

Social anxiety rarely announces itself loudly. It tends to creep in, convincing you that speaking up is risky, that others are keeping score, that you should stay quiet to avoid looking foolish. The discomfort is not just shyness. It can be a pounding heart before a simple phone call, rehearsing sentences for days before a meeting, or backing out of invitations with relief that quickly turns **freedomcounseling.group PTSD therapy** into self-criticism. Over time, avoidance takes the wheel. The life you want narrows, often without a dramatic event to point to, just a hundred small no's that add up.

Anxiety therapy helps people reverse that cycle. It is not simply about talking through fears, though that matters. It is about building a system of actions and mental habits that make daily life bigger again. The goal is not to become an extrovert or love every social setting. The goal is to choose based on values and priorities, not fear.

How social anxiety sustains itself

Most people with social anxiety can track a familiar loop. A triggering thought sparks a jolt of threat: They will think I am awkward, I will say the wrong thing, I will blush and everyone will notice. That jolt prompts habits meant to protect you. You avoid the party, you leave the meeting early, you turn your camera off, you drink before talking, you script every word in your head. In the short term, these moves lower your discomfort. In the long term, they quietly train your brain to believe social situations are dangerous.

Physiology plays a role. The fight or flight system does not distinguish between a charging dog and a room full of colleagues. Sweaty hands, a racing heart, or a trembling voice can trigger more fear, which then prolongs the symptoms. It feels like proof you are not coping when in fact your body is doing its best to help you escape.

People often tell me, I need to feel confident first, then I'll face it. The hard truth is that confidence lags behind action. Confidence is the receipt you collect after doing the thing, not the coupon you redeem in advance. Anxiety therapy focuses on that order.

What effective anxiety therapy looks like

Evidence-based anxiety therapy for social anxiety combines several methods. Cognitive behavioral therapy is typically the backbone, with structured exposure to feared situations and skills for changing unhelpful thinking patterns. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy adds tools for noticing anxious thoughts without wrestling with them, then acting on values. Some clients benefit from social skills coaching in specific situations, like giving feedback to a coworker or joining small talk without feeling artificial. For clients with painful memories of humiliation or bullying, EMDR therapy can reduce the charge those memories still carry.

An experienced therapist will tailor the mix. The work usually moves between three tracks. First, you experiment with new behaviors in the real world. Second, you build a more accurate, less catastrophic mental map of social situations. Third, you adjust your physiology and attention in the moment so your body and mind do not send each other into a spiral.

Getting the diagnosis right, including when to consider ADHD testing

Clients sometimes ask whether their social anxiety is actually introversion, autistic masking, or ADHD. Labels are not the point, but clarity matters because it shapes treatment. ADHD can look like social anxiety when forgetfulness shows up as missing messages, impulsive blurting leads to shame, or variable attention causes someone to miss cues in conversation. The person then avoids judgment by withdrawing. If this rings true, ADHD testing may be wise. When ADHD drives the difficulty, stimulant or nonstimulant medication and structured supports can make social exposures far more manageable.

Likewise, autistic traits may mean that eye contact, sensory overload, or unspoken rules cost more energy. Here the work emphasizes self-advocacy, reducing overload, and practicing concrete scripts that respect authentic communication style. An experienced clinician will sort this out in the first few sessions, but you can help by describing specific patterns, not just I feel anxious.

Here is a quick checklist many clients find useful when deciding whether to seek ADHD testing alongside anxiety therapy:

- You often talk over others or jump in, then feel shame after, with a long history of impulsivity beyond social settings.
- Time blindness or disorganization makes you late or unprepared, which fuels anxiety about being judged.
- You miss pieces of conversation because your attention drifts, even when you care about the topic.
- You rely on intense last-minute sprints to perform, followed by burnout, and this cycle shows up at school or work as well as socially.
- Family history includes ADHD, or teachers flagged attention or hyperactivity issues in childhood.

If these patterns are familiar, combining anxiety therapy with ADHD testing and treatment can remove hidden anchors that **freedomcounseling.group Marriage or relationship counselor** limit progress.

Setting goals that beat avoidance at its own game

Vague goals like Be more confident rarely help. Effective goals are active and observable. For example: Ask one question in each team meeting, initiate one coffee chat per week for a month, attend three social events and stay

for at least forty minutes without alcohol. Behavioral goals give you a scoreboard that does not depend on how you felt, just on what you did. Feelings are welcome data, but behavior is the compass.

When setting goals, aim for a mix of small wins and moderate stretches. Too easy and your brain does not learn anything new. Too hard and you confirm your worst fears. The sweet spot is where discomfort is noticeable but tolerable. Most clients describe it as a 4 to 6 out of 10.

Building an exposure ladder that respects reality

Exposure is not throwing yourself into the deep end and hoping you float. It is a graded plan to contact the things you fear while dropping the safety behaviors that keep you stuck. The detail matters. If speaking in meetings is the fear, you might start by writing and reading two sentences aloud to yourself while recording, then playing it back without criticizing the sound of your voice. The next rung could be sharing a brief comment in a low-stakes meeting with cameras on. The rung after that could be presenting a three-minute update to five colleagues with one question prepared to ask at the end. Your ladder focuses on both intensity and control.

Clients sometimes try to hack exposure by entering the situation but keeping safety behaviors fully intact, like speaking but apologizing three times in the first minute or drinking right before. The brain learns less when you bring a shield. A good plan includes dropping one or two of those shields each time.



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Here is a simple five-step structure many people follow in session and between sessions:

- Pick one target situation and define a small, specific behavior you will do.
- Rate your expected discomfort, then do the behavior without your usual safety behaviors.
- Stay in the situation long enough for your discomfort to level off, even slightly.
- Afterward, write down what actually happened, not what you feared would happen.
- Repeat the same behavior several times across different days or contexts until the fear drops.

Repeating is key. One-off bravery is not exposure, it is a stunt. The brain changes with consistent, repeated contact.

Changing your relationship with anxious thoughts

Many clients try to out-argue their anxious thoughts, a strategy that can backfire because it turns a passing worry into a wrestling match. Instead, we build metacognitive skills. Notice the thought, name the mental habit it represents, then choose whether to engage. For example, mind reading might sound like They think I am boring. Catastrophizing might say If I stumble on this sentence, my career is over. Labeling the habit, then returning attention to the task, usually helps more than finding the perfect counterargument.

That said, sometimes thoughts do need testing. If you believe you always blush and everyone notices, we can run an experiment. Speak for two minutes in a controlled setting and have two trusted observers rate whether they noticed blushing. Most often the ratings reveal a gap between your internal alarm and external reality. When data challenges the story, the story shifts.

Training attention and calming the body

Anxious attention tends to lock onto threat. You scan faces for signs of boredom, then miss neutral or positive signals. We practice shifting attention to the task at hand with brief by-the-clock drills. For example, during a five-minute interaction, set a quiet timer to vibrate every minute. At each buzz, ask yourself, What is my task right now, and where is my attention? If it is on self-monitoring, gently move it to listening for content, asking a clarifying question, or noticing one concrete detail in the room. This is not denial, it is deliberate attention.

Physiologically, we coach skills that can be used in vivo without drawing attention. Box breathing can steady a racing heart, but counting too obviously can be distracting. I often teach clients to adjust their exhale length subtly while maintaining natural conversation. For tremor or fidgeting, anchoring your hands lightly on your legs or clasping them under the table can reduce visible shaking. These are not crutches to keep forever, more like scaffolds while your nervous system learns that these situations are survivable.

When EMDR therapy fits into the plan

Some clients carry specific memories that continue to power social anxiety. A classroom presentation where a teacher mocked them, a workplace takedown in front of peers, a parent who ridiculed their attempts to speak up. These are not simply uncomfortable memories. They are frozen nodes of shame that trigger disproportionate fear years later. EMDR therapy can help the brain reprocess those nodes so they stop hijacking the present.

EMDR therapy for social anxiety usually targets scenes of humiliation, the body sensations tied to those scenes, and the negative self-beliefs they reinforced, such as I am defective or My voice is not welcome. After several sessions, clients often report they can recall the memory without the old punch in the gut. When that emotional charge drops, exposures in the present become far easier. EMDR is not a shortcut around behavioral work, but it removes old landmines so the path forward is less treacherous.

Practicing social skills without becoming a script

Not everyone with social anxiety needs social skills training, but many benefit from tightening a few nuts and bolts. The goal is not to fake charm. It is to make communication smoother so your message carries without you working double time.

I often focus on microskills that compound: starting statements with a clear point instead of a long preamble, using names early in a conversation, asking one genuine follow-up question after someone speaks, and ending answers with a concise summary. In meetings, aim for one contribution per agenda item or, if you are new to speaking up, one short contribution per meeting. In job interviews, a concrete example beats a vague claim. You can rehearse a few core stories that illustrate your competence without sounding canned, then adapt them on the fly.

Pay special attention to camera-on communication. Many clients struggle more on video than in person. Turn off self-view if you are distracted by your face. Put a sticky note behind the camera to remind you to look near the lens when speaking. Stand for presentations if that helps your diaphragm and energy. These tweaks lower cognitive load, freeing up attention for content and connection.

The role of group work and couples therapy

Group therapy for social anxiety works because it brings the exposure into the room. You get real-time practice speaking, tolerating pauses, and giving feedback in a supportive setting where others share the same goals. It also corrects distorted beliefs quickly. Clients who were certain they sounded awkward can hear from peers that they came across as competent and warm.

Couples therapy can also support progress, especially when a partner, with the best intentions, has been enabling avoidance. Partners often speak up for the anxious person, make calls on their behalf, or default to staying home. These patterns reduce conflict short term but sustain anxiety. In couples therapy, we align around the treatment goals, agree on which supports to keep and which to fade, and create rituals for practicing together. A partner can become an exposure coach during a social event, offering a planned prompt or debrief after, rather than rescuing in the moment.

Special considerations for teen therapy

Teenagers often present differently. Their world is intensely social, with high stakes placed on peer acceptance. School settings create daily exposures that can either build resilience or magnify fear. Teen therapy integrates the same core tools but folds in collaboration with parents and schools. For instance, a teen might work up to answering one question in class each day, eating lunch with a small group twice a week, or joining a club for a quarter to widen their circle.

Parents often need coaching to strike the right balance. Overprotecting a socially anxious teen can cement avoidance, but pushing too hard can erode trust. I ask parents to shift from global reassurance to specific support. Help your teen plan the first step, drive them to the event, and celebrate the attempt, not the outcome. If ADHD is suspected, ADHD testing becomes pivotal for teens. Keeping track of assignments, turning in work, and organizing activities can all intersect with social risk. Addressing attention issues reduces friction that otherwise gets misattributed to laziness or defiance.

What the first eight weeks can look like

Clients often want a map. While therapy is individualized, a common arc unfolds across the first two months.

Early sessions focus on assessment and goal setting. We clarify target situations and identify safety behaviors to fade. You learn a few immediate skills for in-the-moment regulation and attention shifting. By week three, you are usually doing your first exposures, designed to produce manageable discomfort and a clear behavioral win. We track results concretely: Did you send the email, ask the question, attend the event and stay for the agreed time?

As the weeks progress, you repeat and expand exposures, adjust the difficulty, and add cognitive experiments that test your beliefs. If trauma memories surface or if you have a history of humiliation that spikes fear, we may incorporate EMDR therapy in parallel. If attention problems or impulsivity are complicating factors, we coordinate ADHD testing or medication discussions with a prescriber. If your partner is deeply embedded in your avoidance patterns, we might add a brief course of couples therapy to align on support plans.

By week eight, many clients report measurable changes. They attend gatherings without pre-gaming, contribute in meetings more days than not, and recover faster from awkward moments. Anxiety is usually not gone, but the

distance between fear and action is shrinking.

Medication, timing, and trade-offs

Medication can be a helpful adjunct for moderate to severe social anxiety, particularly SSRIs or SNRIs. Beta blockers are useful situationally for performance anxiety when physical symptoms dominate, like tremor or rapid heartbeat before a presentation. The trade-off is nuanced. Medication can lower the ceiling of arousal so you can engage in exposures more consistently. It does not replace behavioral work. If you rely solely on medication and continue to avoid, your world may not expand. If you use medication to engage in exposures, progress often accelerates.

Clients sometimes ask whether to start medication before exposures. I usually coordinate with a prescriber and base the decision on severity and impairment. If you are avoiding most social contexts and panic is frequent, medication early can create the stability needed to start. If your anxiety is mild to moderate and you are willing to lean into exposures, you may not need it. Many see good results with therapy alone.

Measuring progress without becoming obsessive

We use behavior-based metrics, but not as a new source of pressure. Tracking can be simple. Tally each day you completed a target action. Rate your peak discomfort during exposures on a 0 to 10 scale. Note how long it took to recover. **Psychotherapist** Watch trends over weeks, not days. Expect setbacks. A bad meeting or a chilly interaction can spike avoidance urges again. The key is to return to the ladder, not escalate avoidance.

I also ask clients to track positive costs. Anxiety hides the price of avoidance by focusing on immediate relief. We flip that by noticing what action bought you. You might sleep better after going to the event, receive useful feedback because you asked a question, or feel a small surge of pride. Naming these costs and benefits trains your brain to factor long-term rewards into short-term decisions.

A brief story about awkwardness and practice

A client in her thirties, a software engineer, avoided speaking up in standups. Her fear centered on going blank. We built a ladder that began with reading a 20 second prepared update to herself while standing. Then she delivered that update to me on video while glancing at bullet notes on a sticky note. Next, she spoke in one small internal meeting with her camera on, keeping her notes visible on screen. Finally, she aimed for one spontaneous comment per standup without notes.

We also ran a cognitive experiment. She believed that if she paused more than two seconds mid-sentence, others would assume she was incompetent. For a week, she deliberately paused for two seconds before delivering the key point of her update. No one commented. Her manager later praised her clarity. That broke a belief that had ruled her for years.

Making room for who you are

Not every goal is about increasing volume. If you prefer smaller gatherings, you do not need to become the loudest voice in the room. Therapy respects temperament. The task is to free you from fear-based limits so your preferences can guide your choices. That might mean finding one or two professional contexts where your style shines rather than trying to conform to a talk-first culture. It might mean building a social life anchored on a few deep relationships.

Authenticity tends to reduce anxiety. Practically, that looks like using clear, direct language instead of elaborate disclaimers, sharing your intentions when helpful, and allowing moments of not knowing. People usually respond to sincere curiosity and straightforward requests, even if delivery is not perfectly smooth. The more you practice acting in line with values and purpose, the less you monitor how you are coming across.

Finding the right therapist and setting

Fit matters. Look for a clinician who can articulate a plan that includes behavioral experiments, exposure work, and attention to thoughts and physiology. Ask how they measure progress and how they adapt the plan if you stall. If you have suspected trauma or significant shame memories, ask about EMDR therapy and how it would be integrated. If your partner is part of your support system or sometimes part of the avoidance loop, ask whether they can include brief couples therapy segments. If attention problems or impulsivity complicate your efforts, raise the question of ADHD testing.

Teletherapy can work well for social anxiety, especially for early planning and debriefing. Do not let it become another avoidance tactic. If video is your comfort zone, use it to plan and then schedule in-person exposures in your real world. Some clinics offer hybrid models, combining individual sessions, group work, and brief check-ins around live exposures. That variety usually produces the best learning.

From avoidance to action, one decision at a time

Change arrives through many small moves, not a single bold leap. Speak once in the meeting. Send the text. Stay ten more minutes at the gathering. Ask the clarifying question. Schedule the first therapy session. These decisions stack. With each one, your experience teaches your nervous system a different story, that you can survive

discomfort, that you can recover from awkwardness, that other people are mostly focused on their own inner monologues.



Anxiety therapy is the structure that supports those [Anxiety therapy](#) moves. It offers tools, feedback, and a place to recalibrate after wins and setbacks. If trauma sits underneath your fear, EMDR therapy can loosen its grip. If relationship patterns maintain avoidance, couples therapy can reset the system. If attention and organization drag you down, ADHD testing can illuminate a path you have not tried. The route is not identical for everyone, but the direction is shared: away from avoidance and toward a life steered by what matters to you.

Freedom Counseling Group

Name: Freedom Counseling Group

Address: 2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710, Vacaville, CA 95687

Phone: (707) 975-6429

Website: <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/>

Email: contact@freedomcounseling.group

Hours:

Sunday: Closed

Monday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Tuesday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Wednesday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Thursday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Friday: 1:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Saturday: Closed

Open-location code / plus code: 82MH+CJ Vacaville, California, USA

Coordinates: 38.3335888, -121.9709253

Map/listing URL:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Freedom+Counseling+Group/@38.3335888,-121.9709253,678m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x80853d08b873:121.9709253!16s%2Fg%2F11l861mmks>

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Freedom Counseling Group provides psychotherapy and counseling services from its main Vacaville office at 2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710.

The practice serves individuals, teens, couples, and families through in-person counseling in Vacaville, Roseville, and Gold River, with telehealth options also listed.

Listed specialties include EMDR therapy, anxiety therapy, PTSD therapy, depression therapy, OCD treatment, addiction support, phobia treatment, couples therapy, teen therapy, and immigration mental health evaluations.

The team is led by Kevin Anderson, PsyD, LMFT, CCTP, an EMDRIA Approved EMDR Consultant listed by the official site.

Freedom Counseling Group is locally positioned for clients in Vacaville, Solano County, Travis Air Force Base, Roseville, Gold River, and the Greater Sacramento Area.

The official site describes online therapy and virtual couples counseling for clients in California, Texas, and Florida, with some pages also referencing Idaho telehealth availability that should be confirmed directly.

The Vacaville service page notes support for adults, teens, couples, first responders, and military personnel seeking care for trauma, anxiety, PTSD, depression, OCD, phobias, ADHD, and autism-related concerns.

Prospective clients can call (707) 975-6429, email contact@freedomcounseling.group, or visit <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/> to ask about a free consultation and therapist fit.

The public map listing for Freedom Counseling Group can help clients verify the Peabody Road office before planning an in-person appointment.

Popular Questions About Freedom Counseling Group

What is Freedom Counseling Group?

Freedom Counseling Group is a mental health group practice serving the Greater Sacramento Area, with offices in Vacaville, Roseville, and Gold River, California.

Where is Freedom Counseling Group located?

The main Vacaville location is listed at 2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710, Vacaville, CA 95687. Additional listed locations include Roseville and Gold River.

Does Freedom Counseling Group offer EMDR therapy?

Yes. EMDR therapy is one of the practice's listed specialties, and the official site describes EMDR as a central part of its treatment approach for trauma, anxiety, PTSD, and related concerns.

What services does Freedom Counseling Group provide?

Listed services include EMDR therapy, anxiety therapy, PTSD therapy, depression therapy, OCD therapy, addiction counseling, phobia treatment, couples therapy, teen therapy, immigration evaluations, EMDR consultation, workshops, and online therapy.

Does Freedom Counseling Group work with couples?

Yes. The official site lists couples therapy and marriage counseling, including Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy for clients working on communication, connection, and relationship repair.

Does Freedom Counseling Group offer online therapy?

Yes. The official site lists online therapy and says telehealth is available in California, Texas, and Florida. Some official pages also mention Idaho, so clients should confirm current state availability directly.

Who does Freedom Counseling Group work with?

The practice describes work with individuals, teens, couples, families, first responders, military personnel, and clients seeking care for trauma, anxiety, PTSD, depression, OCD, phobias, ADHD, autism support, and relationship concerns.

What are Freedom Counseling Group's listed hours?

The matching public listing shows Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Friday from 1:00 PM to 8:00 PM, and Saturday and Sunday closed. Appointment availability should be confirmed directly because the official site also lists broader office hours.

Is Freedom Counseling Group an emergency mental health provider?

The connected client portal states that it is not to be used for emergency situations and advises calling 911 if someone is in immediate danger or experiencing a medical emergency.

How can I contact Freedom Counseling Group?

Call (707) 975-6429, email contact@freedomcounseling.group, visit <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/>, or use the listed social profiles: <https://m.facebook.com/p/Freedom-Counseling-Group-100063439887314/>, <https://www.instagram.com/freedomcounselinggroup/>, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/freedomcounselinggroup/>, <https://www.tiktok.com/@freedomcounselinggroup>, <https://x.com/freedomcounsel>, and <https://www.youtube.com/@FreedomCounselingG>.

Landmarks Near Vacaville, CA

Freedom Counseling Group is located on Peabody Road in Vacaville, with additional locations listed in Roseville and Gold River. Clients near these landmarks can call (707) 975-6429 or visit <https://www.freedomcounseling.group/> to ask about EMDR therapy, couples therapy, teen therapy, immigration evaluations, online therapy, and consultation options.

- [2070 Peabody Road, Suite 710](#) — The listed Vacaville office address for Freedom Counseling Group; clients can use the map listing to verify the office before visiting.
- [Peabody Road](#) — The local corridor connected with the practice's Vacaville office location.
- [Vacaville](#) — The primary city connected with the public listing and main office location.
- [Nut Tree](#) — A well-known Vacaville shopping and local landmark near I-80.
- [Vacaville Premium Outlets](#) — A major regional shopping landmark for clients traveling through central Vacaville.
- [Downtown Vacaville](#) — A central local district and useful reference point for clients in the city.
- [Andrews Park](#) — A recognizable downtown park and community landmark in Vacaville.
- [Travis Air Force Base](#) — A major nearby military landmark; the official Vacaville page notes relevance for military families and service-related concerns.
- [Solano County](#) — The county context for Vacaville and nearby communities served by the practice.
- [Fairfield](#) — A nearby Solano County city; clients can contact the practice to ask about in-person or online therapy options.
- [Dixon](#) — A nearby community east of Vacaville and a practical local reference for Solano County clients.
- [Greater Sacramento Area](#) — A broader regional service-area reference used by the official site for its in-person and online counseling services.