Learning How to Be Comfortable with Discomfort

COMFORT ZONE

25 YRS! Social Thinking®

LEARNING HOW TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH DISCOMFORT

SOCIAL LEARNER INFORMATION

Helping individuals to learn	Developing social competencies	Recommended ages	
☐ How the social world works	☐ Attend	☐ All Ages	☑ 14–18
☑ How each person works in the social world	☑ Interpret	☐ 4–7	☑ Young Adult
	☑ Problem solve to decide	☐ 8–10	☑ Adult
	☑ Respond	☑ 11–13	

TEACHING POINTS

PURPOSE OF FRAMEWORK: The social world and becoming an organized thinker is not all about fun and play; it is not filled with comfort and relaxation. Instead, the world involving our social and organizational competencies is complex, and how things appear may not be truly how they are. For example, people may appear calm and comfortable when they are actually a bit stressed and uncomfortable. Many social learners experience anxiety or stress when relating to less-familiar people, try to make a good impression, or try to complete a classroom assignment. When stressed, they may feel they need to stop what they are doing rather than learn to manage through it. It's important to teach strategies to help learners focus on positive thinking even when they are feeling negative emotions. The goal is not to eliminate feelings of discomfort, but instead learn to manage one's stress and anxiety while simultaneously doing things to accomplish one's goals (social and organizational).

How to Teach This Concept

There is a tendency to downplay the idea that most people may routinely feel uncomfortable when sharing space effectively or when working on assignments or projects. Since stress feels uncomfortable inside our bodies and minds, many social learners want to eliminate that feeling entirely. However, that is impossible. Stress/anxiety exists within us for a reason; it is a warning flag that something is making us uneasy. Subtle or less compelling stress can actually serve as an alert system to pay more attention to what's happening, slow down, and focus on using cognitive strategies to help us succeed in that situation.
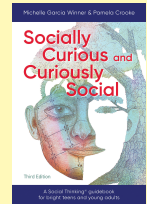
When we explore how we can learn to navigate to regulate in the social and organizational world, we realize that many aspects of it are stress inducing. One big aspect of learning to manage our anxiety is to learn to be ***comfortable with the fact we are going to be uncomfortable***. So, rather than spend time upset with the fact you feel stressed, focus on all you can continue to learn and do so that you can do what you want or need to do to feel successful!

RELATED FRAMEWORKS

- Basic Feelings & Emotions Scale (S1)
- I Don't Care Scale (S2)
- The Spiral of Social Success & The Spiral of Social Failure (S2)
- 4 Steps of Face-to-Face Communication (S2)