
15. I love meeting new people..........................................................1 2 3 4 5

16. I often feel nervous or tense in casual get-togethers in which both guys and girls are present..........................................................1 2 3 4 5

17. I am concerned when I think that a date is forming a negative impression of me........1 2 3 4 5

18. I feel confident in dating situations.......................................................1 2 3 4 5

19. I become tense and jittery when I feel that someone of the opposite sex is checking me out..........................................................1 2 3 4 5

20. I am frequently afraid that the person I have a crush on will notice my flaws..........1 2 3 4 5

21. Parties often make me anxious and uncomfortable...............................1 2 3 4 5

22. I often worry about what kind of impression I am making on members of the opposite sex..........................................................1 2 3 4 5

23. I am afraid that the person I am dating will find fault with me.....................1 2 3 4 5

24. I am more shy with someone of the opposite sex......................................1 2 3 4 5

25. I think that most people find me to be attractive.........................................1 2 3 4 5

26. I worry what my date will think of me even when I know it doesn’t make any difference........................................................................1 2 3 4 5
Appendix D
Measure of Adolescent Heterosocial Competence – College Student Version

1. You and a female friend have been spending a lot of time together. Her boyfriend begins to get jealous of the amount of time the two of you spend together. What would you do and say?
   ☐ Talk to her boyfriend; let him know that you are just friends, and that he is welcome to hang out too.
   ☐ Tell the guy to chill out and explain that you’ve been around a lot longer than he has and you’ll be around long after he leaves.
   ☐ Leave it to the friend to handle, but argue why it is just jealousy on his part.
   ☐ Stop seeing her so much and explain that her boyfriend is more important.

2. You have a female friend that you like very much. In fact, you want to tell her that you’d like to be more than friends. What would you do and say?
   ☐ Don’t tell her and just remain her friend.
   ☐ Find out how she feels about you through friends and then give her gifts.
   ☐ Tell her that you really like her now that you’ve gotten to know her and that you’d like to be more than friends.
   ☐ Look for clues to determine if she is interested in being more than friends and then show her your feelings more through actions than through words.

3. You have a female friend who wants to begin a relationship with you. You just want to remain friends. What would you do and say?
   ☐ Try out the relationship and see how it went.
   ☐ Avoid the topic at all costs.
   ☐ Explain that you want to remain friends but that your feelings may change over time.
   ☐ Tell her about all the things you like about her, but that you’re not interested in pursuing more than a friendship with her.

4. You want to ask a female for her phone number. What would you do and say?
   ☐ Nothing, just forget about it.
   ☐ Talk to her about another topic then shift the conversation to how much you enjoy spending time with her. Then tell her you’d like to get to know her better and ask for her number.
   ☐ Make a date with her and ask for her number in case something comes up.
   ☐ Make eye contact with her and hope she approaches you and either offers her number or asks for yours.
5. There is a female that you are interested in and you want to call her. What would you do and say?

☐ Call and ask about homework and then see what she was doing that night.
☐ Get to know her, but never ask her for her number.
☐ Wait about 4-6 days after getting her number, and then call and act like a buddy.
☐ Call her and ask if she wants to hang out sometime.

6. You want to ask a female to go out on a date. What would you do and say?

☐ Approach her and tell her that you would really enjoy spending time with her by taking her out to do something fun.
☐ Tell yourself that you’d ask her the next time you see her, but never do.
☐ Only ask her if you’d been hanging out for a while and you felt comfortable.
☐ Find a common interest or event and then ask her if she’d like to go along with you.

7. You ask a girl out on a date. Unfortunately she turns you down. What would you do and say?

☐ Die of rejection.
☐ Apologize and make sure to always say hello in the future so she knows there are no hard feelings.
☐ Tell her it’s okay, and then determine whether to keep pursuing her.
☐ Take it with a grain of salt, pat yourself on the back for the effort, and walk away.

8. A girl asks you to go on a date, but you turn her down. What would you do and say?

☐ Go on the date anyway.
☐ Tell her you’re just not interested in going out that night but maybe another time.
☐ Reassure her that she is great, but tell her that you do not feel the same.
☐ Be nice but firm and tell her that you do not want to go out with her now or in the future.

9. You are going on a first date with a girl you like. What would you do and say?

☐ Be yourself.
☐ Make eye contact and smile to let her know you are having a good time.
☐ Be very nervous and not do or say much.
☐ Take her to a bunch of different places so you can see how she reacts in different situations.
10. You and a female are out on a first date. You’re not sure how far to go physically. What would you do and say?

☐ You stop after kissing the girl, particularly if you really like her.
☐ You try some things and see how far she would go.
☐ You fool around until either she or you appear to be uncomfortable with the situation.
☐ You ask her what she wants and then tell her what you want.

11. You and a female are out on a first date. You are not sure how intimate to get emotionally with her. What would you do and say?

☐ Nothing, if it happens it’s cool, but if isn’t meant to it won’t.
☐ Steer clear of emotions at all costs.
☐ Ask her questions about her past to see how open she is and then ask her if there is anything she’d like to know about you.
☐ You would use your common sense about how emotionally to involve myself on a first date.

12. You are going to meet your girlfriend’s family for the first time. What would you do and say?

☐ You try to get out of it.
☐ Start conversations with the family so that you could get to know them better.
☐ Try to impress them or get them to like you.
☐ Dress nicely, use manners, offer to help and try to answer every question to your best ability.

13. You and your girlfriend are talking one day and you both are discussing your past relationships. What would you do and say?

☐ Tell her what she wants to know without getting into many intimate details. Be honest, but avoid saying too much.
☐ Try to understand what she’s talking about and why. If you become uncomfortable, change the subject.
☐ Downplay all of your old girlfriends and let her know that she is the most special.
☐ Brag about yourself and likely become jealous when she talks about past boyfriends.
14. You and the female you have been dating begin discussing the status of your relationship. What would you do and say?

☐ Let her do the talking and agree with everything she says.

☐ I’d be perfectly honest about it, but if I didn’t feel comfortable I’d just agree with her and avoid hard questions.

☐ Let her talk first so you can see how she feels and then talk about the limits of the relationship based on her response.

☐ Tell her how you feel about her and then see how she feels about you.

15. You and a female have been getting along really well recently and you’re very attracted to her. You want to ask her to be your girlfriend. What would you do and say?

☐ Ask her what she thinks of you and ask if you have a chance to be her boyfriend.

☐ See if sparks flew when you kissed or fooled around. Then see if it was worth it to tell her your feelings.

☐ Ask her what she thinks of you and then tell her your desire to be exclusive. Ask if then she’d like to be your girlfriend.

☐ You would never ask her.

16. You and your girlfriend have a disagreement and you begin arguing. What would you do and say?

☐ Talk to her calmly; let her know you understand her position and the need to find a middle ground.

☐ Be quiet and defensive of everything that she says.

☐ Argue back, take a break, and then attempt to discuss the matter.

☐ Tell her to get over it and that you’d get over it too.

17. You don’t like something that your girlfriend does, and you want to tell her about it. What would you do and say?

☐ Ask her to stop and explain to her why you feel the way that you do.

☐ Tell her in a nice way and suggest an alternative.

☐ Don’t say anything

☐ Make a face so she knows that something is wrong.
18. Your girlfriend has a lot of male friends and you often become jealous of them. What would you do and say?
- Ask her to spend less time with them and ask what they give her that you do not.
- Ask her when you could all hang out together so that you can get to know them better.
- Tell her about your jealousy in a slightly joking manner.
- Ask her not to see them anymore.

19. You are hanging out with both your girlfriend and your female friends. What would you do and say?
- Hold your girlfriend’s hand and at the same time talk to your other female friends.
- Act normally and try to make sure you’re paying them equal amounts of attention.
- Act normal, but make sure that your girlfriend is comfortable and not ignored.
- Talk to your female friends more than your girlfriend.

20. You have a lot of female friends and your girlfriend often becomes jealous of them. What would you do and say?
- Ask her why she is jealous and discuss how you feel about it.
- Make fun of her for being immature.
- Tell your girlfriend that you are just friends with these girls and that she should not feel jealous.
- Tell her you spend time with who you want when you want and to stop being immature.

21. You and your girlfriend are at a party and you notice her begin to flirt with someone else. What would you do and say?
- Tease her about it later and see how she reacts.
- Talk to her about it on the car ride home. Tell her what you saw and see if there was something about the relationship that is bothering her.
- Joke at first, but later in private explain to her that it hurt.
- Give her a very dirty look.

22. You are ready to break up with your girlfriend. What would you do and say?
- Tell her honestly the problem and why you want to break up.
- Wait until she breaks up with you.
- Tell her that you need some space and need to think about things. Tell her that you would like to be just friends.
- Tell her that you no longer had feelings for her and that you want to see other people.
23. You find out that your girlfriend has been cheating on you. What would you do and say?
   - First ask her about it, but then probably yell at her and leave.
   - Have a serious talk with her where you re-evaluate the relationship and decide where to go next.
   - Retaliate by cheating on her.
   - Tell her that it's okay if she wants to explore new things, but be fair and don't keep someone else in tow.

24. Your girlfriend has just broken up with you. What would you do and say?
   - Ask her why and then take some time to determine if you could be friends.
   - Just ask why and then talk to friends about it.
   - Get drunk and call other girls.
   - Ask her why she wanted to break up and then tell her not to call and that you could not be friends.

25. You are in the mall one day when you run into your ex-girlfriend. She begins to have a conversation with you. What would you do and say?
   - Talk to her about things like school and family.
   - Tell her that you are in a hurry and give her your e-mail address.
   - Ignore her.
   - Have a friendly conversation and ask if she is dating anyone.

26. You need to get up and speak in one of your classes. The class has a lot of females in it. What would you do and say?
   - Give the presentation, it makes no difference.
   - Focus on a few girls that you know and try not to think about everyone.
   - Try to get to know most of the girls throughout the year so that you don't feel so intimidated.
   - Wear revealing clothing so they pay attention.

27. You want to approach a female but she is with a group of her friends. What would you do and say?
   - Wait until she's alone.
   - Approach her and start a simple conversation. If you feel a bad vibe, just leave the situation.
   - Talk to the whole group openly, but direct a lot of your attention at her.
   - Don't do anything.
Situations 28 – 37 involve Sexual Situations with the Opposite Sex.

28. You are out with a female that you like very much. You want to make a move toward a first kiss. What would you do and say?
   - Nothing.
   - Ask her if you could kiss her.
   - Try to read her signals and then, if it looked good, try to kiss her.
   - Hug her and see if you can make eye contact.

29. You want to tell a female that you would like to have sex with her. What would you do and say?
   - Be subtle and drop hints.
   - Get drunk and tell her.
   - Talk to her about it and ask her what she thinks. Then talk to her about STD’s and her sexual history.
   - Tell her you love her and that she is the one for you and that you’d like to have sex with her if she would like to have sex with you.

30. You and a female are discussing whether the two of you are ready for sex. What would you do and say?
   - Tell her your true feelings and see if you are both ready.
   - Spend some time away from her and think about it.
   - Talk about things like pregnancy and STD’s, and religious and moral values.
   - Ask her if she wants it and see if she has contraception.

31. You want to tell a female what you like sexually. What would you do and say?
   - You’d show her, not tell her.
   - Ask her to do something and be very encouraging.
   - Explain to her what you like and see if she wants to try it.
   - You do not tell her.

32. You would like to ask a female if she would try something new sexually. What would you do and say?
   - Just ask her because you feel comfortable with her since you are already having sex.
   - Bring it up casually and tell her you’d love it if she would do that for you.
   - Make it into a game.
   - Just do it and see what her response is.
33. You’re fooling around with a female and she denies you sexual advancement. What would you do and say?
- Just say okay and try not to be too bothered by it.
- Say, “You’re a tease,” and keep trying your luck unless she seemed really serious.
- Respect her and tell her when she’s ready to tell you.
- Pull back from the advancement and keep kissing her.

34. You are at a party and a female that is very drunk makes a sexual advance at you. What would you do and say?
- Deny her and ask if she needs help home.
- Deny her, but if she persists go with it.
- Walk away and blow it off.
- Laugh at her and make sure a friend was around.

35. You are at a party and you get drunk. You end up hooking up with a female and going farther sexually then you wanted to go. What would you do and say?
- Call a friend or sibling and talk about it with them.
- Try to convince her not to tell anyone.
- Contact her and talk to her about it. Tell her your feelings and ask what she thinks.
- Avoid her.

36. You are dancing with a female at a dance club and her hands wander to places that you don’t want them to be. What would you do and say?
- Ease off the dance floor and tell her to back off. If necessary insult her.
- Ask her not to do it and if it continued stop dancing with her.
- Push her away and move away from her.
- Move her hands and stop dancing with her.

37. A female is joking about male body parts in a derogatory way in front of you. What would you do and say?
- Say nothing, but think that she needs to be more mature.
- Tell her that she needs to stop saying those things and explain that she wouldn’t like it if the situation was reversed.
- Start joking about female body parts in a derogatory way.
- Tell her to shut up and explain that it is demeaning when people do that.
Appendix E
Survey of Heterosexual Interactions

This questionnaire is concerned with the social behavior of college males. In this part of the questionnaire we are interested in what might be broadly defined as "dating behavior." The term "date" used here is to mean any behavior in which some social activity was participated in and planned with a member of the opposite sex. Examples of this type of behavior might include going to the movies, a football game, a party, or even just getting together with some friends.

1. a) Are you currently in a relationship? Yes_____ No_____
b) If so, for how long? __________________

2. How many "dates" have you had in the last four weeks? Please be exact. __________________

3. Estimate the average number of "dates" per month during the past year. __________________

4. How many different girls have you "dated" during the past year? __________________

5. How would you compare yourself with other persons your age with regard to the amount of social behavior you participate in with the opposite sex?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participate in less than an average amount of social behavior</td>
<td>participate in an average amount of social behavior</td>
<td>participate in more than an average amount of social behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items

1. You want to call a girl up for a date. This is the first time you are calling her up as you only know her slightly. When you get ready to make the call, your roommate comes into the room, sits down on his bed, and begins reading a magazine. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be unable to call in every case</td>
<td>be able to call in some cases</td>
<td>be able to call in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. You are at a dance. You see a very attractive girl whom you do not know. She is standing alone and you would like to dance with her. You would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be unable to ask her in every case</td>
<td>be able to ask her in some cases</td>
<td>be able to ask her in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. You are at a party and you see two girls talking. You do not know these girls but you would like to know one of them better. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be unable to initiate a conversation</td>
<td>be able to initiate a conversation in some cases</td>
<td>be able to initiate a conversation in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. You are at a bar where there is also dancing. You see a couple of girls sitting in a booth. One, whom you do not know, is talking with a boy who is standing by the booth. These two go over to dance leaving the other girl sitting alone. You have seen this girl around, but do not really know her. You would like to go over and talk with her (but you wouldn't like to dance). In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be unable to go over and talk to her</td>
<td>be able to go over and talk to her in some cases</td>
<td>be able to go over and talk to her in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. On a work break at your job you see a girl who also works there and is about your age. You would like to talk to her, but you do not know her. You would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be unable to talk to her in every case</td>
<td>be able to talk to her in some cases</td>
<td>be able to talk to her in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. You are on a crowded bus. A girl you know only slightly is sitting in front of you. You would like to talk to her but you notice that the fellow sitting next to her is watching you. You would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be unable to talk to her in every case</td>
<td>be able to talk to her in some cases</td>
<td>be able to talk to her in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. You are at a dance. You see an attractive girl whom you do not know, standing in a group of four girls. You would like to dance. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be unable to ask in every case</td>
<td>be able to ask in some cases</td>
<td>be able to ask in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. You are at the resident hall cafeteria eating lunch. A girl whom you do not know sits down beside you. You would like to talk to her. She asks you to pass a napkin. In this situation you would pass the napkin but be unable to initiate a conversation with her and in some cases be able to initiate a conversation with her.

9. A friend of yours is going out with his girlfriend this weekend. He wants you to come along and gives you the name and phone number of a girl he says would be a good date. You are not doing anything this weekend. In this situation you would be unable to call her in every case be able to call in some cases be able to call in every case.

10. You are in the library. You decide to take a break, and as you walk down the hall you see a girl whom you know only casually. She is sitting at a table and appears to be studying. You decide that you would like to ask her to get a coke with you. In this situation you would be unable to ask her in every case be able to ask her in some cases be able to ask her in every case.

11. You want to call a girl for a date. You find this girl attractive but you do not know her. You would be unable to call her in every case be able to call in some cases be able to call in every case.

12. You are taking a class at the university. After one of your classes you see a girl whom you know. You would like to talk to her; however, she is walking with a couple of other girls you do not know. You would be unable to talk to her in every case be able to talk to her in some cases be able to talk to her in every case.
13. You have been working on a committee for the past year. There is a banquet at which you are assigned a particular seat. On one side of you there is a girl you do not know, on the other is a guy you do not know. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be unable to initiate a conversation with the girl and talk only with the guy</td>
<td>be able to initiate a conversation with the girl in some cases but talk mostly to the guy</td>
<td>be able to initiate a conversation in every case and be able to talk equally as freely with the girl as with the guy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. You are in the lobby of a large apartment complex waiting for a friend. As you are waiting for him to come down, a girl whom you know well walks by with another girl whom you have never seen before. The girl you know says hello and begins to talk to you. Suddenly she remembers that she left something in her room. Just before she leaves you she tells you the other girl’s name. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>find it very difficult to initiate a conversation with the other girl</td>
<td>find it only slightly difficult</td>
<td>find it easy to initiate and continue a conversation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. You are at a party at a friend’s apartment. You see a girl who has come alone. You don’t know her, but you would like to talk to her. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be unable to go over and talk to her</td>
<td>be able to go over and talk to her in some cases</td>
<td>be able to go over and talk to her in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. You are walking to your mailbox in the large apartment building where you live. When you get there you notice that two girls are putting their names on the mailbox of the vacant apartment beneath yours. In this situation you would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be unable to go over and initiate a conversation</td>
<td>be able to go over and initiate a conversation in some cases</td>
<td>be able to go over and initiate a conversation in every case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17. You are at a music store and see a girl that you once were introduced to. That was several months ago and now you have forgotten her name. You would like to talk to her. In this situation you would

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
be unable to start a conversation with her in every case
be able to start a conversation with her in some cases
be able to start a conversation with her in every case

18. You are at the student union or local cafeteria where friends your age eat lunch. You have gotten your meal and are now looking for a place to sit down. Unfortunately, there are no empty tables. At one table, however, there is a girl sitting alone. In this situation you would

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
wait until another place was empty and then sit down
ask the girl if you could sit at the table but not say anything more to her
ask the girl if you could sit at the table and then initiate a conversation

19. A couple of weeks ago you had a first date with a girl you now see walking on the street toward you. For some reason you haven't seen each other since then. You would like to talk to her but you aren't sure of what she thinks of you. In this situation you would

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
walk by without saying anything
walk up to her and say something in some cases
walk up to her and say something in every case

20. Generally, in most social situations involving girls whom I do not know, I would

1  2  3  4  5  6  7
be unable to initiate a conversation
be able to initiate a conversation in some cases
be able to initiate a conversation in every case
Appendix F
Social Interaction Anxiety Scale

Instructions: For each item, please circle the number to indicate the degree to which you feel the statement is characteristic or true for you. The rating scale is as follows:

0 = Not at all characteristic or true of me.
1 = Slightly characteristic or true of me.
2 = Moderately characteristic or true of me.
3 = Very characteristic or true of me.
4 = Extremely characteristic or true of me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
<th>SLIGHTLY</th>
<th>MODERATELY</th>
<th>VERY</th>
<th>EXTREMELY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I get nervous if I have to speak with someone in authority (teacher, boss, etc.).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have difficulty making eye contact with others.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I become tense if I have to talk about myself or my feelings.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I find it difficult to mix comfortably with the people I work with.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I find it easy to make friends my own age.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I tense up if I meet an acquaintance in the street.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When mixing socially, I am uncomfortable.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel tense if I am alone with just one other person.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am at ease meeting people at parties, etc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I have difficulty talking with other people.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I find it easy to think of things to talk about.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I worry about expressing myself in case I appear awkward.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I find it difficult to disagree with another’s point of view.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have difficulty talking to attractive persons of the opposite sex.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I find myself worrying that I won’t know what to say in social situations.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I am nervous mixing with people I don’t know well.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I feel I’ll say something embarrassing when talking.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. When mixing in a group, I find myself worrying I will be ignored.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am tense mixing in a group.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I am unsure whether to greet someone I know only slightly.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G  
Credibility Questionnaire

*Instructions:* Please mark an ‘X’ next to the response that best represents your answer for the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Was the material realistic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Was the content appropriate to your life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did the content reduce dating anxiety?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Were the strategies discussed useful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Should your friends read the book?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does the content reduce alcohol use?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Does the content reduce alcohol use in dating situations?

8. Would most students use these strategies?

*Instructions:* We are interested in your experience with this workbook. Please answer these questions as openly and accurately as possible.

9. Which chapters were most and least helpful for you and why?

10. How would you improve this workbook?
Appendix F
Girl friend/Boy friend: Curing the Jitters

Girl friend/Boy friend: Curing the Jitters

Joshua Medjuck, M.A.
William O’Donohue, Ph.D.
Disclaimer

The ideas, suggestions, and procedures in the book are not intended to be a substitute for consulting with a mental health professional or your physician. All matters regarding your health require medical or mental health supervision.
Preface: How to Use this Brief Book

We are two clinical psychologists who noticed something interesting: a lot of adults drink in situations in which they are anxious. They are not drinking because it tastes amazing: they are drinking to help cope with their nerves and fears. And one of the situations that makes folks really nervous is in situations with the opposite sex: you want to do well; you want to impress; you maybe even want to hook up. It is perfectly normal to feel some anxiety in these situations. We don’t want you to beat yourself up because you think you are weird or unusual for feeling this way. You feel the pressure is on: you know you are being evaluated. Drinking a lot maybe seems like a good way to help you cope with all this pressure and anxiety.

We know there are better ways. Ways that get you to your goals and ways that are much healthier and less painful for you. We wrote this book to tell you about these successful methods. We have used these with real clients in psychotherapy and they have been very successful. They relax more in these situations, drink less and enjoy themselves more. Nothing we say in this book is real hard, but you do have to be willing to do a couple of things: 1) you have to be open and flexible enough to try these new suggestions, and 2) you have to be ready to practice these things to get reasonably good at them. They are skills: you didn’t become excellent at riding your bike the first time; and the same principle applies here—by giving them a chance it means you need to practice them a bit. The more your practice these, the better you will get, and the more relaxed you will be in these situations.

So we hope you will give this brief book a quick read and then practice a bit and see how these tips work for you. We know that when you give them a chance you will be much more comfortable in situations around the opposite sex. So read on!
Introduction

Have you ever found yourself in a situation with the opposite sex where you weren’t sure how to:

- approach a person you don’t know or don’t know well
- start a conversation,
- ask them to see them again
- really feared rejection
- really feared that he or she would evaluate you negatively
- or felt embarrassed about something you said?

If you answered yes to any of these questions then you have gone through one of the most common experiences of growing up. Growing up can be a challenging process and few things are more overwhelming than figuring out how to approach someone you are interested in – even most adults struggle with this! However, it is **perfectly normal** to be nervous when talking to someone that you are attracted to because it means you are concerned about making a good impression. One scientific study showed that around 37% of college men are very anxious about dating (Dodge, Heimberg, Nyman, & O’Brien, 1987). If nearly half of college guys are **really** nervous about dating, you can only imagine how many other people get uneasy about spending time with the opposite sex. The good news is that scientific studies have also shown our nerves go down as you gain more experience in dating situations. Familiarity equals more calmness!

You were nervous when you first drove a car, why? Because it was new and you weren’t sure you had all the skills to pull this off successfully. You were nervous the first time you road a bike for the same reasons. And this applies to dating too. You just don’t wake up one morning and know how to ask someone out on a date, maintain a conversation, or impress them. These things have to be learned and practiced and when these are, you can do this in a calmer manner. This book will help you learn and practice these skills. If you do what we tell you ----and we will try to make it simple as we can—you will get better at this. And you will feel better in these situations—more calm, more confident.

Everyone wants to be perceived in a positive light by friends and potential partners but the hard part is deciding how actually you can behave in a skilled effective way. The task of putting
your best foot forward with the opposite sex can seem truly overwhelming when you have little to no experience of how to do this. The book authors have felt totally lost at times when trying to figure out how to impress a girl or separate ourselves from the crowd. Funnily enough, the harder we tried to be different and someone who we thought was a lock with the ladies, the less attention we got from them! We were baffled at what we were doing wrong. It took us a while to realize that most of us already have what others are looking for in a partner – we just don’t have our heads together enough to realize it.

We decided to write this book because we work with college students and know how difficult it can be starting a romantic relationship in high school or college. Apart from attending classes, studying, and getting good grades, the school environment is also about forming social relationships and developing your identity as an individual. It’s a great opportunity for you to find out what kind of person you are attracted to and would consider having a relationship with. Unfortunately, a lot of students worry they won’t be able to find the right partner or don’t have what it takes to be a desirable boyfriend/girlfriend. *This very brief book will provide you with ways to overcome these fears and feel more comfortable in situations with the opposite sex.* We will focus on what causes anxiety in dating situations, how to effectively manage these feelings, how to improve communication, and ways to create fun, relaxing interactions. These techniques have all been well studied for about five decades in many scientific studies. They have been shown to be powerful ways of changing behavior and emotions.

Dating can be fun, relaxing and you can feel much calmer than you do now. This book will examine dating from the male and female perspective so that both genders have insight into what the opposite sex is thinking when considering a partner. We will also examine ineffective ways of dealing with dating anxiety such as excessive drinking. The majority of adolescents experiment with alcohol but we will demonstrate how you can fulfill your dating potential without binge drinking. The format of the book will be very informal and interactive. We will include quizzes, tips, how-to sections, and stories to highlight the points being made in each chapter. Try and read around two chapters per week and make sure to practice the skills that go along with it. Some of the skills will be harder than others to master but we promise you will get better if you stick with it.
As we mentioned, alcohol use can become problematic when used to reduce anxiety in dating situations. Many people use alcohol in moderation as a way to unwind or relax while others drink excessively to escape unpleasant feelings. We are concerned that you might use alcohol or other drugs to cope with your nerves. It can seem to work. Alcohol gives you an excuse if you embarrass yourself—“I was drunk, it wasn’t really me”. It can make you less inhibited and feel more confident with the opposite sex - but at what cost? We will explore some of the health risks and social consequences associated with extreme alcohol use and how dating anxiety can be managed using other strategies.

We are asking you to stick with us and try and have some fun along the way. Our goal is for you to enjoy reading this book and learn some useful things while you’re at it. Good luck and let’s get started!
Chapter 1: Anxiety is a Normal Part of Everyday Life

In this chapter, we will help you figure out how anxious you are around the opposite sex. Don’t worry! We are firm believers that the first step in solving a problem is to understand it better.

Let’s start with this quick quiz to see how you respond to different dating situations. Remember to try and be as honest as possible so we can help you get the most out of this self-help book.

Show HOW MUCH something is true of you, by using the following scale

  0 = Not at all characteristic of me
  1 = Slightly characteristic of me
  2 = Moderately characteristic of me
  3 = Very characteristic of me
  4 = Extremely characteristic of me

1. I get nervous when I try to speak with someone who I am attracted to  0 1 2 3 4
2. I struggle to find the right words to say when talking with a member of the opposite sex  0 1 2 3 4
3. I avoid calling or texting someone I like unless I know they have similar feelings about me  0 1 2 3 4
4. I rarely approach someone that I find attractive to start a conversation.  0 1 2 3 4
5. I prefer to talk to someone I’m interested in when my friends are around  0 1 2 3 4
6. I feel embarrassed when someone I like laughs at something I say to them.  0 1 2 3 4
7. I have no problem dancing with someone if they ask me to  0 1 2 3 4
8. I notice my heart racing when I am alone with an attractive person of the opposite sex  0 1 2 3 4
9. I feel comfortable asking someone out on a date if I like them  0 1 2 3 4
10. I avoid talking to anyone who likes me but I don’t like them  0 1 2 3 4
11. I am confident initiating the first kiss with someone I like 0 1 2 3 4
12. I will tell a member of the opposite whether I like them if they ask me directly 0 1 2 3 4
13. I will ask a friend to see if someone I like is interested in me or not 0 1 2 3 4

Scoring Guide

OK now add up the numbers for each of your answers.

Score 1-10
You have no problem approaching and talking to people of the opposite sex. You possess the confidence necessary to be comfortable in a variety of situations. Dating does not faze you whatsoever.

Score 11-25
You have few problems interacting with the opposite gender. Occasionally, some scenarios will make you uncomfortable but overall you do well relating to most guys/girls.

Score 26-40
You are happy engaging in with the opposite sex as long as it’s on your terms. Certain situations make you uneasy while others are regarded as okay. A lot of people fall into this category because they have less experience in certain settings.

Score 41-52
You are still trying to figure out the trick to being comfortable around the opposite sex. You are not willing to consider a lot of scenarios with the opposite sex for a variety of reasons. This book will help you address your anxieties about dating and how to enjoy yourself in the company of the opposing gender.
OK, one more quick test to see how you use alcohol in these situations:

1. I use alcohol to reduce my anxiety around people I am attracted to
   - 0 1 2 3 4
2. I feel more confident around someone I like after drinking
   - 0 1 2 3 4
3. I prefer to have drinks when going on a first date with someone
   - 0 1 2 3 4
4. I have difficulty turning down a drink bought for me by a date
   - 0 1 2 3 4
5. I drink before or during social events where the opposite sex will be present
   - 0 1 2 3 4
6. I feel totally in control when drinking with someone I like
   - 0 1 2 3 4
7. I am more likely to initiate sexual advances after drinking
   - 0 1 2 3 4

**Scoring Guide**

Again, just add up your number on each question to get a total score.

**Score 1-9**
You hardly ever use alcohol to reduce your anxiety around the opposite sex. You are capable of managing dating nerves using other techniques.

**Score 10-19**
You use alcohol to feel more relaxed around the opposite sex but have control over how much you drink. If you drink more than usual in a dating situation, it only happens occasionally and doesn’t cause you to act out of character.

**Score 20-28**
You drink alcohol because it helps distract you from the anxiety tied to interacting with the opposite sex. Your drinking can become harmful because you find it difficult to control in dating situations.

So, what did you think of the quizzes? Did you score as expected or were you surprised with how you ranked on these tests? Regardless of your final score, there are many things to take away from the following chapters in this book.
What’s the deal? I just can’t seem to get the hang of this dating thing!

Think back to the first time you met someone whom you were attracted to. What kinds of things went through your head at that time? Usually, we notice the things about the person that we like such as their looks, personality, humor etc. We think about how great it would be to spend time with them because they make us feel good about ourselves or teach us things that we didn’t know before. After we get past this initial stage of imagining ourselves with the person, then we are faced with the dilemma of how to initiate the next step in the relationship. This is where things can get tricky! Now, we have to decide whether we want to take steps to get to know the person better and put ourselves in the vulnerable position of being rejected. Thoughts of rejection, not saying the right thing, or making a fool of yourself can lead to all sorts of worries about whether it’s even worth talking to them in the first place! Sound familiar? The reason we get nervous in these situations is because we care about what the other person thinks of us. We don’t want them to think badly about us or say something to a friend about our actions that will make us feel embarrassed. We get worried that any misstep with the opposite sex will be viewed as a huge character flaw and will eliminate any interest they have in us. A lot of times this fear leads us to avoid the situation altogether and puts us back at square one. We have a tendency to focus on our insecurities and not consider our qualities when considering trying something new. We are reminded of the phrase that “we are our harshest critic” and this certainly rings true here. Let’s take a look at someone that you might be surprised to see was worried about being perceived negatively by the opposite sex:

Even Wizards gets the dating jitters!

Has anyone heard of a guy named Harry Potter? Well, apparently Daniel Radcliffe, the actor who plays the famous wizard from Hogwarts, considers himself to be an amateur when it comes to dating because he doesn’t think he’s very good at it. How ironic is that? Someone who plays an all-powerful wizard capable of casting amazing spells can’t even master the simple task of taking a girl out on a date!

In an interview earlier this year with Parade Magazine, the actor stated “I hated dating because I’m crap at it!” Referring to a past date, he said “I didn’t know what was appropriate, like on which date you’re supposed to try and kiss her. At the end
of the second date I pulled a move out of the Bela Lugosi Book of Woo – I went to kiss (her) and at the last minute lost my nerve and ended up kissing her neck, which is such a weirdly intimate place to kiss somebody on a second date. Afterward, I texted her, saying ‘I’m sorry, what I just did probably seems very odd to you.’”

What can we take away from this story? The first thing is that even rich and famous actors are not as cool or smooth as we initially thought. The second and more important thing is that everyone gets nervous when they are face to face with an attractive member of the opposite sex. No one is born into this world with a supernatural ability to stay completely calm when showing affection to a potential partner. We assume that everyone else knows how to act in these situations and then second-guess ourselves if we make a mistake or do something that we regret. The reality is that we don’t have much experience with these situations as adolescents and have to practice in order to feel more comfortable with them. The good news is that everybody is starting from the same point so chances are you’re not that far off from your peers no matter how inexperienced you feel. If nothing else, practicing these skills is probably more fun than that school assignment you’ve been putting off, right?!

Now let’s look at your behavior in situations with the opposite sex. We will use your answers to determine areas of focus for later chapters. Be sure to answer the questions openly and honestly.

1. When is it most difficult for you to talk to a member of the opposite sex?

2. What are you most afraid of when talking to the opposite sex?
3. Think back to a bad interaction with the opposite sex. What happened and how did you deal with it? Did it involve alcohol?

4. Describe one incident where you avoided talking to the opposite sex even though you wanted to. Why did you avoid them?

5. Describe one person of the opposite sex (outside of your family) that you are comfortable talking to. What makes it easy to talk to them? Do you drink alcohol with them? Why or why not?

Keep these answers in mind as we proceed to the next chapter and beyond. We want you to refer back to your answers when you are completing assigned exercises throughout the book. They will serve as reminders of what personal areas to focus on when making changes in your behavior.
Let’s review some other people who have encountered nerves while dating:

**Who:** Singer Jessie J  
**Source:** Hollywood Dispatch  
**Quote:** “I went bowling on a double date...I got excited and I accidentally threw the ball the wrong way -- backward. It was so embarrassing. They were like, “Yeah, she's so uncool.””

**Who:** Actress Mila Kunis  
**Source:** Los Angeles Auto Show pre-party  
**Quote:** “I'm a girl. So you have to understand I am nervous. I am about to go on a blind date and everyone is about to see it.”

**Who:** Reality Star Kim Kardashian  
**Source:** Showbiz Spy  
**Quote:** Sister Khloe Kardashian on Kim dating Kanye West, “She’s so happy. She’s getting comfortable in her own skin again. People don’t know that she’s incredibly shy and nervous.”

**Who:** Actor Josh Hutcherson  
**Source:** Girl World Daily  
**Quote:** "I was on a date, and we were sitting at dinner. I tried to put my arm around her – I was doing the yawn thing where you lift your arms up. As I did that, I hit the table and spilled a drink."

**Who:** Singer Duffy  
**Source:** Marie Claire magazine  
**Quote:** “He asked me out on a date and we met by the river. We didn't eat any of our food the whole time. I was so nervous. But we got a little bit drunk to ease the nerves. I never go on dates. I've never been on one in my life.”
The last quote is an interesting one because it makes reference to using alcohol as a way to ease dating nerves. Many people use alcohol to reduce anxiety in situations with the opposite sex and become reliant on its effects. Unfortunately, this can lead to excessive drinking, a false sense of reality, risky behavior, getting into trouble, and increased anxiety from regret over drunken actions. We will spend some time throughout the book talking about the role of alcohol use in dating situations and how to develop skills that decrease the need to drink. For the time being, think about what role, if any, alcohol plays in your life and when you are most likely to drink. We will revisit this information later in the book and see how it ties into your experiences with the opposite sex.

Summary

Most people get nervous around the opposite sex. This is uncomfortable but normal. Few of us are “naturals” at this. Some may hide it well while others use alcohol to make it less painful or noticeable. The most important thing to remember is this: - you are not alone regardless of how you deal with it. And there is hope: you were nervous about other things in your life and you got over it. The next chapters will give you some key strategies, based on science and clinical experience, for you to make a lot of progress on your dating nerves too.
Chapter 2: Understanding How Your Thoughts Influence Your Feelings and Behavior

Let’s change gears a little bit now and talk about how our thoughts cause us to feel anxious around the opposite sex. In this chapter, we will discuss how thoughts become automatic and can leave us feeling nervous for no good reason at all. Then, we will review the scientifically-proven techniques that reduce these thoughts and help us view our world and ourselves in a more balanced way.

Think back to the last time you were in a dating situation and you did or said something that you regretted or felt really embarrassed by. Now, we want you to think about what caused you to have this kind of reaction to what happened. Did it cause an undesirable outcome? Did you receive negative feedback for it? Did you think about it in a way that made you feel anxious, angry, or sad?

The reason we bring up these questions is because a lot of times we cause ourselves to feel nervous based on how we think. If you are convinced that something you’ve done will be judged negatively by friends, family, and/or peers, then chances are you’re not going to be happy about it. When we think back to the most embarrassing moments in our lives, they are usually tied to a fear of being evaluated negatively by people who are important to us. Just to be crystal clear – this is perfectly normal. The funny thing about this experience is that we are not very good judges of understanding the effects of our actions. Because we grow up learning how to think about ourselves and the world in certain ways, a lot of times we see things in ways that aren’t very balanced or accurate. In fact, some people get so caught up thinking certain ways that they come to conclusions other people don’t understand or agree with. This happens all the time in dating situations where one person thinks it’s a horrible date while the other person really enjoyed the interaction. The same thing is true with alcohol when people drink a lot because they assume it is beneficial. How does this happen? The following are some things that people do to contribute to distorted thinking as well as alternative thoughts:
1. **All or nothing thinking**
   a. You see things in extremes (e.g. good vs. bad, pretty vs. ugly) without consideration for more balanced interpretations.
   b. Dating example: “I don’t have a boyfriend/girlfriend so I must be (ugly, boring, stupid)”
      i. Alternative thought: I don’t have a boyfriend/girlfriend because I haven’t met the right person yet or I haven’t tried enough yet”
   c. Alcohol example: “I will never get a boyfriend/girlfriend unless I drink alcohol in social settings.”
      i. Alternative thought: “I will be happier if I wait to find a boyfriend/girlfriend who appreciates that I don’t drink too much in social settings”

2. **Mind-reading**
   a. You assume that you know what everyone else is thinking.
   b. Dating example: “They didn’t call me back right away so they obviously don’t like me.”
      i. Alternative thought: There are a number of reasons why they might not have called back right away but it doesn’t automatically mean they don’t like me.”
   c. Alcohol example: This guy/girl will think I’m too uptight if I don’t drink very much.”
      i. Alternative thought: “I don’t know what this guy/girl will think of me if I don’t drink very much but I do know I want someone who accepts me for who I am.”

3. **Fortune-telling**
   a. You assume that you know what will happen in the future.
   b. Dating example: “I will never like someone as much as my ex-boyfriend/girlfriend again”.
      i. Alternative thought: “The painful break-up is making me feel like I won’t like someone as much as my ex-boyfriend/girlfriend again”
c. Alcohol example: “I am more likely to impress this guy/girl if I drink more.”
   i. Alternative thought: “I don’t need to drink in order for people to like me”

4. Should statements
   a. You beat yourself up for not acting differently in the past.
   b. Dating example: “I should have been funnier or tried to kiss them at the end of the night.”
      i. Alternative thought: “I did what felt right in the moment and will learn from this experience for the future”
   c. Alcohol example: “I should have drank more so I wouldn’t worry about kissing that girl/guy.”
      i. Alternative thought: “I can use techniques other than alcohol to reduce my anxiety about kissing that guy/girl.”

5. Catastrophizing
   a. You blow things out of proportion to the point that predicted future events are unrealistic or unreasonable
   b. Dating example: “If I don’t find a boyfriend/girlfriend by this date, I am destined to be alone forever.”
      i. Alternative thought: “I have no way of knowing when I will meet someone I am compatible with.”
   c. Alcohol example: “If I don’t have enough to drink, I’ll screw up and never get a boyfriend/girlfriend.”
      i. Alternative thought: “Alcohol will not make me find a boyfriend/girlfriend more easily.”

6. Filtering
   a. You only focus on the negative aspects of a situation
   b. Dating example: “Even though they said they enjoyed hanging out with me, I talked too much and they probably won’t want to do it again.”
      i. Alternative thought: “They chose to say they enjoyed hanging out with me and that means there is a good chance they will want to do it again.”
c. Alcohol example: “I had fun without getting drunk at the party but that’s why no guys/girls paid attention to me.”  
   i. Alternative thought: “I had fun at the party and guys/girls are drawn to happy people regardless of whether they drink or not.

7. **Overgeneralization**

a. You interpret negative outcomes as representative of your faults or deficits as a person.

b. Dating example: “They didn’t call me back because I am always saying the wrong thing.”
   i. Alternative thought: “I am assuming that I said the wrong thing and don’t know if that’s the reason they didn’t call me back.”

c. Alcohol example: “They didn’t want to meet up with me because I’m boring when I don’t drink.”
   i. Alternative thought: I know people that don’t think I’m boring when I’m not drinking so I can’t be sure that’s why they didn’t want to meet up.”

Do you recognize yourself in any of these categories? It’s okay if you do as we all have a tendency to think these ways sometimes. The most important thing is being able to identify when it happens so you can stop yourself and attempt to view things more objectively. Like everything else in life, you have to practice challenging these thoughts in order for it to change how you feel. Read this story below and see if you can find all the distorted thoughts.

**There’s Something about Sally**

John noticed a collection of wrinkles on the jacket arms and pant legs of his tuxedo as he walked up to the front door of his high school prom date. He had meant to iron the outfit before leaving but was already behind schedule and risked not having time to pick up the corsage before the store closed.

“She’s going to think I’m a total slob for showing up with a wrinkled tuxedo,” he thought to himself as he knocked on the door. “I always screw up the big occasions”.

John had built up the courage to ask out his long-time crush, Sally, to prom even when he was convinced she would say no to him. When she said she would gladly attend the event with him,
John was delighted and terrified at the same time. He never had much confidence around girls and became totally overwhelmed at the thought of trying to entertain and impress Sally for an entire evening.

“Hi John! You look very handsome this evening,” she said enthusiastically.

“You too, Sally,” as his face turned slightly red.

“Thanks, let me just grab my purse and then we can head off,” she said.

“Okay, I’ll wait here,” he murmured.

John was totally dumbstruck with how beautiful Sally looked. He still couldn’t believe that he, out of all the seniors in his grade, was getting the privilege of taking Sally to the flagship senior event. Then it dawned on him. “You too?!” He realized she said he looked handsome and he replied with this foolish statement. John couldn’t believe that he told her she also looked ‘handsome’ instead of using a term that was more flattering and captured just how stunning she appeared.

“Maybe I don’t deserve to be here on this date,” John thought to himself. “I’ve already ruined things by not telling her how beautiful she looks. I’m sure she already regrets saying yes to me.”

“I’m ready now John, let’s go! I can’t wait to see everyone from school all dressed up.”

John couldn’t get over how excited Sally seemed was about going to prom with him. It was almost as if he was waiting for her to tell him it was a big prank and she had planned on going with someone else all along. ‘You’ve been Punk’d and we’ve got it all on video!’ John was imagining the embarrassing moment in his head right then and there.

As they were walking down the front porch to his car, John remembered that he had forgotten to present her with an important piece of her prom outfit.

“I picked up a corsage for you,” John said

I don’t know if you’ll like it but I think it goes well with the color of your dress,” he said hesitantly.

Once again, John couldn’t believe what was coming out of his mouth. What better way to sweep a girl off her feet than to tell her you’ve bought something that you don’t think she’ll like! Not only that but the corsage was clearly a different color than Sally’s dress. The lady at the store had told him a white corsage compliments any dress color nicely but John couldn’t stop thinking that he’d made a mistake by not getting a rose-colored flower to match her red gown.

“It looks beautiful John. Can you slide it on my wrist for me?”
“Of course,” said John. He had beads of sweat collecting on his brow despite it being a cool spring evening.

John took the corsage out of his plastic box and gently held Sally’s hand to wrap the elastic band around her wrist. It was the first time he had touched Sally’s hand and noticed how soft her skin felt pressed up against his fingers. Finally, John was starting to forget about his earlier blunders when he realized that his hands were shaking as he went to slide the corsage into place. Sally looked up at him and smiled but John could only muster a half-grin considering how embarrassed he felt about acting this nervous in front of her.

“I should’ve let her put the corsage on,” John reflected silently. “She must think I’m such a loser getting this freaked out already. We haven’t even left her house yet! I will definitely need to sneak a drink soon to calm my nerves and boost my confidence around her.”

“I love it, John. I was actually hoping you would get a white corsage. I think it balances out the color of my dress really nicely.”

John took a deep breath and tried to take comfort in what she had just said. Unfortunately, he couldn’t rid himself of the thought that his ‘handsome’ comment and shaky hands totally overshadowed the fact that he bought the wrong corsage color. He was convinced that she was already regretting going on this date with him.

They walked down to the street and John opened up the passenger side car door of a brand new, pearl white, convertible BMW that he had rented for both of them to drive around in for the evening. Sally stepped into the car and John made sure her dress was neatly folded inside before he closed the door behind her. As Sally examined the interior of the luxury car and John walked around the backside of the vehicle to get to the driver door, both individuals had a chance to reflect on the few moments of the date so far.

Sally:

“He looks so good in that tuxedo he picked out – it makes me realize how hot he is when he gets dressed up.”

“This car makes us look like movie stars showing up to a red carpet premiere. It’s so cute how nervous he was when he put the corsage on my wrist.”

“I love how he doesn’t try and act manly and drink all the time like other guys. Hopefully, it’s not too obvious that I like him…”
John:

“Come on, John – pull it together!

“This is your one chance to really impress Sally and you’re blowing it.”

“At this rate, you’ll be lucky if she lets you dance with her at all!”

“I know I can do better once I have a few drinks and show her how fun I can be.”

Have any guys ever felt like John when out with a girl? Have any girls ever been in the same situation as Sally? It’s pretty amazing how two people can have such different interpretations of the same events over a short period of time. The reality is that this happens all the time and can lead to anxiety and poor choices with alcohol.

Write down examples of various distorted thoughts from the story. Then, see if you can come up with a time in your life where you did something similar in a dating and drinking situation. After that, write down another way you could’ve thought about the situation that wouldn’t make it a distorted thought. We’ll fill in the first one to get you started.

1. *All or nothing thinking*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I always screw up the big occasions”</td>
<td>“I don’t have a boyfriend/girlfriend so I must be (ugly, boring, stupid)”</td>
<td>“I don’t have a boyfriend/girlfriend unless I drink alcohol in social settings.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I will never get a boyfriend/girlfriend because I haven’t met the right person yet”</td>
<td>“I will be happier if I wait to find a boyfriend/girlfriend who appreciates that I don’t drink in social settings”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. *Mind-reading*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. *Fortune-telling*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. *Should statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. *Catastrophizing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. *Filtering*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. *Overgeneralization*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Your life</th>
<th>Alternative thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANSWERS:
1. Mind reading
   - “She’s going to think I’m a total slob for showing up with a wrinkled tuxedo”
2. Fortune-telling
   - “I’ve already ruined things by not telling her how beautiful she looks”
3. Should statements
   - “I should’ve let her put the corsage on”
4. Catastrophizing
   - “John couldn’t stop thinking that he’d made a mistake by not getting a rose-colored flower to match her red gown”
5. Filtering
   - “Unfortunately, he couldn’t rid himself of the thought that his ‘handsome’ comment and shaky hands totally overshadowed the fact that he bought the right corsage color”
6. Overgeneralization
   - “Maybe I don’t deserve to be here on this date”

How did you find that exercise? Like we said earlier, the most important thing is that you are able to recognize when the distortions are popping up. Then, as you get more practice, you’ll be able to brainstorm different ways of thinking about situations with the opposite sex that won’t get you so nervous. Plus, these strategies are helpful in reducing unwanted and/or dangerous drinking too. **Remember – practice, practice, practice!**

Exercise: When you think about dating or when you are in a situation with someone of the opposite sex: don’t just think your thoughts—evaluate them too. Are these rational and true—or are they the kind of “stinking thinking” we have described? If they are irrational, just smile and think—“there I go again, being too hard on myself, and give yourself a break by thinking a more accurate, kind, and rational thought. Practice this in situations that make you just a little uncomfortable—it is easier to do this in these situations. When you get good at this, then do this in moderately difficult situations—and again when you get better at good thinking in these—then try the hardest situations.
Practice this enough until you know what particular irrational thoughts you tend to generate. List your top 3 irrational thoughts below:

1. 

2. 

3. 

And practice changing these into more rational productive thoughts. What more accurate, realistic thoughts should replace these:

1. 

2. 

3. 

**Summary**

Everyone has a special way of looking at themselves and the world around them. It’s a natural part of growing up and it helps us make sense of things around us. Our thoughts can make us feel anxious, act in ways that lower our confidence and participate in unsafe behaviors. Sometimes these ways of thinking can lead us to assume things that aren’t true. We’ve reviewed some ways to help recognize unhelpful thoughts and how to change them. These strategies will lead you to better personal relationships and healthier use of alcohol if used on a consistent basis. A good thought is something like “I will try my best—everyone is imperfect at this so it’s OK for me to have some problems too—and I can learn and become better”
Chapter 3: Face Your Fears! The Key to Overcoming Anxiety

In this section, we’d like to talk about effective ways to reduce anxiety caused by being around the opposite sex. One of the main reasons we develop anxiety is because we end up avoiding the things that make us feel scared or nervous. The main problem with avoiding is that you don’t learn that actually these situations are really not that threatening and that you can learn to gradually respond in a less fearful way. (Imagine if you got scared riding your bike the first time, and then always avoided doing this again—this simple, fun activity would still be frightening to you!).

There are simple techniques you can practice based on science that involve facing your fears in order to make you feel more comfortable in situations that cause anxiety.

Imagine you are a young child again encountering things for the first time with only your instincts to guide your reactions. What were the things that you gave you great joy, excitement, and happiness as well as sadness, anger, and fear? Once you recall some things that elicited these emotions in you during your childhood, we want you to focus on specific events that caused you to feel afraid or anxious. What was it about these experiences that led to this response? Did you end up avoiding these same experiences in the future? Did avoiding these things help to reduce your anxiety, keep it the same or even make it worse?

If you are like most people, you probably answered ‘yes’ to avoiding things from your past that made you feel scared, nervous, or anxious. Just as we have said in previous chapters – this is perfectly normal. In many instances, avoiding threatening things (situations that are actually dangerous like lions, tigers and bears) is adaptive because it prevents us from putting ourselves in danger or feeling unwanted negative emotions. However, the problem with avoidance is that it usually leaves us feeling the same way about feared objects and/or situations because we don’t have any experiences to demonstrate that our anxiety isn’t justified. We have to give ourselves a chance to learn something different in these situations. This can be challenging if we experience anxiety in non-threatening situations like going out on a date or turning down alcohol with friends because it discourages us from doing it again in the future. Then, the longer we avoid going on another date or telling our friends that we prefer to drink less, the more likely it becomes that we will develop distorted thoughts about the feared situation that will maintain or contribute to our anxiety.
Do you avoid or face your anxiety?

1) I am always up for something new (T or F)
2) I like to do things spontaneously (T or F)
3) I need to plan my day to enjoy it (T or F)
4) I like the feeling of an adrenaline rush (T or F)
5) I avoid things I am unfamiliar with (T or F)
6) I won’t try something again if it makes me feel nervous (T or F)
7) I have difficulty starting a conversation with a stranger (T or F)
8) I prefer texting over calling someone I like (T or F)
9) I can turn down free alcohol at a party (T or F)
10) I will make the first move if I am attracted to someone (T or F)
11) I won’t tell the opposite sex if I like them (T or F)
12) I drink to feel more outgoing and confident (T or F)
13) I avoid rejection at all costs (T or F)
14) I only approach the opposite sex if I know they like me (T or F)
15) I can stay sober when everyone else is drinking (T or F)

Give yourself a point if your answers correspond to the following key and then check out the meaning of your total score

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calm and composed (11-15 points): You are totally comfortable with new experiences and facing things that may cause varying amounts of anxiety. You are not afraid of challenging social expectations in order to stay true to yourself.
Mixed moods (6-10 points): You don’t mind testing past your comfort zone in certain areas but are reluctant to do so in others. You look for certain assurances before putting yourself in a vulnerable position.

Shaken and stirred (0-5 points): You become easily flustered or anxious over various things. The thought of being in potentially embarrassing or unnerving situations makes you prefer to avoid them altogether.

Now that you have a better idea of how you personally deal with anxiety in various situations, we want to discuss some of the strategies science has shown to reduce anxiety and increase confidence. As you might guess based on our previous discussion, one of the most effective ways to treat anxiety is to expose the person to whatever is causing them to feel nervous or unsettled. In the scientific literature, “exposure” therapy is essentially helping the client stay in the fearful situation and face their fears. It can be uncomfortable at first but what clients learn is that these feeling of anxiety go away after several minutes. They think they will just last and last, but they don’t. But you have to stay in the situation to learn this. After ten times of doing this, usually people’s anxiety levels are now in the normal range! It is not a “miracle” instant cure—but it also doesn’t take months and months. Think that if you do this about ten times (and maybe if you are lucky, even fewer times) you will see a big payoff.

In the case of dating anxiety, that means getting practice spending time with the opposite sex and exploring ways to express romantic feelings. Easy enough, right! The same principles apply to people who feel anxious about saying ‘no’ to alcohol in social settings such as parties or during a date. Again, the key to overcoming this anxiety is to practice moderating your alcohol use even if that means going against what your friends or date wants.

The following section is a how-to guide on practicing exposure exercises that will help with your anxiety:

What do you think of when you hear the word ‘anxiety’? Does it bring up thoughts of worrying, shaking, and/or avoiding? If any of these descriptions sound familiar it’s because they are all anxiety symptoms. However, sometimes it’s helpful to classify anxiety symptoms using the following three components:
Body – These symptoms refer to any negative sensations you can feel. They may include:
- Sweating, shaking, rapid heartbeat, dizziness, nausea, breathing difficulties etc.

Thoughts – These symptoms refer to any statements made in your head. They may include:
- “This is terrible”
- “I am going to have a heart attack”
- “I am embarrassing myself”
- “I need to get out of this situation”

Behaviors – These symptoms refer to any actions you make. They may include:
- Escaping the stressful situation after being exposed to it
- Avoiding the stressful situation altogether

The first thing to do when developing an exposure assignment is to compile a list of all the situations that cause anxiety. In this case, we want you to think about dating and drinking situations that have led you to anxious reactions in the past. Some examples are listed below:

1. Telling someone you like them
2. Asking a person out on a date
3. Showing physical affection to someone you are interested in
4. Turning down an opportunity to drink
5. Doing something embarrassing while drinking

Were you able to think of some circumstances related to these topics that caused you to feel anxious? As we stated earlier, everyone experiences some level of anxiety when faced with these situations, so don’t feel strange or abnormal for having gone through this at some point in your life. Just remember, it’s like everything else in life that seems difficult or overwhelming at first – practice makes perfect. Anxiety never fully goes away because it is a basic human emotion like happiness or sadness and it informs us about important things in our life. However, the more practice you get experiencing and managing your anxiety in specific situations, the easier it becomes to deal with it again in the future. Let us be concrete: we promise you that if you will just force yourself to be in these situations 10 times—you will feel much less anxious
the 11th time. But you have to experience some uncomfortable anxiety these 10 times—but it will pay off. NO PAIN NO GAIN.

Now that you have created a shortlist of dating and drinking situations that lead to anxious feelings, we need to categorize these events based on how much anxiety they cause you. The plan is to use a simple scale from 0-100 to describe how stressful each experience is for you (e.g. 0 = no anxiety at all; 100 = the most anxiety you have ever felt). We will refer to these numbers as **Subjective Units of Distress** or **SUDS**.

See if you can put at least one situation into each of the following SUDS categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-20</th>
<th>21-40</th>
<th>41-60</th>
<th>61—80</th>
<th>81-100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> Seeing someone I am interested in</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> This person comes very near me</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> They are talking to one of my friends next to me</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> I need to say something to them</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> I want to ask them out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now for the fun part! We want you to start by picking the situation ranking lowest on your SUDS chart and then expose to it by recreating the scenario somehow. Be creative!

Remember the following points when doing this exercise:

1. **It is normal to feel anxious during exposure**
   - The goal of these exposure exercises is to produce anxiety and then let you ride it out. This process helps you learn that anxiety is a basic human response and not something to be afraid of.
2. Anxiety is like a wave
   - Anxiety is like a wave created by currents in the ocean. Just like a wave growing in size until it breaks on the shoreline, anxiety will increase in intensity until it peaks and then fades away. This is sometimes called “surfing” because like a wave, you can feel anxiety begin to build, it crests—but here is the good news—like a wave it breaks. You need to ride these anxiety waves—you will become an anxiety surfer.

3. Don’t avoid anxiety
   - The best way to overcome anxiety is to experience it and learn that it’s not overwhelming or uncontrollable. If you avoid anxiety by removing yourself from the stressful situation, you teach yourself that anxiety is too difficult to handle and make it worse when it occurs in the future. You have to accept the fact that life sometimes is uncomfortable.

4. The anxiety you will feel is temporary
   - Anxiety peaks and subsides within seconds and minutes, not hours or days. Your body is not designed to withstand intense anxiety for long periods of time and therefore reduces the anxiety response shortly after it begins. Trust us, it will go down even when it feels unbearable – just like it did the first time you spoke in public, drove a car etc.

5. Exposure requires practice
   - As we said earlier, exposure works by learning that anxiety isn’t harmful. The only way to teach your body and mind this point is through practice. It may take 5, 10, or even in some tough cases 20 exposures but we promise you will eventually notice a big difference. But it is worth it. You will be putting these anxious feelings behind you for the rest of your life. Think about how this has happened for you with bike riding, diving off high dives, driving, etc.—it can and will happen for you with the opposite sex too.
6. **Start out easy**

   - Start out with the least stressful situations and work up to more challenging ones. At first, you might involve people who you can tell about the exercise afterwards as you become more comfortable with them. Towards the end, your exposures should involve all the elements (i.e. people, settings etc.) that lead to anxiety.

7. **Be yourself**

   - Be in the moment and don’t second guess yourself. You already have the skills necessary to be successful and reduce your anxiety.

Here are some examples of self-talk that may be helpful as your practice exposure:

- “I am really nervous right now but that’s okay. It will go away in 10 minutes if I stick with this”
- “My anxiety is like a wave. Surf the anxiety until it goes down”
- “The key to exposure is not avoiding this stressful situation”
- “The more I practice exposure, the less anxious I will be”
- “I have control over my anxiety”
- “No pain no gain”

As you engage with increasingly anxious situations, you’ll notice that your experiences managing anxiety in previous contexts will help you handle the elevated pressure. Try and see each situation to its conclusion before evaluating how anxious you felt or how successful it was. One of the most important things to remember is that **exposure is a learning experience and will help you understand how to respond to anxiety**.

It also may be helpful to review Chapter 2 and see if any distorted thoughts are contributing to your anxiety levels. If you do recognize some cognitive distortions, come up with alternative ways of thinking about the situation and give yourself the opportunity to try the exposure again. Eventually, we’d like you to expose to the situation, or some variation of it, ranking highest on your SUDS chart. Although this task may seem unimaginable or overwhelming right now, our
experiences and research have demonstrated that this system will allow you to build up the confidence necessary to conquer your anxiety and achieve your ultimate goals.

Summary
The most effective way to reduce anxiety in our body, thoughts, and behaviors is through exposure. Exposure exercises involve confronting feared situations so we can learn how to manage our anxiety more effectively in similar situations in the future. Exposure is uncomfortable at first and requires practice to perfect but it will leave you feeling less anxious and a more confident person.

Cross off each time you have faced your fears: We want to see the number 10 crossed off:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
Chapter 4: The Surprising Facts and Not So Surprising Myths about Alcohol

In this chapter, we will review some important statistics on alcohol use in college and highlight how our perceptions of alcohol play a huge role in how much we drink.

Key Facts about Alcohol Quiz

Let’s start by taking a quiz on alcohol use in college

1. How many students between the ages of 18-24 die each year as a result of alcohol-related injuries?
   a. 525
   b. 1025
   c. 1525
   d. 1825

2. How many students between the ages of 18-24 are sexually assaulted or raped each year as a result of alcohol use?
   a. 27,000
   b. 57,000
   c. 77,000
   d. 97,000

3. How many students between the ages of 18-24 drive under the influence of alcohol each year?
   a. 536,000
   b. 1,360,000
   c. 2,360,000
   d. 3,360,000
4. How many students meet criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse each year?
   a. 1%
   b. 11%
   c. 21%
   d. 31%

5. How many students develop an alcohol-related health problem each year?
   a. 25,000
   b. 50,000
   c. 100,000
   d. 150,000

Source: A Snapshot of Annual High-Risk College Drinking Consequences

ANSWERS:
1. d  2. d  3. d  4. d  5. d

What did you think? Did any of these answers surprise you? The goal of this quiz is not to scare you out of drinking because we know that is not an effective strategy for reducing college alcohol use based on past research. However, we do hope that these numbers alerted you to some of the risks associated with drinking and how frequently they occur amongst college students. The good news is that you have control over your own drinking habits. Drinking can be done responsibly so that you can enjoy yourself without putting yourself or others in danger.

Let’s move on to some common myths about alcohol that might influence your decisions around drinking

*Myth #1: Excessive alcohol use is normal in college*

Truth #1: Most college students assume that excessive alcohol use is normal and that other students drink more alcohol than they do. However, this is false. Research has demonstrated that students regularly overestimate how much others are drinking on campus and this leads to an
increase in overall levels of alcohol use. In fact, one effective treatment for reducing alcohol use in college is to have students participate in peer-led groups that discuss misconceptions about the frequency of student drinking. Moreover, just because something is normal—that is, a lot of people do it—doesn’t make it good or desirable. Being overweight is becoming “normal”—in that many or most people are, but it still doesn’t make this being desirable or good.

**Myth #2: The opposite sex will like me more if I am drunk**

Truth #2: As much as we would like to think that alcohol can cause the opposite sex to like us, it really can’t. The one thing alcohol is capable of doing is reducing our ability to pick up social cues. So, when you think someone is laughing more at your jokes or more attracted to you when you’re drunk, chances are you’re not paying attention to signals that suggest otherwise.

**Myth #3: I will like my behavior more when I am drunk**

Truth #3: As we said in the last point, drinking large amounts of alcohol limits our awareness of behavior in social contexts. You may think that you are a better version of yourself while drunk but how can you be so sure? Your judgment is restricted by the alcohol and you are vulnerable to slurring, wobbliness, and other negative effects associated with being drunk. Our experience with college students suggests that a false sense of confidence while drunk is a common cause of embarrassment and shame when the individual reflects on their behavior while sober.

**Myth #4: I am more likely to hook up or start a relationship while drunk**

Truth #4: We think a more accurate rewording of this statement is the following: “I am more likely to hook up or start a relationship while drunk because my anxiety prevents me from doing so while sober”. Alcohol does not magically provide you with the skills to show physical affection towards the opposite sex – **you already have them**! You are more likely to demonstrate these skills to the opposite sex when not inhibited by being drunk. As you practice using these skills while sober, you will experience less anxiety in dating situations and not feel the need to always be assisted by alcohol.
Myth #5: Drinking is a good long-term strategy for handling dating jitters
Truth #5: We hope our chapter on exposure helped you see the major problem with this statement. The use of alcohol to handle dating jitters teaches you that anxiety is terrible and uncontrollable and that avoidance is the only way to handle negative emotions. Wrong and wrong! The best way to treat anxiety is to face it head on without alcohol so you can learn strategies for dealing with it in the moment. As you get more practice exposing to dating situations, your anxiety will go down and alcohol will not be required to feel calm and collected.

Myth #6: Drinking is cool
Truth #6: At some point in your life, you may have thought that drinking was something that ‘cool’ people did; especially, when you had little to no experience with it. Media are constantly advertising alcohol so we believe that amazing things will happen when we drink. We will not deny that alcohol has contributed to some memorable moments in the authors’ lives. The point we want to make is that alcohol is not required to be cool. What makes people cool are things like their personality, interests, and sense of humor. If you match well with someone in these areas, it’s doubtful you will dislike them based solely on their drinking habits.

Before you go into a situation where there will be a lot of drinking—think over your thoughts about alcohol. Mild drinking (when it is legal) is perfectly OK. We are not against drinking. We are against overdrinking because it is psychologically and physically unhealthy—and because you don’t need to do it. So before the party, think about these thoughts:

1. Most folks my age are not overdrinking. Especially most folks that are doing something with their lives.
2. I have other ways of handling my nerves.
3. I find people attractive and cool when they are not drunk, and other people can find me attractive and cool when I am not drunk.
Summary
We’ve shed some light on a few beliefs about alcohol that may encourage college students to drink at increased rates. Hopefully, this information will make you think twice about what you want to get from alcohol before your next drink. At the very least, we want you to be aware of the consequences of reckless alcohol use and how inaccurate information can lead to dangerous drinking habits.
Chapter 5: Sit back and relax – strategies for reducing anxiety through relaxation

In this chapter, we’d like to focus on reducing anxiety using proven relaxation techniques that involve breathing and muscle movements. The purpose of learning these techniques is not to avoid anxiety altogether but to help you in two ways: 1) becoming a more relaxed person in general; and 2) helping you to cope by relaxing in situations that start to make you nervous. There is plenty of scientific research that shows that relaxation can be done on a regular basis as it helps reduce stress levels and leads to an overall sense of well-being.

Here are some fun relaxation quotes to get you in the right frame of mind for this chapter:

“I don't watch a lot of comedy. For relaxation and escape, I watch shows about how people survive bear attacks.”
- Amy Poehler

“I love traffic. It's fantastic. New York traffic is so relaxing.”
- Chris Kattan

I'm trying to read a book on how to relax, but I keep falling asleep.
- Jim Loy

- Homer Simpson

“For fast-acting relief, try slowing down.”
- Lily Tomlin

“Drinking coffee for instant relaxation? That's like drinking alcohol for instant motor skills.”
- Marc Price
“*The time to relax is when you don't have time for it.*”
- Jim Goodwin and Sydney J. Harris

“*Just breathing can be such a luxury sometimes.*”
- Walter Kirn

Let’s start with what’s referred to in the scientific psychotherapy literature as **diaphragmatic breathing**. As you might imagine, one common side effect of anxiety is irregular breathing. One way our body responds to stressful events is through hyperventilation or **chest breathing**—short, quick breaths into the chest designed to increase the flow of oxygen to critical organs like the heart. However, the increased level of oxygen also produces a spike in the body’s production of carbon dioxide, a by-product of respiration that can trigger physical responses associated with anxiety. The goal of diaphragmatic breathing is to regulate the flow of oxygen into the lungs and bring the body back to a resting state. It achieves this by having you take slow, long, deep breaths into the abdomen – the area of the body where the diaphragm is located. Abdominal breathing allows the diaphragm to move naturally with the body and regulate breathing with less energy compared to hyperventilation. Diaphragmatic breathing is used in many forms of meditation to help relax the body and mind. It is also an effective strategy for reducing the physical effects of anxiety when it strikes unexpectedly.

**Before you begin our diaphragmatic breathing exercise, we want you to recognize the differences between abdominal and chest breathing by practicing both.**

1. Place one palm over your chest and the other palm over your lower abdomen
2. Take three short, quick breaths into the chest while maintaining eye contact with both hands
3. Take three deep, long breaths into the abdomen while maintaining eye contact with both hands.

What did you notice? Were there differences in your hand movements with chest breathing compared to abdominal breathing?

You should have seen only one hand rising and falling depending on which breathing style you were practicing. Chest breathing leads to air entering the upper torso without any
movement in the stomach. On the other hand, diaphragmatic breathing leads to a full expansion of the stomach with little to no movement in the chest. The point of this exercise is to demonstrate the physical differences between these opposing breathing styles and to help you understand how diaphragmatic breathing earned its name.

Now, let’s try a full diaphragmatic breathing exercise:

1. Find a quiet space with few sensory distractions
2. Sit down in a chair or on a couch so the body is comfortably supported
3. Place one palm over your chest and the other palm over your lower abdomen
4. Practice taking several deep breaths into the abdomen and then slowly exhaling.
5. Close your eyes
6. Slow the rate of breathing down to about 8 to 10 breaths per minute or whatever is comfortable.
7. Focus only on the sensations associated with breathing and let all thoughts and distractions fade away.
8. Continue for several minutes and then open your eyes to reflect on the experience.

Did you notice a change in your mood or level of relaxation after completing the exercise? Some people report being distracted by their thoughts while practicing diaphragmatic breathing and find it difficult to focus only on the breath. This type of experience is totally normal. As long as you are able to maintain a stable breathing pattern that utilizes the abdomen and not the chest, the concentration piece will come with practice.

As with progressive muscle relaxation, you need to practice diaphragmatic breathing in order to get the best results. Again, want you to practice this at least 10 times. The great thing about diaphragmatic breathing is that it’s very easy to practice and doesn’t require much time at all:
Relaxation Technique 2: Muscle Relaxation

The next relaxation technique we want to teach you is called **progressive muscle relaxation**, or **PMR**. PMR consists of a series of movements where you alternate between tensing and relaxing muscles throughout the body. The idea underlying this approach is that it is easier for muscles to relax immediately after they have experienced tension. Think back to a time where you really pushed your body to its physical limit and how it felt afterwards. Apart from being drained of energy, how did it feel in the body? Did you feel wound tight and rigid or loose and wobbly? Chances are your muscles entered into a state of recovery and you could feel the tightness slowly drain out of them. From a physical perspective, the sensation of tension leaving your body is caused by blood emptying from your muscles after they have been in use. Things like anxiety and stress contribute to tension in the body and make it difficult for the muscles to relax. The goal of PMR is to practice tensing and relaxing major muscle groups until all of the areas in the body have had the opportunity to experience decreased tension. If you still feel particularly stiff in one area following a PMR session, it is recommended to revisit the area and
continue practicing until there is a noticeable decrease in tension. Never push yourself to the extent where it becomes painful.

Try the following how-to-guide for practicing PMR:

1. Find a quiet space with no sensory distractions
2. Sit down in a chair or on a couch so the body is comfortably supported
3. Close your eyes
4. Focus all of your attention on your dominant hand and its various muscles. When you are ready, create a fist and squeeze as tightly as possible for approximately 5-7 seconds. Try and remain focused on the tension being produced in your fist until time is up. After time has expired, relax your hand and notice the tension flowing out of your fingers, hand, and wrist. For 30-40 seconds, remain focused on the sensations in the hand and compare these feelings to the tension experienced before.
5. Use the same procedures from the previous step and shift your target muscle group to the following areas:
   a. Dominant upper arm → push elbow down on arm rest
   b. Nondominant hand and lower arm → make a fist
   c. Nondominant upper arm → push elbow down on arm rest
   d. Forehead → raise eyebrows as high as possible
   e. Upper cheeks and nose → squint eyes and pull cheeks towards nose
   f. Lower face and jaw → clench teeth and pull back lips to corner of mouth
   g. Neck → tuck chin into neck and prevent it from touch chest
   h. Chest, shoulders and upper back → squeeze should blades together
   i. Dominant upper leg → push foot down on floor
   j. Dominant calf → point toes up towards the head
   k. Dominant foot → curl toes down and turn foot inward
   l. Nondominant upper leg → push foot down on floor
   m. Nondominant calf → point toes up towards the head
   n. Nondominant foot → curl toes down and turn foot inward

OK, you have read this—now do it. Put this book down and take 15 minutes and do these “tension and relaxation” exercises. Give yourself a Subjective Unit of Distress Score of
between 0-100 before you start and after you finish. (0 is completely relaxed—you are about to go to sleep; and 100 is so anxious you could faint).

Now you’ve had the opportunity to practice running through all the major muscles, how does your body feel? We hope you feel more relaxed and notice a decrease in overall tension throughout your body. If you didn’t detect a big difference after this exercise and are still wondering what we are talking about – that’s okay! Our experiences with PMR suggest that it takes time to train the body into getting maximum results. The most important thing is to carefully follow the procedures so you are tensing and relaxing in the correct order and for the appropriate amount of time. Feel free to modify any movements that achieve a higher level of tension in the targeted areas.

On to the fun part! The best way to access the benefits associated with progressive muscle relaxation is through practice. Below is a practice log designed to help you keep track of your sessions and compare your improvements over time. Ideally, we would like you to fit in at least one practice session every couple days but everyone needs to find a routine that works for them. Remember to try and pick times and places that minimize distractions during your session. Again, we encourage this goal: Do it 10 times. At about the tenth time, people, “get it” and learn to have much more control over their tension and can command themselves to relax and it works for them.

Good luck!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Relaxation Rating Before Progressive Muscle Relaxation (0-100)</th>
<th>Relaxation Rating After Progressive Muscle Relaxation (0-100)</th>
<th>Total Practice Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When do I use these techniques in situations that cause anxiety?

Great question! We are asking you two develop two skills in this chapter. One by practicing these two relaxation exercises, you will go around in your everyday life a more relaxed, less anxious person. Second, when you are in a situation in which you start to feel anxious (maybe before a test or speech), you need to go into relaxation mode and actually do these techniques in these situations. These will help you calm down and stop the anxiety from getting worse.

In fact, we want you to revisit a few of the scenarios from your exposure list and see how implementing either diaphragmatic breathing or progressive muscle relaxation can be helpful in reducing your anxiety. Below are some tips on when to perform these techniques during stressful situations:

- **Before the event (i.e. date, party, dance)**
  - This is a great time to try out either progressive muscle relaxation or diaphragmatic breathing to reduce anxiety. Make sure you allow yourself enough time (i.e. 10-20 mins. for PMR or 5-10 mins. for DB) to complete a full practice session before entering the stressful situation. Progressive muscle relaxation can be particularly helpful if you are feeling physical symptoms of anxiety such as muscle tension, nausea, or shakiness. Find a quiet spot and progress through each of the muscle groups to ensure that your entire body is relaxed. Spend additional time on muscles that feel particularly tight since each practice will help release the tension built up by your anxiety.
- **While driving, walking, or sitting**
  - These moments are perfect for brief sessions that incorporate both progressive muscle relaxation and diaphragmatic breathing. Driving and sitting are stationary activities that can be used to practice quick muscle contractions to relieve tension. Make a fist or clench your toes to help counter tightness in the body. These movements will likely go undetected at a dinner table, while talking or casually dancing. Walking is a great opportunity to practice diaphragmatic breathing and develop a deep, even tempo between breaths. Again, accompanying people will be focused on walking and rarely notice a change in your breathing pattern.

- **In the restroom or stepping outside**
  - A trip to the restroom or stepping outside is when you can take a short break from the stressful situation and compose yourself. This strategy is especially helpful when the presence of the opposite sex is the source of your anxiety. Take a moment to do some diaphragmatic breathing and focus on relaxing tense muscle groups. Try to keep restroom or outdoor visits to a minimum and as brief as possible to ensure they are not reinforcing avoidant behavior.

- **During the event**
  - You can do these even in the situation that makes you anxious. When you feel anxiety starting to mount—examine your breathing—slow it down and deepen it. Focus on this until you have accomplished a different kind of breathing. Second, do a mental scan of your body and where you feel muscles beginning to tense (shoulders, neck face, etc.); tense these a bit more and then tell those muscles to relax. Do this a few times. You will find you have some muscle memory—and these muscles will relax more and then you will feel less anxious. This is key and very, very important—**PRACTICE BREATHING and MUSCLE RELAXATION IN SITUATIONS WHERE YOU BEGIN TO FEEL ANXIOUS**
- **After the event**
  
  o  The period of time immediately following the event is a great time to unwind through relaxation exercises. Any combination of progressive muscle relaxation or diaphragmatic breathing will continue to relax the body and mind and help you return to a resting state. Try to avoid overanalyzing your performance at this point and focus solely on relaxing the body as fully as possible.

**HOMEWORK:**

In 5 situations that make you feel anxious practice breathing and muscle relaxation skills before, during, and after. Record the exercises below:

SITUATION 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>DURING</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SITUATION 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>DURING</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Summary**

Relaxation techniques can be extremely effective tools for regulating anxiety when faced with stressful situations. Progressive muscle relaxation and diaphragmatic breathing are two proven strategies that assist with reducing the physical symptoms of anxiety through various muscle movements and breathing exercises. Relaxation is most effective when used in conjunction exposure and should not be considered as a way to escape or avoid all anxiety symptoms.
Chapter 6: People Skills

Now that we’ve covered the basics about anxiety, alcohol, and relaxation strategies, we want to switch our focus to specific skills that can help you in personal relationships. Although everyone has their own personal style when interacting with the opposite sex, there are some simple things you can do that are almost guaranteed to make a good impression. In this chapter, we will review a number of these helpful techniques as well as behaviors to try and avoid in social interactions. Finally, we will evaluate some common assumptions about what makes you attractive to the opposite sex.

Take a minute and think about all the people in your life who you really enjoy spending time with. What is it about their company that is so enjoyable? Is it what they say to you? Is it how they say it? Is it their body language? Chances are it is a combination of these things that makes the person so special. They may not even be aware of how their actions strengthen the relationship between the two of you. You might not either. Usually a closer look at the relationship will show that each person really values specific things you do each and every time you meet.

Dale Carnegie wrote a bestselling book called “How to Win Friends and Influence People” that outlines some of the ways to make people like you and strengthen existing relationships. We want to review some of these principles and talk about why they are so important.

1. Commit to learning about the person – show interest in them

- You might be asking yourself how you can practice being ‘interested’ in another person. The key to showing interest is going beyond the usual responses people hear from strangers or acquaintances that do not care hearing more than the bare essentials. Statements such as ‘how are you?’ or ‘nice to see you’ are good starting points for a conversation but they do not go beyond what is covered in most daily interactions. These can be very superficial. Take the conversation to the next level by following up with questions or comments related to the person’s initial responses. This attention to detail demonstrates that you are actually
interested in what the person is saying and not just listening to them for the sake of being polite.

2. *Say my name, say my name*...
   - Have you ever had the experience where you were able to hear your name called from a distance despite being in a loud, noisy setting? The reason we are so sensitive to hearing our name is because we have learned that it refers to us—only us. When people use our name in everyday conversation it communicates a sense of closeness that the person is talking to us and no one else. We feel more attended to and more special as a result.

3. *Tune into the details and listen carefully to what they are saying*
   - Listening is a crucial part of any good interaction. You think to impress you need to be witty or funny all the time. What research shows is that people are really impressed with a good listener! Without good listening skills, we have no way of picking up on the little details that allow us to respond with thoughtful, relevant responses during the conversation. Careful listening is the gateway to asking someone personal questions that are important to them on a deeper level. One of the most frequent complaints regarding a bad date is that they talked too much about themselves. Allowing someone to talk about themselves is a reliable way to make a positive impression because it allows them to take center stage and see that you are interested in hearing their story.

4. *Explore the interests of the other person*
   - The easiest way to strike up a conversation with someone is by talking about things most interesting to them. Almost all of us have had the uncomfortable experience of forcing a conversation with someone because we had no idea what to talk about. Even if you don’t have much in common with the individual, asking them questions about things they are passionate about will almost certainly end up with them taking the lead in the conversation. Ask them questions like, “What do you like to do?” “What really interests you?” Apart from impressing
the person by showing your interest in their life, you might even learn something cool along the way!

5. Make them the center of attention

- We like to think of this last point as a combination of all the other strategies mentioned here. Everyone has their own style for making people feel special and there’s no right or wrong way to do it. Some people focus more on body language and smiling while others emphasize the importance of good conversation. Some tell things that they genuinely appreciate about the other person, “You’re funny”; or “You really look great”. The element underlying all of these approaches is being sincere in the process. Humans are hardwired to pick up on subtle social cues and have an amazing ability to tell when someone is acting genuinely or not. However you choose to try and make the person feel important – remember that your level of commitment to the cause is one of the first things they will notice.

Now we want to review some tips on physical behavior during interactions with the opposite sex. We have included a brief statement on what to guard against with each of these actions as well.

1. Eye contact

- Eye contact is arguably the best way to indicate to someone that you are paying attention. It communicates to the other person that you are focused solely on them and that they are important enough to command your undivided attention. Also, it is more difficult to become distracted by things outside of the interaction when you are looking directly at the person.

- BE CAREFUL – Just like having too much of a good thing, too much eye contact can leave a bad impression if you are not careful. No one likes leering. Don’t be afraid to look away momentarily while thinking or talking to ensure the person doesn’t feel overwhelmed by an extended stare.
2. **Smile**
   - A smile may seem simple but it communicates so much more than a movement in facial muscles. Humans have evolved to smile when experiencing positive feelings and research has shown that smiling in the presence of others can actually influence how frequently people smile. Plus, smiling in response to seeing someone or hearing something they have said demonstrates they have created positive feelings for you. Who doesn’t enjoy making other people feel good, right?
   - **BE CAREFUL:** Smiling is a very welcoming gesture as long as it is genuine. Smiling for the sake of smiling will likely look strained and fake and may limit the bond you are trying to develop with the other person.

3. **Physical distance**
   - There is no precise formula to determine how close you should stand or sit next to someone when trying to make a good impression. Positioning yourself too far away may communicate a lack of interest or a desire to leave the situation. Make sure you are close enough that the person feels you have created a private space for them to interact with you.
   - **BE CAREFUL:** Being too close to another person might make them feel like you are invading their personal space. Avoid entering into the personal space (e.g. within a few feet) of an individual until you are invited to.

4. **Speech**
   - The style in which we talk to others communicates a great deal about ourselves and our level of engagement in the conversation. Susan Spence, a school psychologist who specializes in social skills training, lists three components of speech to focus on: tone, speed, and clarity. Variations in tone indicate you are combining emotion with your verbal response while appropriate speed and clarity help the individual understand what you are saying and add to the impact of the statement.
- **BE CAREFUL:** Too many variations in tone and speed may come across as odd or bizarre because it might seem unnatural or forced. Vary these elements based on your reaction to the conversation but avoid doing so if it does not feel appropriate based on the content.

Now that you’ve got some ideas about what to say and how to act during a conversation, let’s talk about the steps involved with getting the interaction up and running smoothly.

1. **Starting a conversation**
   
   Like we said earlier, if you know the person start with something informal and casual:
   
   “Hi, how are you?”
   
   “Nice to see you”
   
   If you are talking to the person for the first time, try and introduce yourself early on:
   
   “Hi I’m __________. Nice to meet you”.
   
   After you have shared your name and, if necessary, allowed the other person to introduce themselves, try and find common ground to continue the dialogue. If there is something interesting or notable about the situation you are in, comment on it, or pose a question to the other person to get them talking about it. It might be about the weather, current events, or even something humorous. It doesn’t matter what you say as long as it engages the other person and shows them you are interested in getting to know them better. Remember – you don’t need to hit a homerun with the person right out of the gates! Let the conversation develop naturally and roll with topics the person seems interested in.

2. **Maintaining a conversation**
   
   One of the keys to carrying a fun and interesting conversation is focusing on the other person. Let them decide where the discussion goes and encourage them to do most of the talking. Very few people find themselves uninteresting – especially if someone is right there asking them questions and urging them to talk more! Here are some quick, easy phrases to start with:
   
   “Really?”
“Interesting…”
“I didn’t know that!”
“What do you think about that?”

These are great ways to communicate your interest in the conversation and make the person feel important. Don’t be afraid to comment on how your own experiences relate to the conversation. Your input might teach the person something new about a topic they find interesting or confirm their knowledge in the area. Either way, you are keeping them entertained and they will associate you with the positive feelings they experience!

3. Ending a conversation
Bringing a conversation to a successful close usually contains several elements. First, make sure the person knows how much you enjoyed their company. Start to close the conversation with:

“It was great seeing you”
“I’m glad we bumped into each other”
“Thanks for telling me about that”

These statements communicate your appreciation for the person taking time out of their day to talk to you. Once you feel confident the person knows you enjoyed their company, it is a nice gesture to comment on when you’ll see them next. This can involve making a specific plan for seeing each other or merely stating that you hope to see them again soon. If you are meeting them for the first time and are interested in meeting again, go with one of these responses:

“I hope we can get together again soon”
“Do you want to meet for (studying, coffee, lunch etc.) next week?”

This tells them you liked them enough to plan for another meeting. If the person is someone you have met before or really want to see again, try something a little more direct:

“When can we get together again?”
“I’d really like to take you out to (dinner, a movie, a show etc.). Are you free sometime this week?”
Specifically asking about a time to meet lets the person know you are willing to set aside a future date for them. Regardless of how you choose to end the conversation, try and focus on leaving a good impression on the other person as they will often reflect on the beginning and end of the interaction to determine their perception of you.

As you may have noticed, there is a lot of overlap between several of these tips on how to foster a good, enjoyable conversation. No one point is more important than the other but all of them need to be considered when looking to make a positive impression on someone. You probably incorporate a lot of these skills into your social interactions already but may feel more competent with some compared to others. Below is a record log for you to rehearse the skills that may require a bit more practice to perfect in everyday interactions with the opposite sex. See if you can practice your target skills at 10 different times and increase your confidence in situations with the opposite sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Target Skill</th>
<th>Confidence Level Before Practice (0-100)</th>
<th>Confidence Level After Practice (0-100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We also want to address some of the commonly held assumptions people have about ‘experienced’ and ‘successful’ people and how they act in situations with the opposite sex.

**Assumption #1:** They don’t text or call the person first because it will make them look desperate

**Assumption #2:** They plan really original, elaborate, and exciting dates to take the person on.

**Assumption #3:** They always have something funny, smart, or interesting to say when talking with the other person.

**Assumption #4:** They ‘hook-up’ with the person on the first date

**Assumption #5:** They don’t get nervous

---

**Top 5 Myths about People Skills**

1. “I have to be amazing and impressive every time I talk or do something.”

You don’t always have to be funny, or fascinating; once in a while is great. Don't think you always have to be “on” like some talk show host (with scores of writers helping them). This is too much pressure on you.
2. “You must always succeed, succeed quickly and just knock it out of the park”.

   People enjoy being around relaxed people who are not trying too hard. Enjoy the moment. Notice what you like about what is happening right now.

3. “I must create a great façade”.

   Don’t fake anything. Most people can tell insincerity a mile away. Even if you are nervous—admit it—it is honest and the other person is probably nervous too.

4. “It is important that I get compliments; not so the other person. It is my performance that is on the line”

   Be positive. Compliment sincerely. People like to be liked. But again, don’t overdo it. You don’t want to seem too syrupy.

5. “I need to bring an entire new set of skills to the ‘hook up’ situation”.

   No, use the skills that work with you with friends. Be yourself. Being yourself works in other contexts and it will work here. You will fail trying to be someone else. And again, you put too much pressure on yourself trying to be SuperYou.

Assignment 1: Go with your strengths
Write down the five skills you think you use with friends you already have, e.g., I am funny once in a while. Come up with good ideas regarding fun things. USE THESE SKILLS WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX.

1.

2.

3.
Sometimes we might not even realize how or what we are doing. When we play sports we need a coach to look at us from the outside and give us feedback about what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. We sometimes just can’t see this ourselves, or think we are doing a great job, but to an external observer it is obvious what the problem is. Get some feedback from a trusted friend who has seen you with the opposite sex. Tell them you are not fishing for a compliment but really want honest information so you know what to keep doing (your strengths) and what to improve. Maybe this friend should be pretty competent with the opposite sex so they know what they are talking about. You might take this with a grain of salt, but then again, it is grist for the mill, and you might try working on the areas identified.

Get some feedback from a trust friend who has seen you with the opposite sex. Ask them, that you want some honest feedback to see what you might be missing. What am I doing that maybe I don’t realize? How am I doing? What am I doing well? What can I improve on?

List the top 3 things they tell you:

1.

2.

3.
Summary

People skills are an essential part of any good social interaction. Everyone has their own style when talking with other people but there are some basic tips for socializing that will help you make a good impression. Avoid trying to be someone who isn’t you and show a genuine interest in the person to improve all your personal relationships.
Conclusions

Well, you’ve made it to the final chapter of our manual and we want to thank you for sticking with it! We imagine you’ve encountered some ups and downs along the way but hope you feel better off having taken the time to read this. The goal of this final chapter is to summarize everything we’ve discussed across the manual and pull it all together for you. We will outline why we included the chapters we did and hopefully shed some more light on how these topics contribute to the goals of healthy relationships as well as decreased anxiety and alcohol use.

One thing we really tried to emphasize at the beginning of the manual is that **anxiety is normal.** All of us experience anxiety in varying degrees just like people range in height, weight, and skin color. There’s no right or wrong level of anxiety to have – it all comes down to what works for you and how satisfied you are with life. Some of us are biologically hardwired to feel anxiety more intensely than others or can cope with stress more effectively when it arises. Different experiences with anxiety don’t reflect our qualities as people but rather illustrates that everyone is unique. With this notion in mind, the authors’ interactions with college students over the years suggest that **early adulthood is a time period when individuals are particularly susceptible to anxiety problems.** Two major factors associated with anxiety during this period are dating and alcohol use. Developing an interpersonal style with the opposite sex that suits your personality and allows for experimentation with romance is a challenging task indeed! This is a skill set that continues to be perfected over the lifetime and is a source of anxiety for individuals of all ages and genders. One point we have attempted to highlight throughout this manual is that many people turn to heavy alcohol use to reduce anxiety produced in situations with the opposite sex. Although the short-term effects of alcohol appear to minimize anxiety in dating situations, the reality is that **excessive drinking reinforces our anxiety, limits our ability to reach our goals, and puts us at an increased risk for numerous health-related problems.** We have outlined several ways to reduce anxiety caused by encounters with the opposite sex without engaging in dangerous alcohol use.
Thoughts

As you can imagine, our thoughts play a vital role in everyday life. How we think about events in our lives has a huge impact on our feelings and actions. We develop ways of thinking early in life and sometimes these patterns can lead to beliefs that are inaccurate or biased. Dating anxiety and excessive drinking may be a result of distorted thinking that is maintaining these behaviors. Our goal was to highlight common types of distorted thinking (i.e. all or nothing thinking, fortune telling, catastrophizing etc.) and how they might apply to these contexts. For example, take the following two thoughts:

“I will never feel happy without a boyfriend/girlfriend in my life”

“Drinking is the only way I will feel comfortable enough for the opposite sex to like me”

Both of these statements are likely to lead to negative feelings. They are absolute, predict the future, and leave no room for change. Anyone would feel anxious, upset or discouraged by thinking this way! Your challenge is to generate alternative, more balanced ways of thinking that don’t paint such a bleak picture for the future. Maybe something like this:

“I have already found happiness without a boyfriend/girlfriend and will continue to do so”

“The more I practice spending time with the opposite sex, the more confident I will feel”

Science has shown that taking the time to analyze, challenge and change negative thoughts can lead to improvements in mood and quality of life. The close link between thoughts, emotions and actions has demonstrated that even small changes in one area can lead to major shifts in the others. We hope you review all the distorted thinking patterns and practice creating alternative thoughts that can lead to improvements with anxiety and alcohol use.

Facing Your Fears: Exposure

One feature of anxiety is avoiding situations that lead to discomfort or stress. Unfortunately, avoiding situations that do not pose an obvious risk (i.e. talking to a member of the opposite sex) maintains anxiety or even makes it worse when faced with the same situation in the future. This is because you are teaching yourself that the situation is too overwhelming to handle and should be avoided at all costs. Then, the next time you are faced with the anxious situation, these same thoughts come up and contribute to physical symptoms of anxiety such as sweating, trembling, pounding heart etc. Our chapter on exposure tries to illustrate the importance of facing your fears in order to overcome your anxiety. Exposure is a highly effective treatment because it
allows us to experience anxiety and learn that it is not completely overwhelming or uncontrollable. With multiple exposures, we learn how to manage our anxiety in threatening situations and reduce how frequently it arises.

Anxiety caused by dating and drinking situations can be greatly reduced through effective exposure treatment. Committing to ask a crush out on a date or reduce how much you drink before flirting with the opposite sex may cause an initial wave of anxiety but will subside with practice. As you gain more experience in these scenarios, you learn to manage your anxiety through positive self-talk and by realizing that there really isn’t anything to be afraid of! Take a look below to see the relationship between behavior, thoughts, and emotions and how exposure works to reduce anxiety:

\[
\text{behavior (confronting the feared situation)} \rightarrow \text{thoughts (e.g. “I am capable of asking this person out without drinking first”) \rightarrow emotions (reduced anxiety)}
\]

**Alcohol Assumptions**

One of the reasons we don’t worry about drinking excessive amounts of alcohol is because we don’t fully understand the consequences it can have. People don’t usually think that having a couple extra drinks during a night out can pose serious risks to their safety or health. It is important to realize that alcohol contributes to a growing number of deaths, sexual assaults, and health problems in college students every year when not used responsibly.

Sometimes we assume things about alcohol that aren’t true and discount the risks associated with increased drinking. Most of the common myths about alcohol adopt the notion that more alcohol equals better results in friendships, dating, and managing anxiety. The ironic reality is that **alcohol often limits our ability to reach goals** in these areas. In fact, you have a much better chance of being successful by focusing on being yourself and practicing skills without drinking beforehand.

Even though it may seem like drinking in college is associated with popularity and dating accomplishments, try and remember that alcohol is not the answer to everything. **Most people in college do not drink to excess** and the ones who do have likely encountered problems as a result. Alcohol use does not translate into attractiveness – feeling confident and good social
skills are what cause people to like you. Keep this in mind the next time alcohol feels like the easy option to take.

**Relaxation**
Sometimes anxiety causes us to feel on edge or uncomfortable even when we know in our head there is no logical reason for it. How do we deal with this? Relaxation strategies work extremely well as a way to reduce tension and discomfort caused by anxiety. Essentially, relaxation strategies use different parts of the body to reduce the physical effects of anxiety. Two common approaches reviewed in this manual are **progressive muscle relaxation** and **diaphragmatic breathing**. Both of these strategies are geared towards using a systematic, step-like process to reduce anxiety. The goal is to direct attention inward (e.g. focus on the body) and away from thoughts and behavior that contribute to anxiety. Progressive muscle relaxation concentrates on alternating between tension and rest in the muscles to achieve increased relaxation. Meanwhile, diaphragmatic breathing uses deep, rhythmic breaths to increase oxygen flow to the brain and reduce levels of carbon dioxide – a by-product of quick, shallow breathing and contributor to anxiety symptoms.

One important thing to remember is that relaxation strategies are not meant to completely eliminate anxiety symptoms. If relaxation functioned to remove anxiety, it would be no different than avoidance because it would teach you that anxiety is too much to handle! Remember - avoidance is the most common way that people maintain debilitating anxiety. This point emphasizes why exposure is such a crucial part of most anxiety treatments and how relaxation is only meant to assist exposure exercises and not be used as the sole treatment.

**People Skills**
Have you ever noticed that some people always seem to say the right thing? Or found yourself ending a conversation with someone and really looking forward to seeing them again? Chances are these people have perfected some of the basic skills necessary to be successful in social situations. It’s important to realize that you need to develop an interpersonal style that fits your personality and no secret tip that will make everyone instantly like you. However, there are two guidelines that will increase your chances of making a positive impression on those around you.
Make the person feel special
- There are a number of ways to achieve this goal but one reliable approach is to keep the conversation focused on them. Ask about their interests, career, relationships etc. – anything that shows you want to know more about them.

Be your genuine self
- So many people act differently across situations because they are trying to cater to the individual or group. Try and avoid this! People are hardwired to pick up on superficial facial expressions and will most likely know when it happens. You will form stronger relationships by acting naturally and discovering which people appreciate you for it.

Summary
We hope that you’ve enjoyed reading our manual and find some use for it in your life. Our goal with writing this was not to try and force you to change but instead to offer you information about how to change if interested. Anxiety and alcohol use are two of the most common problems on college campuses today and many students don’t get help because they aren’t sure where to look for it. At the very least, we hope this manual helped you realize how normal it is to suffer from these types of problems in college. The treatments we have discussed throughout this manual are all based on science and have produced positive changes in similar populations. If you found this book helpful and would like to explore further options for addressing the areas covered in this book, we encourage you to contact your college student health center or a mental health professional in the community.