

1 **Interview – Ann**

2 **Interviewer (I):** To begin with, will you just talk a bit about
3 yourself?

4 **Ann (A):** Ehm, I'm in my second year of uni and I'm doing
5 History and it's alright, I'm working here as well so pretty
6 much, I'm pretty much here all the time, and my friend
7 [name] she is also in her second year, I live with her at the
8 moment [pause] Yeah, we, we only met when we first
9 started uni so we became friends very quickly and yeah,
10 she's, she's cute.

11 **I:** Could you tell me about how you became friends?

12 **A:** Ehm, well, we, we lived in [house on campus], do you
13 know the big halls down there, we were just, 'cause all girls
14 and we were on the same floor, ehm, I can't even
15 remember first meeting her 'cause we were all really drunk
16 but [inaudible] but I think it was like fresher's week and we
17 were just, we just [inaudible] really quickly, it was cute,
18 because I didn't think I'd like her at first 'cause she looked a
19 bit, not, I don't want to say bitchy but do you, someone just
20 looks a bit bitchy and I'm like: oh my God, she's gonna be
21 horrible but I don't know, she's, she's really cute, we just
22 became friends and [inaudible] stupid things.

23 **I:** How did you start talking?

24 **A:** It must have, it was, we chatted a bit on facebook, we
25 had a facebook group with [the house they lived in
26 together]. I didn't speak to her much though on it and then
27 we all went down to [dining hall] to eat, like all of us would
28 go down together and I think that's how we got chatting
29 and we'd arrange to go down and do things, 'cause we
30 don't do the same course so we were hardly ever at uni at
31 the same time, so we always had like loads of time off so
32 we just, just moved around the halls for a bit and yeah.

33 I: Okay, how long have you known that she has had social
34 anxiety?

35 A: Well, she only got diagnosed with it, it was, it was a
36 couple of months ago but I've always, 'cause she's got, she
37 got depression and social anxiety and I always knew she had
38 anxiety 'cause she's always been like afraid of talking to
39 people and she's always been quite shy and went just really
40 anxious around everyone [inaudible] I'm quite outgoing, so
41 I've always kinda looked after her in that aspect and I'll go
42 and talk to people and phone people for her, ehm, and
43 that's been as long as I've known her really so, but yeah,
44 she's only been diagnosed a couple of months ago, she
45 went to the doctor 'cause she was getting really cranky.

46 I: Did you know, or did she talk about it before she was
47 diagnosed?

48 A: No, not really, she's always joked about it, like: oh God I
49 just, I can't do it, like too anxious, socially awkward, things
50 like that, she's always joked about it [pause] 'cause I don't
51 think she knew she had it really, I think she just thought she
52 was just dead awkward and didn't like talking to new
53 people and doing things, yeah. [coughs] Sorry.

54 I: That's alright, so would you tell me a bit more about your
55 friendship, what it's like.

56 A: It's [pause] Well, it's pretty intense 'cause ever since like
57 we met, 'cause she doesn't, she's friends with people but
58 she doesn't like close to people, she doesn't like get on with
59 so many people so when me and her became best friends
60 like for her I know it was like very, very quick and it was like
61 very intense and we were having like sleepovers all the time
62 and going out every night, things like that, which is fine but
63 it was just very fast moving and then especially over the
64 summer when we weren't together, I know that she was,

65 like she was really struggling with it so then when we've
66 seen each other again, like it's been, it was just a very
67 intense friendship, not anything like, not in a bad way but
68 we were just super, super, super close and then I split up
69 with my boyfriend like four months ago and then, 'cause
70 she's, she's got a boyfriend now for the last couple of weeks
71 but when I split up with my boyfriend she was like, she was
72 like obviously there for me and doing all that, but then
73 whenever I got close to anybody else she'd get like, she'd
74 get quite worried and then she'd like lash out, she didn't
75 like anybody else being near me or talking to me, she's just
76 like, she's very protective, I think it's like 'cause I'm one of
77 the closest, 'cause she always tells me I'm like the only real
78 friend she's got and so, she's very close, she's very, she
79 doesn't like to think that other people are going to take me
80 away from her and things like that but yeah, so it's intense
81 but it's fine.

82 **I:** Okay, yeah, you talked a bit about what you do together
83 but I'm kind of interested in if it's changed since she's been
84 diagnosed? If you feel like it's changed in any way?

85 **A:** I think it definitely has 'cause it used to be like often,
86 'cause I was like working and doing uni so I never really had
87 much time to myself and then I wouldn't get any time to
88 myself because she'd always call me and like, not madly but
89 she'd always want to be around me and then if I ever
90 [inaudible talk] like said I just want to go to bed early
91 tonight or whatever and she'd get upset about it but things
92 like that, she's fine with that now, she doesn't like need me
93 as much, she is getting a lot better and she's got like a new,
94 a partner now so, like he is helping her out and she's told
95 him that she's got social anxiety and depression, he's
96 helping her through it as well so but yeah, it's definitely
97 been an improvement, I think now she knows that she's
98 definitely got it, she's got medicine for it and everything

99 [pause] I think she knows that she's gonna get better from
100 it so she's in better mind-set, 'cause I know she's like
101 wanting to get better from it whereas at times I saw her,
102 like when she was at her worst and she just didn't want to
103 help herself and she didn't want to do anything, it was, but
104 now she wants to so it's definitely, definitely an
105 improvement. [I: Yeah] Yeah.

106 I: So how does that make you feel that-

107 A: So much better, I'm so happy she's finally doing
108 something about it and like realizing, because I get, I never
109 knew what to say to her when she was like: oh I got like
110 anxiety and stuff, like I knew, like I knew she had it but I
111 could never work out how to help her with it, you know
112 what I mean, so now that she's got it she always sends me
113 like articles about people with it and she tries to help me
114 like understand how she's feeling, things like that, so I can
115 help her, so it's a lot easier and I'm a lot, I'm dead happy
116 that she's got herself sorted, sorted herself out yeah.

117 I: Do you feel that you, not understand it better, but do you
118 feel more capable of [A: Yeah] helping her now?

119 A: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, 'cause I didn't want to, I don't know
120 anything about it really, except what she's told me about it
121 and the basics so I didn't, I couldn't, I didn't know where to
122 go from and then when it was quite intense and she was at
123 her worst and it was just like, it was just hard for me to
124 have to deal with her and then deal with all my uni life and
125 then trying sort her out and make her feel better about it,
126 like it was quite difficult so I was a bit, it was just a bit tense
127 and there were times when I was just like: it's exhausting
128 like being friends with her and picking her up all the time
129 [pause] but it's, yeah, now that I've got a better
130 understanding, like I'm not, I was never like, never left her,
131 never [inaudible], always helped her out but now it's like

132 easier to see why she's being how she is and things like
133 that. Yeah.

134 **I:** Yeah. Okay, so when you helped her out, can you think of
135 any specific situation where you've helped her out and
136 what you did to help her?

137 **A:** It's just like little things, like if we'd go down to the shop
138 or something and she sees someone that she had
139 recognized from the course or someone that, someone that
140 spoke to her before and it all sort of get like worked up and
141 she couldn't go down the same aisle as them or she
142 couldn't go near them and then she just like run of and just
143 freak out and then I have to like get her back, need to like
144 take her out or just take her somewhere else, like things like
145 that happened quite often and then she wouldn't, like she
146 wouldn't be able to like phone people or phone her
147 grandma or phone her friends or anyone if they needed to
148 speak to her, so it was like trying to coerce her into doing
149 things like that, things like that happened all the time I
150 suppose, she was always, she doesn't really like speaking to,
151 well she never really liked speaking to that many people,
152 she couldn't really do it that well.

153 **I:** How was it for you to help her?

154 **A:** Ehm, like I didn't, I didn't mind it at all 'cause I got used
155 to, used to it and I just accepted like it's just who she is, she
156 doesn't like talking to people, things like that, so I never
157 minded, sometimes it got a bit tiring 'cause I was like I just
158 can't understand why you just can't like phone the doctors
159 if you need to go and things like that, and then I think she'd
160 get worked up about it knowing that I was getting a bit like:
161 come on, just phone the doctor's, ehm, yeah.

162 **I:** So do you feel like when you helped her that- Did she
163 actually phone the doctor after you talked to her?

164 **A:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, I get her, I always got her to do it at the
165 end, yeah, she'd always get there so it was just a bit,
166 sometimes a bit of an effort to get her, to get her there but
167 yeah, I've always, most of the time been alright with it.

168 **I:** Alright, so right now how would you, what place does the
169 anxiety have in your friendship would you say?

170 **A:** I think at the minute it's not a major part of it, just
171 because she's got me, like she's always had me but she's
172 got her new partner who she is, like she's like relying on
173 him so, I know 'cause she's got both of us she's not, she's
174 feeling a lot better about it and obviously the medicines,
175 like the medicines' working, it's working, so it's not like, she
176 has her bad days where she'll like come back from home
177 and like spend the day in bed like crying and things, it
178 doesn't happen as often anymore but it's just, she just tells
179 me like she has her bad days, which is fine, I completely
180 understand but it doesn't happen anywhere near as often
181 and we're both a lot more open about it now and she'll like
182 tell: I'm having a bad day and I don't want to take it out on
183 you, I am a bit upset today, and then I'll be like, I will know
184 whether to leave her or go sit with her for a while, now that
185 we're a lot more open about it it's not like a major issue,
186 we've just accepted it and working with it.

187 **I:** Right, now I'm just going to ask if you feel like, do you feel
188 like you're closer with her.

189 **A:** Yeah, definitely, when, yeah definitely because it was
190 quite hard when she was so intense by everything because
191 she'd obviously have these mood swings and she'd lash out
192 and she would, she'd feel very threatened by anybody else
193 around me, and I'm quite like an outgoing person, like I'll be
194 friends with anybody and obviously she's like the opposite
195 so it was quite hard sometimes and I felt like I had to
196 revolve my life around her, just so she wouldn't kick off or

197 she wouldn't get upset, which was quite like annoying me
198 at the time because I was just like: I can't, like it's quite
199 suffocating, I don't want to be dragged down by all, but
200 since, and I always feel bad thinking that it ever got to that
201 stage but like we spoke about it and we had like a, we had it
202 all out and she was like she apologised that she always took
203 everything out on me and that was before she was
204 diagnosed, and we sat down and spoke about it and that's
205 when we said that she should probably go to the doctor's
206 about it, and then [inaudible] since she went we've just
207 been a lot more open about it because of that, like we are a
208 lot closer, and yeah, I feel like, 'cause we got all the mates
209 that we live with and stuff, they all know that, that she has
210 it but no ones, no one really knows how to speak to her
211 about it and because it's, she just speaks so openly to me
212 about it and I can speak to her about it as well without
213 being awkward or anything so specially because of that we
214 are getting a lot closer, yeah.

215 **I:** You have talked a bit about it before, like experiencing,
216 like specific experiences where she was anxious and I just
217 wanted to, can you give me a bit more experiences [A:
218 Right], just I'm really interested in how you provided
219 support for her.

220 **A:** There was, we had, well, she's got an ex-boyfriend who's
221 like probably the whole reason she's got anxiety and
222 depression because he wasn't, he was really bad to her,
223 they were going out for years and years so she kind of like
224 conditioned herself to that, and it's been a few times where
225 I've gone back to her home in [name of city], stayed with
226 her family for a while and we've just gone out for the day
227 and we've seen, like seeing her ex or something and she'll
228 just, like just freak out and then she'll get really, really so
229 she won't want to either get out of the car or she don't
230 want to, she'll just run, like just run and hide somewhere,

231 and then she'll get embarrassed that she is, like that she
232 was like running away, and then she'd get more freaked out
233 that people were like looking, oh she was making a big
234 scene, so then have, so then I've had to take her out, we're
235 just in a little café, I managed to get her into the café, and
236 then she was just, just so freaked out about it that I had to
237 take her, like take her back into the car and then just sit
238 with the radio on like super, super loud and just make her
239 sing all the songs that she knew until she was fine, just
240 stupid things like that so she'll be alright about it 'cause she
241 always, she just gets so worked up, about him especially,
242 like even just going back home makes her think that she's
243 going to see him around the corner or something like that
244 [coughs]. Yeah and, she, we had, there is a girl in our house
245 that we live with who she doesn't really like purely because
246 she thinks that she uses me, don't know why, but I think
247 that's just feeling threatened that someone, like that she's
248 going to have competition or something, but I went away
249 quite recently to Thailand for a few weeks and obviously
250 they stayed back at home in the house and before I went
251 away, like my friend brought, this other girl brought me like
252 a few presents, like a pen and a notepad, like fun while
253 you're travelling type of thing and [name of friend with
254 anxiety] obviously saw that and got like quite angry about
255 it, and she was just like screeching and like: 'why is she
256 doing that, she is being so manipulative', like really, really
257 stressing out about it and it, 'cause it'd been building up for
258 a few weeks where this, 'cause no one liked her, I don't
259 want to see this girl alone so, like I've always been friends
260 with her and nothing's, nothing's changed, and it was really
261 awkward 'cause it was like she hated her but then this other
262 girl was trying to get on with her 'cause she just wants to be
263 friends with people but for some reason she's had it in her
264 mind that she hated her and everything she did was

265 manipulative and vicious and had like a motive behind it, so
266 I spend quite a long time trying to like calm them both
267 down, like trying to get [name of friend with anxiety] to be
268 okay with me spending a little bit of time with this other
269 girl. It was a lot of, it was a lot of hard work and it was really
270 stressful and it [sighs] was really annoying, not annoying but
271 it was quite hard, but yeah, she was like proper freaking out
272 that she had got me these presents, since she went, when
273 she went home that weekend, she brought back a little ring
274 with her name on it which she got given when she was a
275 little kid, she's had it, she was like: 'I want you to have it
276 and take it with you so like you won't forget about me while
277 you're there' and I said: 'of course I'm not, I'm only going
278 away for a few weeks' but it was seeing that I knew how
279 worried she was that this was a girl who like bought my
280 friendship or something like that, so I had to sit down with
281 her and just say you don't have anything to worry about
282 with the girl, she'd get really upset about it, she'd cry for
283 ages and ages and ages about it. She still doesn't like her
284 but it's getting there, yeah.

285 **I:** So when these happen, you said that you feel like it's
286 stressing you out a bit [A: Mmh], how do you, you talk to
287 her and you tried to figure it out between the two girls and
288 you but how do you handle it on your own?

289 **A:** I normally just take myself out of the equation, give them
290 both time to breathe, like I'll explain, explain to them that it
291 wasn't, like it's not fair for me to constantly be the one in
292 the middle of it all 'cause you know how uni halls is like they
293 get dead catty and everyone's like on teams and trying to
294 be the peacekeeper in it all, so I just, I just take myself out
295 of it and just say to them that I'm not the [inadudible] like
296 you can just take a breather guys, and then just leave it for
297 a day or two and then try to let it blow over because it
298 doesn't, sometimes it just gets, like now I know, she still

299 gets worked up about it, so I know just to like leave it unless
300 you need to speak about it but I'll normally just let it go and
301 just leave them to it for a bit if it's getting too much, yeah.

302 I: Does it help you to talk to her about it?

303 A: Yeah. Yeah, I mean to an extent because sometimes, like
304 she never used to realize what she was doing and then
305 trying to talk about, I was feeling like I was offending her or
306 being patronizing or anything like that. I think it was quite
307 hard to but it definitely did help just speaking to her about
308 it, like it was the only way she was ever gonna like calm
309 down about it.

310 I: Yeah, so do you feel, do you talk to your other friends
311 about this?

312 A: Ehm, [I: If it's getting to you], I don't like talking to them
313 about it just because I don't want, 'cause I know there's
314 quite a few people who, especially with the depression side
315 of it that don't, that people don't believe that it's an actual
316 thing, whereas I know it is 'cause my, like my mum had it so
317 I can, I do recognize it as a like a big issue but then I don't
318 ever want to talk to them about it 'cause I feel like they're
319 not going to take it seriously enough, which is isn't fair on
320 [name of friend with social anxiety] and then if they're not
321 taking it seriously enough they are not gonna be willing to
322 help her or be willing to listen and then they'll just know
323 that it's going to get [inaudible] fed around the house and
324 then, like I don't, I just don't want people talking about it
325 without understanding it so if they're like, if they're willing
326 to understand it and I know that they're genuinely going to
327 be interested in helping her out or just having patience with
328 it all then I've got no worries, like talking to them about it,
329 obviously I'm not going to tell them everything because
330 that's, you know what I mean, just things between me and
331 her but I've got my twin sister, speak to her about it quite a

332 bit because they're friends anyway but also she
333 understands and recognizes it, so it's easy to talk to her
334 about it, because she isn't in uni so there's someone from
335 the outside giving me advice on how to handle it all, what
336 to do with it, which is nice and I know that she doesn't
337 mind, [name of friend with social anxiety] doesn't mind
338 talking about it, she obviously doesn't like me talking about
339 it to people and I wouldn't do that but she knows that I do
340 sometimes speak to [name of Ann's sister] about it and
341 [inaudible] she hasn't got any issue about it.

342 I: What kind of advice has your sister given you?

343 A: Well, she just tells me not to get so worked out, like
344 worked up about it, like especially when we, when [name of
345 friend with social anxiety] went through the stage of feeling
346 very threatened by everyone else and it was like she
347 wanted me all to herself, it was quite hard, like having to
348 shut other friends out just to keep her happy and then
349 [Ann's sister] was like: 'just remember that she's only doing
350 it because she needs you so much', so just recognize that
351 and just know that it's like, she's taking, she's doing it the
352 wrong way but it's not anything, she's not doing it in a
353 vicious way so she just, 'cause I was getting like really
354 stressed out about it and yeah she just told me, she was just
355 like calm down, she doesn't mean to do it, to be
356 manipulative or horrible, she isn't being like a bad friend,
357 she's just not dealing with it very well. Just, like just look
358 from the outside and realize that you've still got all these
359 other friends, you don't have to shut them out, but yeah,
360 yeah.

361 I: Yeah, did you, you said that you shut them out, how long
362 ago was this?

363 A: Ehm, it was, it must have been, it was only like three
364 months ago so it wasn't that, that long ago, like next after

365 Christmas. Yeah, it was, I don't even know how it got to be
366 so bad, she's always been like a bit touchy with other
367 people around me but it was just for some reason like those
368 few months ago and it must have been because, when I
369 broke up with my boyfriend obviously I needed her a lot
370 more and she was was kind of like, obviously she was
371 brilliant with me and then she kind of like took that on
372 board and then, 'cause she helped me through it so much,
373 she would just want to be the only person that could help
374 me out or talk to me or make me feel better so then it kind
375 of escalated to the point where she didn't like anybody else
376 in the house, like being with me for so long in my room, she
377 was like: 'how long were they in the room for, what did you
378 talk about, what did you she say', either worried that we
379 were speaking about her or I don't know, she was just
380 worried about it in general but it did get quite hard because
381 then I couldn't go out with people that I work with after
382 work because she'd knew what time I'd finish and she'd be
383 like: 'you finish at ten, so you're going to be back here by
384 half past. 'Why are you late, don't be late home' and things
385 like that. So, yeah it was quite, it was quite tough but, and
386 obviously I didn't completely like just do everything she
387 says, like I'm not like a pushover but there were times
388 where I'd be out with my friends or something, she'd
389 message me like: 'oh I'm crying my eyes out, I'm having a
390 panic attack', things like that, so I'd know that like she
391 would be freaking out, let's go home, and then sit outside
392 her room for about half an hour trying to convince her to
393 unlock the door, I mean things like that it annoyed me
394 'cause like I've just been out with some other people and,
395 'cause I was like it's annoying, I feel like you're just doing it
396 for attention, so I'd come home and then she'd like want
397 me to sit outside her door and like beg me to let her in

398 because she's like crying her eyes out, things like that. It
399 used to really annoy me, it's like 'ugh' but yeah, so like that.

400 **I:** It might be a stupid question but why did it annoy you?

401 **A:** I guess because it happened so often and it was such a
402 regular thing and because it became quite unbearable and
403 quite suffocating that I'd have to, constantly I'd be doing
404 something and I'd had to stop, put everything on pause, go
405 and sort her out 'cause she's having a freak out or
406 something like that, and because it happened quite often
407 there were times where I felt it *was* just for attention
408 because she'd never want really, like she would want me to
409 come and help her but there's only so much that I can do
410 and then if she wasn't getting any better, but then she'd
411 message me, obviously it's horrible to know that your best
412 friend is like sat in the room next door crying her eyes out,
413 but I felt like she'd know it was hard for me, so she'd like
414 message me and tell me that she's like really upset, I could
415 hear her crying but she wouldn't let me in but she'd be
416 telling me how bad it was, things like that, like you know
417 just annoyed me that she wouldn't want me to help her but
418 she wanted me to help her, like I felt like, I was like, there's
419 nothing that I can do neither way, yeah, just when it was
420 like that it was quite annoying. Like not, like I feel bad, not
421 annoying but do you know what I mean, just tired and.

422 **I:** Yeah.

423 **A:** Yeah.

424 **I:** Does it happen a lot less now?

425 **A:** Mmhm [drinking water], yeah, definitely, it's not, it's not
426 happened for a while now really, except when she first
427 when on her meds and she was like up and down for like
428 the first few weeks. Apart from that she's alright, she's still
429 a bit touchy if I go out with other people and she's not

430 there. She gets a little bit touchy but it's not, not that bad
431 anymore, it's alright, yeah.

432 **I:** Yeah, so a friendship with someone socially anxious is
433 that, would you say it's different from a friendship with
434 someone who is not?

435 **A:** Yeah, definitely different, like not in a bad way. Cause I
436 know a lot, like everyone has their own issues, things like
437 that, I think it's just once you both know that it is actual like
438 social anxiety and it is an actual, it is a problem, it's a lot
439 easier to work with, 'cause at first it was like we were
440 getting to know each other, it was kind of like I was just
441 guessing that she didn't like to speak to people and it was
442 like we grew closer without either of us knowing she had
443 social anxiety, so it didn't obviously, didn't affect how close
444 we became, but yeah, I'm thinking as long as we both know
445 about it, like it's fine, it's gotten us a lot closer as well 'cause
446 we can speak about it and I know that she's coming for
447 support to me about it and I'm coming around to her
448 [inaudible]. I think as long as it's like that then, like it's
449 different but like it's fine, it's a good friendship. Yeah, I
450 wouldn't change it, I wouldn't change it at all.

451 **I:** Yeah, I've gone through my questions. Is there anything
452 you wish to discuss that I haven't covered?

453 **A:** Ehm, really know.

454 **I:** It's alright if there is nothing, it's alright if there is.

455 [Both laugh]

456 **A:** I don't know, I don't think so. Can't think of anything
457 really. [Coughs] Ugh, sorry, I hope you've been able to
458 understand.

459 **I:** Yeah, I have [both laugh]. No problem. No problem at all.
460 Alright, well, I don't have that much more actually so.

Interview - Ann

461 **A:** Okay.

462 Interviewer and Ann talk a bit about the topic of the

463 dissertation before they say goodbye.

Interview Mike

1 **Interview – Mike**

2 **Interviewer (I):** To begin with will you just tell me a bit about
3 yourself?

4 **Mike (M):** I'm at [name] university, I'm a second year psychology
5 student, I just finished off my exams, in a few weeks I'm going to
6 start my work experience, it's going to be in a psychiatric ward
7 [inaudible] What else would you like to know? My favourite
8 colour is blue [both laugh]. [I: Okay, that's good, thank you].
9 Whatever you want to know.

10 **I:** So, you have a friend who has social anxiety [M: Yeah] and can
11 you tell me about how you became friends?

12 **M:** Okay, her name is [name] and it's, it must be about five years
13 back, it was the last year of secondary school, we were in the
14 same science class and the same history class, would you be able
15 to narrow down the question for me? Is it recording by the way?

16 **I:** Yeah, it's recording.

17 **M:** Okay, would you be able to just narrow down the question?

18 **I:** Yeah, just how long have you been friends, five years?

19 **M:** On and off for about five years.

20 **I:** And you met in school then?

21 **M:** That's right, [inaudible] in my sixth form as well.

22 **I:** And how long have you known that she's had social anxiety?

23 **M:** It was from the start, it was pretty obvious, she kept missing
24 school, she kept having panic attacks, yeah, one time we had
25 known each for about a month, we were in this additional maths
26 class, it was after school, [inaudible] because she didn't
27 understand the question, she started shaking, not making eye
28 contact, anyway, I had to take her out, you know, she didn't
29 have to say, it was pretty obvious, anyway, later on she tells me

Interview Mike

30 she has been doing CBT for awhile [inaudible] dose of Prozac, so
31 I knew from the start.

32 **I:** Yeah, so how would you describe your friendship?

33 **M:** I will try not to be vague here.

34 **I:** It's alright, just anything you can think of.

35 **M:** It's supportive and we know a lot about each other, it's close.
36 [pause] [I: Yeah, so-] It's close, we've been on and off for a few
37 years, she lives in [city] right now, so we're close, we talk every
38 day and we know a lot about each other's interests, I'm not
39 exactly sure what you're asking for here?

40 **I:** I'm just asking, so you're close friends, so do you share a lot?
41 Like, do you feel able to talk to her if you're going through a
42 stressful time or something?

43 **M:** Yeah, I know that she'd do the same for me.

44 **I:** Yeah, so you feel like you're close friends?

45 **M:** I thought I would say something but I don't want to say
46 anything that's irrelevant that would just waste your time.

47 **I:** No, that's alright, I mean say anything that you can think of,
48 I'm just interested in any experiences [M: Any experiences,
49 really?] you've had with your friend who has social anxiety.

50 **M:** Actually, I had a pretty bad break up a few months back, she
51 was very supportive through that, yeah, we've got a lot in
52 common, do you want me to describe her as a person? [I: Yeah]
53 Okay, she's, I'm not sure, do you want me to explain it casually
54 or do you want me to use some kind of theory? [I: No, just, just
55 the way you want to] Okay, pretty closed off when you first get
56 to know her, takes a while before she shows anything, so she's
57 not open, she's pretty neurotic, she, she really likes Studio Ghibli
58 movies, she, she didn't make that many friends in second school
59 or college because she's always seemed very distant, basically
60 she's scared of getting into an argument with anybody, she used

Interview Mike

61 to skip school a lot, I actually had to drag her back [inaudible]
62 but she's a, once I got to know her we have a lot of shared
63 interests, she's a warm person and she's a supportive person,
64 what else?

65 I: I was thinking-

66 M: I get the feeling I'm not being of much help here.

67 I: No, no, no, you're alright, don't worry, it's alright, I was
68 thinking, you said that you dragged her back to school, can you
69 tell me about an experience like that for example?

70 M: [inaudible] I was in sixth form, right, and I had a lunch break
71 and then I have a free period and then history class, so I go to
72 her house for a few hours, she's basically my wife and, and, and
73 we have a meal together and we, like watch a movie or
74 something and she always makes it some kind of depressing
75 movie so that then we have to see the end of it and then spend
76 another hour, anyway, I try to get her to go back to school, right,
77 and it takes a while to talk her into it and being anxious like that
78 sometimes because of her Prozac and being on Zoloft she's very
79 distant and you know not making eye contact or anything,
80 constantly like chewing her lips, [inaudible] trying to take her
81 back to school and to go back to the college you have to go
82 through the market in town and there's this, a farmers market
83 town, it's like a slaughterhouse right in the middle of the town, I
84 don't know why they designed it like that, anyway, we're
85 walking through this town and there's this cow there just
86 [inaudible] and then she runs back and that held me back about
87 a week but I used to do that once in a while and a lot of people
88 at school they were saying you know: 'just give up on her', they
89 were saying you know: 'it's her decision' and I was saying: 'no,
90 it's not her decision, it's a condition she has', I mean, she does
91 actually want to go to school, I mean it's a pretty rough school so
92 she doesn't like it anyway but she has a lot of aspirations, she
93 wants to be a vet or a doctor, actually right now in [city] she's

Interview Mike

94 working as a lab assistant, crystallisation tests, so it's not as if
95 she wasn't trying [I: So she did want to go to school, yeah], it
96 was just difficult for her because she was, she was very nervous,
97 there were times in which say in history class she'd say
98 something and it would be fine but someone would laugh
99 because you know they're, they're fifteen years old and she just
100 gets scared and doesn't know how to react.

101 **I:** Yeah, so when you talked to her and you dragged her back,
102 what would you say to her?

103 **M:** The dragging is a bit of an extreme word, it was a lot of
104 negotiation, I guess, first I was trying to just talk to her about
105 how she, how it was going in school, how it'd be good for her
106 and she wasn't really buying into that because you can't, it's not
107 a rational problem, rationally she knows that she should go, it's
108 an emotional problem, so I said: 'if you go to school I'll buy you
109 some [inaudible: some food]', now that doesn't work either, it
110 was a pretty long process and I think I actually ended up giving
111 her the textbooks, [inaudible] textbooks from the school so that
112 she could revise in her own time, think she still has them.
113 Anyway, the process was a few months long and it didn't
114 actually work that well, I mean she's, [her] parents, would you
115 like me to tell you about her parents? [I: Yeah] Okay, they're
116 really closed off, and she has brother who's, who's got some
117 kind of, I think it's some kind of autism, I don't know, he hasn't
118 actually said, he doesn't talk to people and her dad says that he
119 can't get therapy you know because that's not the money
120 [inaudible] you know that kind of crap, can you believe that?
121 They're not very supportive, don't really talk to each other that
122 much so I guess not having any kind of social support like that
123 wouldn't help her, she actually got a lot better when she moved
124 to [city], she's living with her grandparents, so I think if there
125 was a problem it's just that she wouldn't have enough support.

126 **I:** Did she go to you then to get support?

Interview Mike

127 **M:** Yeah, she did when she could, I mean, we were living a few
128 miles away from each other so she had to arrange it in advance
129 because she didn't want to be on the bus on her own in case
130 someone says something to her and she panics and doesn't
131 know what to say but whenever I could I made myself available
132 for her, I mean, I know she, that if she was able to she would do
133 the same for me.

134 **I:** So, how is her, her anxiety now?

135 **M:** Her anxiety is getting better, she's, she's still taking Prozac,
136 she had therapy, two different kinds of therapy, heard of EMDR?
137 Oh, it's [inaudible], student therapy classes a few months ago
138 and she actually has tried this therapy, basically it's like
139 behaviour therapy but while you're looking at some flashing
140 light, it doesn't do anything, she's had all kinds of it, and even in
141 terms of therapy, at least if you go by the textbooks like the
142 [inaudible] therapy only works if you still have support outside
143 of therapy, which you know she didn't have a lot of at the time,
144 which meant that a lot of the time I had to act as if I was a
145 therapist, which, you know, I'm not exactly that good at [pause],
146 what were you saying?

147 **I:** If her anxiety has gotten better?

148 **M:** Yeah, it's been better since now she's living with her
149 grandparents, she's got more support. Plus, she's got support
150 from me because like I said we talk every day. Being in a pretty
151 rough school, she didn't have supportive parents, the teachers
152 you know weren't that good and the people there were very
153 clique so there wasn't much support there but now she's a lot
154 more independent, she's got her own job, she's got goals, she's
155 going to be, I think it's some kind of doctor, she hasn't exactly
156 decided yet but she's a lot more independent and autonomous,
157 feels more confident so yes, she is feeling better.

158 **I:** So, how does that make, how does that affect the friendship?

Interview Mike

159 **M:** [inaudible] than it used to be, she would cancel on me all the
160 time because she got, she got scared, she pretended to be sick
161 but now she got better, so I can trust her more, I'm not an
162 expert about this but I suppose it's some kind of negative cycle,
163 say if you're depressed and if people don't want to talk to you
164 because you're no fun to talk to, if you're anxious then you get
165 people to move away from you, so it, I don't, to stick with her
166 for a few years, well it wasn't fun I didn't exactly get much out of
167 the friendship but in the end it paid off.

168 **I:** So, if you think back to before she got a bit better-

169 **M:** Yeah, that was very frustrating, we used to argue a lot
170 because I, it's going to make me seem pretty cold but I, I just
171 couldn't understand like you'd be saying: 'you want to go to the
172 cinema or are you going to come over to my house?' and in the
173 end of having texted her in every hour or so in advance, I, I just
174 couldn't understand why that was so hard for her, yeah, I've
175 been doing a lot of research about it, actually that's why I took
176 psychology, to find out about these psychopathologies and I
177 guess I tried to make myself more supportive if I would
178 understand her. I suppose it wasn't that difficult but she was fine
179 most days, say about she had a panic attack or some kind of
180 [inaudible] every fourth night so most of the time it wasn't that
181 bad.

182 **I:** Okay, so now when you still support her, is it different in any
183 way the way you support her now?

184 **M:** Yeah, yes, it is. Yeah, it used to be that she was almost
185 completely dependent, when she had a panic attack and I'd have
186 to hold her, and I'd have to talk her through everything
187 [inaudible] you know, go through everything, but now when she
188 has a panic attack or something I don't have to talk her through
189 it, I'm able to, not actually give any answers, because I know that
190 now she's healthy enough to work through it herself and she's
191 fine in about ten minutes, lets say she's anxious about, I don't

Interview Mike

192 know, exams for example, it used to be that I'd had to say: 'this
193 is what you do to' kind of give her some kind of structure of
194 what to do, which I suppose wasn't the best option because she
195 wasn't able to do it for herself, but she wasn't able to do it for
196 herself anyway, but now if she's saying she's having a problem
197 with exams, I'd say something like, and if she's panicking, I say:
198 'okay, just tell me three things that you can do about that' and
199 then she can solve it herself, so it's gotten a lot easier for both of
200 us. [I: Yeah, great strategy] Yeah, it's like client-centred.

201 I: Yeah. And did she, did she feel that it worked to when you
202 helped her?

203 M: I don't know about her feelings towards it but it used to work
204 anyway, she's having a lot less panic attacks, I don't know
205 whether that's me or whether that's her moving to [city] but it's,
206 it's, [inaudible], it would make her feel calm a lot more easy
207 because this year, I used to have panic attacks when I was about
208 fifteen, I had a little bit of CBT but it wasn't that much, it was
209 nothing compared to what she had and if you're having a panic
210 attack everything is so confined, I mean, you feel, you know,
211 trapped, it's like there's this big sheet of glass in front of you and
212 everything else is, you're not in control of anything, did that
213 make any sense whatsoever? [I: Yeah] Well, if you're having a
214 panic attack it wouldn't, how can I describe it, no matter how
215 much you were panicking basically you want, you feel like you
216 can't control anything, so you want somebody else to take
217 control over it, as if your anxiety is a physical thing for the other
218 person to take so that person then has power over you, you're
219 willing to do whatever that person says just to feel better,
220 which, I know that's a, makes you pretty pathetic at the time,
221 but at the time when you have no alternative [I: You need that
222 support] yeah. But she doesn't actually need it anymore. I used
223 to have panic attacks, it was just, I would, I'm actually pretty
224 embarrassed to say, we're in this car, we're going back, me and
225 my dad and I'm getting anxious about everything and I'm getting

Interview Mike

226 very defensive and he's starting to shout back at me because I'm
227 being a little bitch so he starts shouting back at me, that's his
228 phrase anyway, obviously that makes it worse and worse [pause]
229 you have to explain, like she did, you have to explain in advance
230 what's happening otherwise you don't physically have the tools
231 to help, I help her as much as I want to, I mean, I mean, I help
232 her as much as I have to, but I'm always concerned that if I'm
233 doing too much then that's not her doing it for herself, cause in
234 the end it's her problem so her own mind and, I had a few weeks
235 of therapy and then afterwards, after I left her, whenever there
236 was a problem I didn't think I could solve it so I was thinking:
237 'okay, where's [name of his therapist], where's my therapist?',
238 so it was important that she was able to deal with as much as
239 she could herself so that if I wasn't there, she'd be able to fix it
240 herself so she wouldn't become dependent.

241 **I:** And did you find that balance?

242 **M:** Yeah, I did, it took, it took a while, there was a period of a
243 few months where she was constantly texting about help with
244 every, every thing, like a crazy [inaudible], everything, every
245 little tiny thing, and it was almost like trying to wind her off it. I
246 don't think that without that she would have been able to live in
247 [city], she was actually quite stressed about, can I give you
248 another example? [I: Of course] Okay, she's hoping to go to [city]
249 university and do medicine and she's having, I wouldn't say a
250 panic attack but she's getting fuzzed and she's getting stressed, I
251 mean, her hands aren't sweating and she's not hyperventilating,
252 so a real panic attack, but I'm scared that there might be,
253 obviously I'm not going to show that I'm scared because that
254 would just make her feel as if being scared is justified, you know,
255 if I'm getting scared about it then she's just going to get even
256 more scared, so instead of telling her that it's going to be okay,
257 obviously that's what I would say towards the end, but I'd say:
258 'okay, have you thought about this and if it happened what
259 would you do?' like an action plan, so now it's her plan for it, it's

Interview Mike

260 not someone having to look over her shoulder, it's her being
261 grown up enough to fix it herself, obviously you don't just do
262 that to someone having a panic attack but if you do it an hour or
263 so before then you can avoid the panic attack altogether, does
264 that make sense?

265 **I:** Yeah, that does make sense, so she can be more in control?

266 **M:** Yeah. Otherwise it would just be her depending on me and
267 the moment I wasn't there she would be back to having a panic
268 attack again, it would just be completely useless.

269 **I:** So, now when you're this far apart, does your conversations,
270 are they about her and her anxiety or?

271 **M:** We actually don't talk about her anxiety that much. She, like I
272 said, she's pretty autonomous now, she's able to, to go to work
273 by herself, she walks around [the city] and she goes to some
274 bars, she doesn't really feel that anxious anymore, but if she did
275 she would be able to tell me, say four years ago it used to be
276 once every two days and now it's about once a month.

277 **I:** Yeah okay, so there's a big difference.

278 **M:** Yeah, that's big improvement. We don't talk that much
279 about, about anxiety because, basically because we just ran out
280 of things to say about it, if she was feeling anxious she would tell
281 me.

282 **I:** Yeah, and you would, she would know that would just be there
283 for her?

284 **M:** Yeah. Talking about supportiveness, I actually had a pretty
285 bad time about a few, actually about half a year ago, I had this
286 girlfriend at the time and she said about being sick all the time
287 that, you know, she had tachycardia, schizophrenia and
288 depression, she had heart cancer and all these things, anyway,
289 turns out she was lying about this stuff, yeah, and basically I was,
290 like I had been before with [name of friend] I was trying to help

Interview Mike

291 her so much that I just became dependent, like I was being
292 conditioned, so when I found out that, you know that, this
293 girlfriend wasn't, wasn't actually sick, she was just making it up
294 basically just for attention, I was just so set, in the mind set that
295 she was being sick and she needed me, I remember being up to
296 about three in the morning, right, desperately trying, trying to
297 text her and get my phone charged because every time she
298 would end the conversation it was fine but as soon as I was
299 going to leave she was going to like slit her wrists, she was going
300 to jump out of the window, just these desperate cries for
301 attention, I actually feel ashamed of myself for believing it so
302 long afterwards, anyway, the point of that, was that if, was that
303 even if she had been, it had been real or even if [name of friend]
304 came up to me that was a problem, at the same time by making
305 myself so dependent I wasn't actually helping out I was just
306 making it worse. I, it took me a while to distance myself, I went
307 to work on this [inaudible: work place] for a while, it shocked me
308 how, how distanced they were about it, you know they were
309 talking about like a Jessica, she's not going to school again, she's
310 anxious about this, just talking as if, as if they were some kids
311 and they weren't able to make their own decisions and I'm
312 thinking: 'what if they're not able to make their own decisions
313 because you're not letting them, how are they ever going to
314 learn?' Otherwise, you might be sick and it will get better by
315 itself, that's what therapy is about, you go to therapy they don't
316 tell you what to, what to do, it's like Aaron Beck, he developed
317 cognitive therapy, he said that the point of therapy wasn't for
318 the therapist to give a solution, it's just to allow people to come
319 up with their own, to become their own therapist, and the
320 moment you the, you know, that you're a victim, the moment
321 you say you're a patient, that's taking all the power off yourself
322 and then you're not being proactive about it, you're not saying:
323 'okay, my heart rate is slightly elevated, my hands are kind of
324 sweaty, my thoughts are running way too fast, I could use some

Interview Mike

325 breathing exercises', now if you call yourself a patient or
326 dependent then you think it's hopeless and you're going to have
327 a panic attack and you're just waiting for someone else to come
328 along and help you and okay maybe that helps if that person is
329 in the room all the time, but in the moment they're not, like I
330 said, you haven't improved in any way. Does that make sense? I
331 feel like I'm repeating myself.

332 **I:** Yeah, it makes sense. My questions are about the same-

333 **M:** Can I see them? [**I:** Yeah] Where are we up to? [**I:** Here, I
334 don't know, we're kind of going back and forth, and that's
335 alright, it's not like structured, I have to do all of these]. Okay,
336 what's the next question?

337 **I:** I was thinking about if your friendship with [name] is that a lot
338 different from friendships with other friends you have?

339 **M:** Yeah, it's a lot closer. I've got a few friends, someone wants
340 to be a director, someone's doing psychology who wants to be, I
341 don't know they change every year, but I got a few friends from
342 college, and with [name] I need to be closer to her, I need to be
343 supportive, it requires me being closer to her, and I think that
344 her being anxious like that it's just facilitated our friendship,
345 spoken about something we have to bond over you have to be
346 closer, her being anxious that means we spend more time with
347 each other, being supportive you have to learn a lot about that
348 person and you become closer friends as opposed to like, as
349 opposed to the others where you talk about trivial things, you
350 know like superficial things but if you have to support that
351 person, then you get to know all about them, all they care
352 about, about what they believe in, it's a lot more, a lot deeper.
353 By the way, how are you analysing this, are you doing a thematic
354 analysis?

355 **I:** No, I'm using IPA, do you know, interpretative
356 phenomenological analysis.

357 **M:** So it's not about the words I use. Oh that's okay.

358 **I:** No, it's about meaning and context and your experiences.

359 **M:** Yeah, I did an interview a few weeks ago on relationships
360 using thematic analysis and there were tow guys and one of
361 them was just talking about normal stuff: 'oh if I was in a
362 relationship I wanted to be funny, I wanted t be kind', all this
363 kind of stuff, and the other guy, we were just saying, talk like it
364 was an essay, 'well, if you wanted to distinguish a platonic
365 relationship then you have to consider these criteria', you know,
366 which, I mean, he was really smart but can't just like put those
367 words into [inaudible] it doesn't make any sense, so anyway, I
368 just use any words I like then.

369 **I:** Yeah, I'm still interested in more experiences that you've had
370 where she was anxious and the kind of support you provided?
371 So, I'm really interested in *what* you say [M: What I said] kind of
372 specifically if you want to tell me.

373 **M:** Okay [pause] I'm trying to think of one now. It's about
374 November about two years ago and she just got her results back
375 from her biology exam, now she don't really get to see them,
376 she's just kind of wandering around in the lobby in the school
377 just trying to [pause] yeah, I don't know what she's trying to do,
378 anyway, I talk to her, I found her [inaudible], and then, I mean,
379 she's been there about, I don't know, half an hour, just kind of
380 [pause] stagnating there, just moping around, thinking about it
381 over and over again, she's thinking about it but it's not like
382 reasoning thinking, it's logical thinking, it's just going over the
383 problem, not doing anything, except making her more anxious,
384 so what I tried to do was I tried to give her some distance, so
385 what we used to do, we used to go to this place called [name of
386 place] which is a hill with all these stones, kind of like a little
387 henge, a tiny little henge, so you can go up there and you can
388 look over the town, and [pause] look over it, she liked to do that,
389 that made her feel calm because that, that gave her some

390 distance, now, everything else seemed small and she never
391 whatever happened and no matter whether she failed that exam
392 a hundred times and then she'd still be able to go to that hill and
393 get some distance, and I'd [inaudible] talked to her [pause]. A lot
394 of time it was just, and I know this [pause] probably doesn't
395 sound like a good saying [inaudible] but if she was feeling
396 anxious about something then I wouldn't tell her what to do but
397 give her about three different options, and one of those options
398 would be to stay here, one of them would be, something else,
399 something trivial, like watch a film or do something to distract
400 her, and the third one would probably be just to take an hour off
401 and skip the next class, which, I mean, you might be thinking
402 'okay, skipping class is bad for, she's', no, her problem is not
403 being in school but even if she was in school during that hour
404 then that would just make her more anxious, it's better for her
405 to miss that one hour of school than to miss the two days
406 afterwards, and I think it helped just to give her that, if I told her:
407 'okay, don't go school' or if I told her: 'we're going to watch a
408 movie or do this, going to [the hill]' then she, she wouldn't like
409 that but the fact that I gave her the options makes it so she's in
410 charge, which means that she's showing herself that she's
411 capable of making these decisions so the anxiety isn't taking
412 over all of her life.

413 **I:** And do you feel that it helped her? Could you see that it
414 helped her?

415 **M:** Yeah, it helped her a lot, because sometimes I would just sit
416 down like [inaudible], I was nineteen, it was my birthday, and
417 she was anxious and she was in the, she was anxious about
418 something to do with her parents that I'm not going to go into
419 but she as in the bathroom and I was trying to comfort her, she
420 was having the door locked and, curtains over the windows and
421 everything, 'cause she was scared anyone could see, and then I
422 spend a while just talking to her about these things that
423 happened and it was going on for about half an hour, just trying

424 to get to the bottom of what made her so upset but thing is I
425 didn't actually help, I just made her more upset but she only
426 actually felt better when I was able to give the options to do
427 something else, then she's still thinking about, she's thinking
428 about it in the back of her mind but the fact, just trying to make
429 her confront it, by forcing her to do, that would just make her
430 feel even more powerless, so giving her the option, that was a
431 lot better. Would you like another example?

432 **I:** Yes, if you have.

433 **M:** If? [long pause] Like I said she used to skip school a lot and I
434 used to go to her house to check on her and sometimes she
435 wouldn't answer the door and I mean, I'm panicking, I'm fifteen
436 years old, I don't know a thing about this and I'm thinking: 'oh
437 God, she's like, I don't know, slit her wrists or she's killed
438 herself', you know thinking about that, that's a pretty
439 disrespectful considering her, she's got panic attacks but she's
440 not that bad, and so I'd stay outside for, I don't know, an hour
441 just like shouting and throwing rocks at the walls, trying to get
442 her downstairs. That, that didn't work, anyway, so instead of
443 doing that I decided to say to her: 'okay, I'm going to come to
444 your house [inaudible] I'm going to', obviously you can't phone
445 her because she's too scared to answer the phone in case it's an
446 advert, she doesn't know what to say, 'I'm going to go to your
447 house, like I said, and I'm going to call you once and I'm going to
448 knock on your door and if you're not there within five minutes
449 I'm just going to leave', I mean, that, that's still giving her the
450 choice, that's giving her the choice of answering or not and if I
451 actually tell her the rules, so tell her what's going to happen
452 then she has enough information to know what to do, which
453 means that now she actually comes down, now she's actually
454 being proactive and talking to me about this rather than just
455 trying to hide, and I think that I was applying some pressure on
456 her, I was telling her 'okay, you've got five minutes to come
457 down' but at the same time that's not taking the choice off her,

Interview Mike

458 I'm not saying 'I'm going to leave now' because that would make
459 her even more desperate, so I was, I have to do both, I have to
460 apply pressure saying 'you know, you have this deadline or I'm
461 going to leave' but that's still giving her the choice, during that
462 time she can still make her decision, does that make sense? [I:
463 Yeah, it does] Okay, that's my examples anyway.

464 **I:** Did she come down?

465 **M:** Yeah, she came down a lot more when I, when I asked, I said:
466 'I'm going to give you five minutes', she answered about four-
467 five times as many in that condition than when I was just staying
468 there.

469 **I:** Okay, was she anxious when she came down?

470 **M:** Yeah, so she was wearing long sleeves, that was always a bad
471 sign, you know [pause] you know, I'm not sure if you know what
472 I mean [I: If she had-] yeah, she was cutting herself, and you
473 know at first I was anxious about this and I was begging her not
474 to do that again and then obviously from her point of view that
475 wasn't helping 'cause now she's feeling bad enough to cut
476 herself and now she's got one friend and suddenly he's
477 panicking, you know, who's going to look after him, so it was
478 [pause] when I [inaudible] before I saw her I had to distance
479 myself first, I'd have to tell myself 'this is, this thing might
480 happen, it might have already happened, the damage might
481 already have been done, she might already have cut herself', but
482 even if she has then my job isn't to undo the damage, I can't go
483 back and stop her from doing it, I can just prevent her from
484 doing it again and if I want to do that then I'm going to have to
485 support her.

486 **I:** Yeah, so when she came down and met you-

487 **M:** Sorry, I got in a bit of tangent there, yeah when she came
488 down she was, she was anxious, you know like, she'd hurt
489 herself and she couldn't make eye contact, you know, her eyes

Interview Mike

490 were all puffy from crying and, most of the time she was actually
491 in her pyjamas because she had just been too anxious to get out
492 of bed, she was anxious most of the time, I used to go into her
493 house and I used to give her a bear hug, like lift her up and yeah,
494 you'd ask first, you know, yeah, I learned that the hard way, and
495 normally I'd say: 'okay, do you want to talk about it, you know,
496 do you want to stay here for awhile' and then I'd say, I'd give her
497 the option of what she wants to do, or if she said she wanted to
498 stay, I'd say: 'okay, what about we stay here for an hour and
499 then you go to class', so it's not just one of the other, and
500 normally what would happen is that we'd watch, I'd make her
501 some pasta while watching the Simpsons or something, you
502 know just some light meaningless entertainment to calm her
503 down, and, and just me being there calmed her down because if
504 she wanted to talk then I was there, she didn't actually have to
505 say anything, she was probably saying it to herself, she, she
506 constantly looked at if she was about to say something, which
507 means she was thinking through it herself, but if I was asking
508 her, if I was pressuring her, forcing her to actually give an answer
509 then that would just panic her again. She, she was anxious but
510 she came down, she opens the door and I come inside, in about
511 half an hour she was feeling a lot better, considering that she
512 had been anxious about four hours before that, so it took her
513 about thirty minutes with somebody else to calm her down. I
514 think that answers your question.

515 **I:** Yeah, it does. And how did you feel during this hour when you
516 were cooking pasta and watching Simpsons?

517 **M:** It did get to be like a bit of chore, like I was thinking
518 sometimes why, why is it my job to do this and why is it my
519 responsibility, well okay, there was two reasons why I was
520 because, now it's everybody's responsibility, all the people who
521 are supporting her, obviously they failed to do that so just by a
522 process of elimination I have got to do something but that was
523 only on the bad days, most of the time I was able to see my

524 friend and we were able to talk about a lot of things and we had
525 a lot in common, you know like, we had a lot in common, she
526 could, she could go from talking about the [inaudible] civil war
527 one minute, [inaudible] really serious stuff to talking about what
528 she read on buzz feed, you know, we talk about all different
529 things, which I can't really do with many other people, most
530 talks with friends are just superficial stuff and I think the reason
531 we got to get to know each other so much is because I had to be
532 supportive of her, it did take a while to get used to but I think
533 once you get used to it, I remember, I think I was sixteen and I
534 went to prom and I picked out this tie which, that I even had a
535 shirt to wear it with, got this like red tie to match her dress and
536 she was just too anxious to turn up, I was really pissed off with
537 her about this, I'd go to her house and I'm ready to shout about
538 it, another day she's going to go to [an amusement park], and
539 it's, we've woken up really early so that we can catch the
540 different trains to [the amusement park] and it is me and [name
541 of third person] so we go to [her place] at the time she's, she's
542 just still in bed, she's just decided against it, again she's picked
543 an argument with her dad which obviously helps and I
544 remember, I didn't talk to her for a few days after because I was
545 just so, so pissed off with her for, you know, letting me down, I
546 don't have to put up with this stuff with my other friends, but
547 obviously that is not going to solve anything, you know having
548 an argument with her that just makes [inaudible] even further I
549 mean it's like, you know, it's like trying to hunt a deer, you know,
550 you've got to let them come to you [pause] that was actually an
551 awful analogy, just forget I said that [both laughs]. That was
552 really stupid, yeah, I got to say something, it felt like the time for
553 an analogy [pause] now all I'm doing is thinking about all the
554 ways this analogy was for, I completely lost track, but yeah, she
555 wasn't going to go to [amusement park], she wasn't going to go
556 to the prom, you know, she wasn't going to do these things, and
557 [pause] the only time I was actually able to make her, no not

Interview Mike

558 make her, but able to get her to do those things, like she had the
559 advantage of not going to do those things about ten minutes
560 before, [pause] the, when I said, you know: 'you don't have to'
561 but I said: 'okay, I have something come around to my house,
562 you can join if you like' but I set my expectations low, like if I'm
563 saying I'm having eight friends around, I wouldn't say I was
564 having seven friends and [she] might come and, [pause] so that
565 stopped me from being disappointed. And even know we did
566 know more about each other we had to be more, more distant,
567 I'd, I'd always expect that she wasn't going to turn up, which
568 meant that, it's not like it's unfair because I had, I would expect
569 this to happen to there's no point in getting frustrated about
570 that but, I suppose that sounds like a very defeated way of
571 thinking about it but really that does actually help her, make her
572 come along and see other people more often because there's no
573 pressure applied to any of it. But it did frustrate me for the first
574 few [pause] the first few years, especially the first two years, is
575 that still on? [points to Dictaphone] It looks like it's running out.

576 **I:** It's still on, yeah, batteries just a bit low, it's alright 'cause this
577 one is still recording.

578 **M:** Yeah, okay, how long has it been recording for?

579 **I:** 45minutes.

580 **M:** Really, that long?

581 **I:** Yeah. Have-

582 **M:** Okay [pause] you're going to hate all these pauses I'm doing.

583 **I:** No, I think that's fine.

584 **M:** You were going to say something?

585 **I:** No, I was just, yeah I forgot it now but I just wanted to pick up
586 on something you said but now I-

587 **M:** About how the first few years were frustrating?

588 I: Yeah, but now, when is better, how is it now, do you still? If
589 you make an, if you agree to call each other, are you still
590 expecting her not too?

591 M: Normally we talk at five 'cause that's when she finishes work
592 but she does still sometime say that she's sick or there's
593 something going on and instead of buying into it, I, I just say, I'm
594 not going to say that- [one recorder runs out of battery], is the
595 recorder still on? [I: Yeah] Okay, like I just said she's, 'okay, I get,
596 you don't want to talk 'cause you're anxious, that's fine, just
597 next time you tell me in advance', so now, she, she, she tells me
598 like a few hours in advance and it's fine, not having lost anything
599 and in the end it is her decision and I mean as much as I want to
600 support her, as much as I want to help her, now she is twenty
601 years old and she, you know, she's a smart person, she's got a
602 lot of ambitions and she's got, probably been through a bit more
603 than a lot of people her age, so she is actually able to make her
604 own decisions, and if I was going to demean her and saying: 'no,
605 we have to talk at this time', then, then that would just be taking
606 a step back. Want me to try to clarify that? [I: Yeah, if you want
607 to]. Okay, [pause] well, what I mean by that is that [pause] I try
608 to make her feel as if it's her decision, which it really is, it's not a
609 difficult type conversation of conversation with someone, I
610 mean, there's really no stakes involved but if you're anxious like
611 she is, even if I'd say that: 'okay, you're anxious, you don't want
612 to talk, next time just tell me in advance', basically that would, I
613 mean, I don't bother getting pissed off with her, I don't bother
614 having arguments 'cause that wouldn't lead anywhere,
615 [inaudible] she's anxious, she's not doing it because she's being
616 spiteful, she's doing it because she feels scared and you can't be
617 angry with someone for feeling scared, normally what happened
618 after that is I wait ten minutes to call her and during this time
619 I'm [inaudible] and I'm setting my expectations low 'cause I will
620 end up getting disappointed, but normally within ten minutes
621 she then calls back saying 'sorry about that, I was panicking' and,

Interview Mike

622 just by addressing the issue as the anxiety, it makes her feel
623 better because that's separating herself from the anxiety, it's
624 not her that I have a problem with, it's the fact that she has a
625 condition, it's like saying that [pause], I mean, if it was a physical
626 conditions like if someone couldn't go to the bar with you or
627 couldn't spend time with you because they have the flu, you
628 don't hate them, you hate the flu, that's the same principle so
629 just by clarifying it, 'it's not you, it's the anxiety, you can get
630 passed this', by distancing herself from that then she's able to
631 overcome it and actually get, calm down after.

632 **I:** So, your support has really helped her?

633 **M:** Yeah, I guess, I don't want to be, sound vain, it's not just me,
634 her grandparents she talks a lot to them as well.

635 [Mike and the interviewer small talk back and forth as Mike
636 throws out his water bottle]

637 **I:** I don't really have much more but if there's something you feel
638 we haven't discussed then tell me?

639 **M:** You don't have any more questions?

640 **I:** No, this is kind of the end of the interview.

641 **M:** [looks at the questions again] Anything that I think I should
642 say? [pause]

643 **I:** This is just a guide.

644 **M:** Yeah, talking about experiencing it different from other
645 friendships is the last thing I'm going to say. We're in a lot more
646 contact because you have to be because if someone's anxious
647 they do need more support but I just want to stress something
648 before this interview ends, throughout this conversation I've
649 made it seem as if it's just a constant chore, that she's been, that
650 she's just being a drag on me, I just want to clarify that that's not
651 the case, she might get anxious once every few months but a lot
652 of the time she is also there for me, like when I had that break

Interview Mike

653 up I told you about, so if she was feeling anxious and if she was
654 having these panic attacks and it didn't, you know, and she still
655 wasn't a good friend then, then I wouldn't bother, I'm not
656 friends with her because of the anxiety, I'm friends with her in
657 spite of that. I think in this conversation it's making us, it's
658 making it seem as if being anxious is all of her personality, but
659 it's not, it's just one, it's just one problem which most of the
660 time, it only comes up once a month, so most of the time this
661 stuff just doesn't even apply, it used to in the past [inaudible]
662 and she's basically over it now. That's about it.

663 [Interviewer and Mike talks back and forth about the possibility
664 for Mike to see the dissertation when it's done and the interview
665 ends.]

Interview Sabrina

1 **Interview – Sabrina**

2 **Interviewer (I):** So will you just to begin with tell me a bit
3 about you? What you do?

4 **Sabrina (S):** Well, my name is Sabrina, as you probably know,
5 I study English Literature and Language and History and, so I
6 just finished my degree actually and I'm originally from
7 France and I'm an Erasmus student here at [city], mmh yeah.

8 **I:** Yeah, that's fine. Can you tell me about how you became
9 friends with your friend who has social anxiety?

10 **S:** So her friend is, my friend is called [name of friend] and we
11 met at the beginning of the year because we are both
12 Erasmus students coming from France. And we met at some
13 international event at the beginning of the year, the same
14 one I met you I think [laughs], so yeah, we met there and
15 then we are doing the same course so we had quite a lot of
16 things in common so yeah, we just became friends like that.

17 **I:** Yeah, so can you describe your friendship?

18 **S:** [pause] I'd say it's [pause]. How can I put it? I felt like it
19 was meant to be like, it's quite funny because we are both
20 from kind of similar backgrounds, we both do the same
21 course and we both end up in the same city, which wasn't
22 our first choice for any of us and like we both have a lot of
23 things in common and we just got on really well since the
24 beginning so I just feel really grateful for our friendship.

25 **I:** What do you have in common? Interests?

26 **S:** Interests. Well, we do the same study so we are both into
27 English and English literature and books and reading and
28 writing, and things like that, but also like music taste, like I
29 don't know, we like the same clothes, little things like that I
30 guess as well. And we kind of had the same activities when

Interview Sabrina

31 we were back in France when we were kids and things like
32 that, so yeah, we had a similar childhood as well I think.

33 **I:** So you share a lot and that makes it-

34 **S:** Yeah, I think so, that's why we kind of clicked as quickly as
35 it did in the beginning.

36 **I:** Would you describe yourself as close friends?

37 **S:** Yeah, definitely now, it's funny 'cause I think it went quite
38 quickly because we only had a year obviously to like get to
39 know each other but now I feel like I've known her all my life
40 basically, 'cause we, we've been hanging out a lot, a lot
41 together so like getting to know each other quite deeply I
42 guess, so.

43 **I:** Yeah, okay, so, your friend has social anxiety? [S: yeah].
44 How long have you known?

45 **S:** Not since the beginning. I kind of got a grip of her
46 character as the weeks and months went on but without
47 specifically saying that it was social anxiety until like a few
48 months ago maybe. I knew that she was kind of, like she
49 wasn't very confident in a group of people sometimes and
50 she would talk about these things but I didn't know it was to
51 that big an extent basically, so I only discovered that a bit
52 later but it wasn't that big of a surprise because I kind of like
53 noticed that, and she had talked about it as well but not in
54 such words I guess.

55 **I:** Yeah, so what did she do that made you notice that she
56 was anxious?

57 **S:** Ehm, she was just often like, it would often be after an
58 event or something, she would say: 'oh I didn't tell you or
59 whatever but before we got here I was like so stressed and I
60 was like what are people going to think, I didn't know what to
61 say and was panicking and stuff', but she would always say

Interview Sabrina

62 that, quite often it would be after the said event so we
63 wouldn't have even noticed 'cause when she's, when she was
64 in the group of people or whatever she was fine, I guess, but
65 it's like beforehand she would have all this process that we
66 didn't know about. Yeah.

67 **I:** Yeah, when she told you that what did you think about
68 that?

69 **S:** Ehm, I think I was quite surprised at first, well, as I said
70 when she was in the group she seemed quite fine but at the
71 same time I did know that her personality was quite like not
72 confident like in that, in that way, so it didn't surprise me that
73 much but like she would say that it was, it would make her
74 want to throw up at times and thinks like that, and I didn't
75 know it was that big of a problem so I was quite surprised at
76 first and then I was like: 'oh I didn't know that, and then like
77 can I help in anyway or whatever', but because she would
78 always say it after we were like oh it's too late now, we can't
79 do anything about it, kind of thing. So it was a bit frustrating I
80 think at first, like when we, when she told us.

81 **I:** So what about now when she, when you know you are
82 going out with other people?

83 **S:** I think that when she goes out with close friends, like me
84 and others, she already feels a bit more confident because
85 she knows that she's not going to be alone and things like
86 that, so as soon as she is with a group of people that she
87 knows a bit better I think it's, I think it's easier for her and we
88 were just trying like to reassure her. Sometimes we are also a
89 bit nervous as well like going to some places and meeting
90 new people, so we'd be like: 'don't worry, we feel the same
91 way as well, it will be fine' and like: 'I'm sure in the end it will
92 go well 'cause all the other times you were stressed out it
93 finished quite well', so trying to, yeah, say things like that, I
94 guess.

Interview Sabrina

95 I: And when you say things like this do you feel that it helps
96 her?

97 S: I think so. Well, she would still kind of like keep going in a
98 sense, like I'm trying to think of a precise example, it's a bit
99 difficult 'cause I feel like it's been a while but I think it does
100 help in a sense because she feels reassured. And I think that
101 the fact that we also say that we are not super confident
102 either maybe like fills in the gap a little bit so that she doesn't
103 feel that she's really, like, pathetic and we are super
104 confident and you see we kind of put ourselves on an equal
105 level, I guess. That probably helps.

106 I: Yeah, can you, yeah, you just mentioned it, if you could
107 think of a specific example?

108 S: Yeah, uhm, like an example where it went well you mean?
109 Like something-

110 I: Yeah, well, or when you could feel that she was anxious.

111 S: There was, one night we went to an evening barbeque
112 party kind of thing at someone's house that we didn't know
113 at all and we didn't really know who was going to be there or
114 whatever, one of my friends kind of knew a few people but
115 like [name of friend with social anxiety] and I didn't know
116 that many people there and uhm, but we were like: 'okay,
117 let's do this, it's a nice day, we kind of want a barbeque, and
118 like to meet new people, it could be fun' and like so we like:
119 'okay, let's go' but as soon as we were like walking near the
120 place we were getting a bit anxious, like 'oh but we don't
121 know anyone, what are people, people going to think', and
122 stuff like that. And she was I guess the worst in that sense,
123 like thinking all these negative thoughts I think, but we were
124 all kind of like that in that situation and then in the end we
125 were just like outside the house and we were like: 'okay, let's
126 do this, let's go and whatever happens, I mean, we are all of

127 us together and if it doesn't go well we'll just leave altogether
128 and that's fine', so in the end we walked in and she, like at
129 first it was a bit like 'hmmm' but as the evening went on we
130 spoke to different people and in the end it was a really nice
131 evening, so that was a success I think, she managed to like
132 overcome these negative thoughts I think. And because, I
133 guess, the other friends with whom we were kind of like
134 pushed her, well, not forced her but we were all a bit anxious
135 but we all decided to just go for it and stop thinking of the
136 negative aspects and just go for it, I think that encouraged to
137 think like: 'okay, let's do this and we'll see how it goes', kind
138 of thing. Don't know if that was a good example, I can't think
139 of anything else right now.

140 I: That was a good example, definitely, so you mentioned that
141 she has negative thoughts before going, what kind of
142 thoughts is that?

143 S: We talked about that quite, well, the day we saw you [the
144 interviewer] at [cafe]. [Both laugh] Yeah, we were meeting up
145 kind of to talk about that kind of thing and she was telling us
146 that she would think that like people, well, first of all she is
147 always scared of being sick in public, like that's a fear that's
148 been, lasted for years and years, so, and because of that
149 initial fear every time she is in public she kind of like doesn't
150 feel completely at ease because she is scared of being sick
151 and like vomiting or whatever in front of people. So I think
152 that is the main issue but then also like the fear of not being
153 accepted I think and like 'what will people think, they
154 probably won't like me or they won't accept me, or I'll say
155 the wrong thing, I'll make a fool of myself, I'll say a joke and
156 they won't laugh, they think I'm not funny, they won't invite
157 me again', these kind of things, I think.

158 I: Okay, she seems kind of open about all these things with
159 you?

Interview Sabrina

160 **S:** Yeah, now she is, yeah. At first like we didn't know about
161 that really but I guess as our friendship developed, she felt
162 more at ease to speak about these kind of things and now,
163 yeah, now she is like completely open about it, yeah.

164 **I:** Has there been a situation where, you mentioned this one
165 that was really successful, like you said you all had a great
166 evening, have you had one where she couldn't go through
167 with it?

168 **S:** Trying to think 'cause it would probably have been at the
169 beginning of the year when, like when we go out together as
170 a group I think she feels like kind of confident 'cause of the
171 group and because we are quite close, but at the beginning of
172 the year I know that she would sometimes come home after
173 events and like cry because she felt it went wrong and she
174 did everything wrong and like she, yeah, but I think that now,
175 I can't think of anything where we went as a group and she
176 kind of left before everyone else or like [pause], no, I don't
177 think so. [**I:** Okay]. But in the past she did tell us that
178 sometimes she would like say yes to something and have to
179 cancel at the last minute 'cause she really didn't feel like
180 comfortable with going to this place or that place or
181 whatever, but I don't think it's happened since we were like
182 close friends really.

183 **I:** Okay, so your friendship is helping her go through with
184 these things?

185 **S:** Ehm [pause]. Well, when she is with a group of good
186 friends I think she is okay so in that sense I guess our
187 friendship helps when we're with her, but then as soon as
188 she is by herself like, I mean we can still say like reassuring
189 words to her by like Facebook, text, phone or whatever, but I
190 think it's just not the same as us being there and being able
191 to like really physically be there for her and like encourage
192 her, I guess.

Interview Sabrina

193 I: Yeah, so when she does things alone do you, are you in
194 contact with her sometimes?

195 S: Yeah, well, she would usually get back to us after and say
196 it, tell us how it went and stuff or we would ask her like 'how
197 did it go?' Most of the time it's fine, I mean, most of the time
198 I think she kind of exaggerates a lot in her mind before going,
199 so that when she is actually there it actually goes quite well in
200 the end and then is kind of surprised in a good way at the end
201 of the day because it went quite well.

202 I: Yeah, alright, so when you provide support for her, how do
203 you do it? You say that you talk to her, you tell her that
204 you're anxious too.

205 S: Yeah, that and also just, like a lot of the time because, this
206 is a quite particular context because we are only here for a
207 year so often we will say like: 'we are only here for a year, we
208 have to make the most of it, then we won't be together
209 anymore, we really have to like, yeah, make the most of it',
210 so that would be an argument as well but we never want to
211 like force her to do anything, because then that would be
212 worse I think, so now that we kind of know what she is like
213 we would kind of take it easy and made not present the
214 things in the same manner as we did at the beginning, like
215 trying to like, hm, not making things appear too, I don't know
216 how to put it, like just to make her feel comfortable with the
217 idea before even trying to tell her like: 'we're going!'. First of
218 all talking about it and like, yeah, uhm, yeah. We also went
219 on a, on a one week trip to Scotland as like three good
220 friends and then she was quite anxious about that as well
221 because like leaving and it was just us, we didn't know
222 anything and we had, like, some parts of the trip were not
223 very well planned out yet and so, she said she was quite
224 anxious about that but she, she didn't really let it appear that
225 much as we were preparing so we thought she was kind of

226 okay with the whole thing, and afterwards she was like, like
227 she would tell us that beforehand she quite anxious and stuff,
228 and we were like: 'oh, in the end it went well, you see' and
229 she was like: 'yeah, in the end it went well so I'm happy
230 about, like I'm glad I went', kind of thing. And uhm, yeah I
231 can't remember why I was talking about that [both laugh]. I
232 think I've lost it [I: That's alright]. Yeah, sorry.

233 I: So this trip, that went well.

234 S: Yeah, most of the time. Then there were times when we
235 would all get quite anx-, quite anxious because like of trains
236 that were cancelled or whatever, like plans that were
237 changed but there was this interesting moment when we
238 went on a hike and it was unexpectedly long, like way longer
239 than we thought and we didn't have a map so we were just
240 like following these little signs like for, it was like a hiking trail
241 kind of thing. And so we ended up walking and walking about
242 like nine and a half hours, basically non-stop, and like we
243 arrived at this hostel at like half eleven at night so we were
244 walking in the dark at the end, and we, it was raining and so it
245 was quite tough emotionally and physically and everything.
246 And I think that in that moment we kind of all like closed off
247 in a way and we were all walking like separately and like in
248 our own thoughts and like not really communicating. And I
249 think in that moment we were all a bit anxious but I mean I
250 felt that if I like told the others I was anxious, it would just
251 make the whole thing worse 'cause then we would all be
252 panicking together, whereas if we kind of show ourselves a
253 bit more stronger, not stronger, but like a bit more confident
254 and like reassuring, it would probably help her as well, 'cause
255 she was like walking behind and not saying anything but we
256 knew perfectly well that she probably quite, quite anxious, so
257 we would, every time we would just like stop and catch our
258 breath, we would like try to say positive things like: 'we
259 should get there quite soon, we should...', like I don't know

Interview Sabrina

260 what, but just trying to be positive as much as possible even
261 if deep down we were not that positive all the time. But I
262 think it is kind of like this group effect, if, if like two of you are
263 panicking then the last one will probably panic as well, and I
264 think that if two of you are positive then it might help the
265 other one, kind of thing, so that was tough, but in the end we
266 made it and it was, it was fine but she did tell us afterwards
267 that she was like really, like really on the edge of like
268 completely collapsing. It was quite, quite intense but yeah,
269 we made it.

270 I: Yeah, how does it make you feel to give her this kind of
271 support?

272 S: I feel like it kind of responsabilises, is that a word? [laughs]
273 Uhm, me, because I feel like I can't let myself like panic too
274 much or like completely break down in front of her because
275 that would just make the situation worse, so I kind of have to
276 like, I don't know, like gain confidence and go for it and be
277 encouraging and positive as much as I can, so that she
278 doesn't feel completely like depressed basically, so yeah.

279 I: And how it that? To do that?

280 S: Uhm, I think it's, well, I think I'm quite a positive person in
281 general so I wouldn't be like thinking negative thoughts all
282 the time but in that situation I was kind of like, it was kind of
283 ups and downs, at some points I was like: 'oh, we're never
284 gonna get this done' and at other points I was like: 'okay, we
285 can do it, we're nearly there, we're nearly there', so it was
286 kind of like this [shows up and down motion with her hand]
287 but I would only show like the moments where I'm really
288 positive so I could encourage the others, but sometimes I did
289 have to like overcome my personal negative thoughts to like
290 encourage the others I guess. So it was challenging for me as
291 well in that sense I think. Yeah.

Interview Sabrina

292 I: Alright. So before you knew she had social anxiety, was
293 your friendship different from what it is now or from after
294 she told you?

295 S: Well, as I said I kind of had got a grips of her personality so
296 I knew she wasn't a super confident person from the start,
297 like in, in groups of people, but it did kind of change in the
298 fact that I didn't know it was such a big deal in her life, that it
299 really affected her that much, so I think I kind of became a bit
300 more, ehm, what's the word, like I would be a bit more
301 careful in what I'd say and also like, 'cause she could easily
302 take comments quite, like for herself quite personally quite
303 quickly, so like just being careful and like just positive,
304 encouraging, loving, caring and like trying to be as nice as I
305 could. But it wasn't like a pain to do, kind of thing, 'cause just
306 like once you, you're friends with people you just want to
307 make them feel good, so it wasn't like a hard task or like
308 forcing myself to change, it was just quite natural I guess
309 because I just wanted her to feel as good as she possibly
310 could. Yeah.

311 I: Yeah. That makes sense.

312 S: Hopefully, yeah.

313 I: Yeah, it does. Has she been diagnosed with social anxiety?

314 S: Like officially? You mean like, uhm, I don't think so. I don't
315 think so, no.

316 I: No, so she just defines herself as someone with social
317 anxiety?

318 S: Yeah. Yeah I think so.

319 I: Okay, let me see. We did a lot of this [questions] already.
320 [Both laugh]. Do you feel, or can you tell me if you experience
321 that being friends with someone socially anxious is different
322 from being friends with someone who is not?

323 **S:** I think it is, yeah, 'cause like I said I kind of changed my
324 behaviour towards her in the sense that I would be more
325 caring and just be careful like what I'd say and the way I'd say
326 things and the way I do things, and maybe I wouldn't like
327 offer the same activities to a different person, like knowing
328 that she's not really at ease in big groups of people, like
329 maybe I wouldn't offer to go to, I don't know, this big event
330 with thousands of people because I just know that she
331 wouldn't be really comfortable in that, whereas someone
332 else, maybe I would offer that proposition. But I think mostly
333 it's just in my way, like the way I act when I'm with, like my
334 behaviour when I'm around her basically, just trying to be a
335 bit more caring and, yeah, just being careful. Basically.

336 **I:** Has she said or told you anything about how that helps her
337 or how that makes her feels?

338 **S:** Well, we were kind of asking like: 'are there any things that
339 we say or that we do that kind of have a negative effect on
340 that aspect of your personality? Like that kind of make you
341 feel down and like anxious or whatever', and she did like say
342 like: 'be careful when sometimes you might just be joking
343 around completely innocently but sometimes it kind of
344 affects me more than you think, so she did get back to us on
345 that, so now we're extra careful [laughs] and [beeping noise
346 starts], but she doesn't want it to appear as a, I don't know
347 what that is [referring to the beeping].

348 **I:** Me neither, I think it's the other room.

349 **S:** We'll see [laughs].

350 **I:** We'll see [laughs].

351 **S:** What was I saying? She doesn't want it, she doesn't want it
352 to appear as a burden for us, I think, she is always like, she
353 would say that but then she would be like: 'don't worry,
354 really doesn't happen that often, don't be too harsh on

Interview Sabrina

355 yourselves, like really you're, I mean you're my friends so if
356 we're friends it's not like, I have accepted you the way you
357 are and stuff', so she doesn't want us to completely change
358 just for her 'cause like she became friends with us for a
359 reason, like before we even knew she had social anxiety, so
360 yeah, she doesn't want us to completely change because of
361 her. But I think we're just trying to be a bit more careful.

362 **I:** How many are you in this group of friends?

363 **S:** Uhm, yeah, sorry, when I saw 'we', like it depends but the
364 closest friends I guess it's like three of us. We're like the
365 closest. And the ones that went to Scotland and everything,
366 yeah. [pause] So it's not a big, a big group, so yeah. And I
367 think that helps as well to have like two close friends and not
368 like six or seven, I don't know, a bigger group 'cause maybe
369 she wouldn't have shared that aspect of her personality if she
370 was in a bigger group of people, so.

371 **I:** Yeah, so do you feel like she probably feels better with a
372 smaller group, closer friends-

373 **S:** Probably, yeah. I think that's the kind of friendships she is
374 looking for, yeah.

375 **I:** How is it now you're, you're both going back after this
376 year?

377 **S:** Well, she actually decided to stay now but the two, like me
378 and the other girl we're both heading back to France so
379 that's, she, she is bit scared about next year I think. It will be
380 very different.

381 **I:** Has she talked to you about that?

382 **S:** Uhm, yeah, well, she has said that she was quite anxious
383 because like obviously this year we were all at uni together so
384 there were like different, like we would see each other on
385 campus and stuff, but next year she is staying to work, so she

386 won't have all these links to uni and like societies and things
387 like that, and groups of friends, so it will be very different, so
388 she is a bit scared of that but at the same time she feels like
389 [city] is quite a good environment for her, because it's not a
390 big city and she kind of feels good in this place now and she
391 has like her favourite places and things like that, and she
392 knows the city quite well. So she, she does feel quite
393 confident, like comfortable and confident in the city, so I
394 think that helps but then for sure she is quite like scared,
395 obviously, for next year. So, and we feel a bit like useless kind
396 of, well, I guess we can stay in contact like through Skype,
397 phone calls, whatever, messages, things like that, but it's just
398 not the same as being able to actually be there, like to go
399 places with her, encourage her and bring her along to things,
400 so we'll see how it goes, I guess.

401 I: Yeah, but you will try to keep like in contact with her?

402 S: Yeah, definitely, definitely, yeah, yeah. For sure. And
403 hopefully she'll find other good friends with whom she can
404 like do things and who she feels like at ease and confident I
405 guess.

406 I: So you mentioned a bit like, there are some things you
407 would invite her to and some things [S: Yeah] that you
408 probably wouldn't, so there are some things you feel like you
409 can do together and some you probably would avoid?

410 S: Yeah, yeah probably. Well, as I said big, big events, I don't
411 know, I'm just thinking like a festival or things like that with a
412 lot of people or something where she would find herself in a
413 position where she would be, I can't think of a specific event,
414 but if she would be like exposed to crowds of people, like up
415 on a stage or something like that, yeah, things like that, we
416 probably wouldn't even talk about because like yeah, but
417 even myself like I wouldn't, I wouldn't go, I'm not the most
418 confident person either so I probably wouldn't go either,

419 unless I'm like with other people like her that would also
420 encourage me to go but yeah, if it's just like something small
421 and cosy and like that we, if we know a lot about the event,
422 we know what's going to happen, we know what we're going
423 to get involved in, we know who's going to be there, that
424 helps a lot, like if we have certain knowledge about the thing
425 we're going to, whereas that party I was talking to earlier,
426 talking about earlier we didn't know like the place, we didn't
427 know the people, we didn't know what was going to happen,
428 so basically the unknown is quite scary, like obviously, but
429 yeah.

430 **I:** So that's what starts the negative thoughts?

431 **S:** Probably, yeah. And also especially in the beginning of the
432 year, like the fear to, like the want and desire to fit in,
433 especially as you come to a new city and new environment,
434 new uni, things like that, you want to make things obviously
435 so at the beginning that was a big issue like I think, the desire
436 to fit in, and that, yeah. Yeah.

437 **I:** Did you talk a lot about that?

438 **S:** Well, as I said it was mostly at the beginning of the year, I
439 think, and it was before we became friends but I do
440 remember like a few times when we were like hesitating to
441 go to different events, we were like: 'oh, we should go, we'd
442 be able to meet people and make friends', and things like
443 that, so that was like an encouragement for us to go to
444 places, thinking like: 'oh, we'll meet new people, make
445 friends', things like that.

446 **I:** I'm still interested in how all this makes you feel. Your
447 friendship sounds really close, so will you tell me more about
448 why you are friends, what are the good things in your
449 friendship, what you get from talking to each other, being
450 together.

451 **S:** Okay, well, our friendship began like as any friendship I
452 guess, in the beginning and before I knew about her anxiety
453 or anything, so it was just like her personality, my personality,
454 kind of matched and like everything we had in common came
455 up quite quickly so that helped a lot and we were both from
456 France so we could speak French together in this new
457 environment and like share experiences as Erasmus students
458 and like how it was going and yeah, things like that, so what
459 was I saying?, so yeah, that helped having a lot in common
460 again, and, your question was like how it affects me, our
461 friendship, what I get out of it? [I: Yeah]. [pause] It's a hard
462 question [laugh] [I: Yeah, yeah, yeah.], 'cause I know we're
463 really good friends but it's hard knowing where it's exactly
464 coming from.

465 **I:** But you have mentioned common interests and stuff like
466 that, so-

467 **S:** Yeah, I think that's number one thing. Yeah, we just get
468 along really well and laugh a lot. And share like our past
469 stories or like family lives and anything really, it's just quite,
470 communication is quite easy between us, so that helped. And
471 just also at the beginning of the year there were quite a lot of
472 events organised so we would meet quite regularly even if
473 we didn't necessarily want to, kind of thing, before we were
474 really close friends we were just seeing each other randomly
475 quite a lot of times, so we would kind of hang out together
476 more and more and then it became quite natural to hang out
477 together even if there weren't all these events planned out
478 and just like, yeah.

479 **I:** Alright, so you have said a bit about that you, that it's
480 difficult to see that she's nervous in the situation if she
481 doesn't tell you, are you more aware of it now even though
482 she doesn't tell you before that she's nervous?

Interview Sabrina

483 **S:** Yeah, I think now I kind of expect it, expect it more, like
484 before we're going somewhere I would kind of know that she
485 would probably feel anxious without her having to say, 'cause
486 I just know now that if there's a crowd, she won't feel too
487 good, if there's a lot of people, she won't feel too well, so I
488 kind of know like what contexts she feels bad in, so, was that
489 the question? Now I kind of expect it more, I guess, yeah.

490 **I:** Do you think that that makes her feel more at ease? That
491 you do know.

492 **S:** Probably, yeah, 'cause I mean she can be more open about
493 it and speak about it whereas before she would tend to hide
494 it a bit more and keep it to herself, but now that she knows
495 that we know, I think it probably helps 'cause she knows that
496 she, like if she feels bad she can go to us, like come to us and
497 tell us: 'I don't feel too good, I'm just going outside for a
498 minute', or whatever, I don't know, or just like: 'Can we
499 leave?' or whatever, that could happen maybe. And at least
500 she has people to go to and to talk about when she is feeling
501 bad, whereas before it was like herself and she would carry a
502 lot and then go home and cry because it didn't go well, or she
503 had to leave before the end, or whatever, so, I'm thinking it
504 really helps, yeah.

505 **I:** Alright, is there anything that you can think of that I haven't
506 asked you about, in relation to being friends with someone
507 with who's got social anxiety?

508 **S:** Hmm, I think you did a good job, no, I can't think of
509 anything just like that.

510 **I:** That's alright, so that's basically it.

511 **S:** Okay.

512 **I:** Do you have any questions about the interview?

Interview Sabrina

513 **S:** No, I just hope I was helpful enough 'cause I feel like I
514 didn't.

515 **I:** No, you had some good examples and you explained it very
516 well.

517 **S:** I feel like my English is like, now that I don't go to classes
518 anymore, like ugh. I'm not used to answering questions
519 directly like that. It's good practice. [laughs].

520 **I:** [laughs] Yeah, it's good practice. So, are you still
521 comfortable with me using your interview for my study?

522 **S:** Yeah, sure, I just hope [name of friend] would be, like she
523 would be able to confirm everything I said, but probably like,
524 we met up just to talk about it kind of, so that she would
525 share her thoughts about the whole question, so.

526 **I:** What did she say about that?

527 **S:** Well, she just kind of explained, went through again like
528 the reasons why, her fear of being sick in public and then
529 what kind of triggers her anxiety, being accepted and like not
530 knowing the people, not knowing where she's going and like
531 trying to make friends and things like that, so it wasn't a
532 whole lot of new information but it was just like refresh, like
533 to refresh my mind on it.

534 **I:** Alright well, thank you very much for your help.

535 **S:** You're welcome. It was easier than I thought. [laughs]

536 **I:** How was it to talk about yourself and your friendship?

537 **S:** Well, I hadn't expected that as much, I thought it was more
538 going to speak about her, but I mean, that's fine, I'm okay
539 about that [I: Okay, that's good]. And it makes me think as
540 well [laughs] so it's good.

541 **I:** Yeah? What did it make you think about?

Interview Sabrina

542 **S:** Just like the way I react and the way I can be a good friend
543 towards her in that situation I guess, 'cause a lot of the time
544 we would just meet up and I wouldn't necessarily think
545 about, about that 'cause it doesn't necessarily appear when
546 we're just like close friends together, she doesn't like have
547 any signs of anxiety, so most of the time I don't even think
548 about it, it's good for me to reflect and like remind myself
549 [laughs]. That like what her initial situation is and what she
550 actually feels even if she doesn't show it I guess.

551 **I:** Do you talk to anyone about it?

552 **S:** Well, when she was talking, I kind of told you, like she kind
553 of told us like: 'be careful', like in a nice way, be careful when
554 you say jokes or whatever because they can affect me more
555 than you think sometimes, so she told us that like face to face
556 with the other friend who was there, so we were like: 'okay,
557 we'll be careful', so we didn't necessarily speak about it just
558 the two of us when [name of friend] wasn't there afterwards,
559 it was kind of like on the spot, we were like: 'oh yeah, sure,
560 we should be careful', kind of thing but I don't think we've
561 really, well, sometimes like, sometimes I would say
562 something without thinking and the other friend she will be
563 like: 'be careful' and like pushing me or don't exaggerate
564 things so that she doesn't feel too bad or too anxious about
565 that, or the other way around, I mean it's good also to have
566 another person like to, like it's always better when there are
567 several people in case one of us makes a mistake, the other
568 one can kind of like catch up and change the subject or
569 whatever, so that she doesn't feel bad, I guess, yeah.

570 **I:** So you kind of help each other?

571 **S:** Yeah, even like in Scotland during that hike we were both
572 of us, we were a bit ahead and we would often like just speak
573 to each other and just say like: 'we have to, we have to look
574 after staying positive and encouraging otherwise it will go

Interview Sabrina

575 wrong', so yeah, it is good to have another person there to
576 help I think.

577 **I:** Do you feel that makes it easier sometimes?

578 **S:** Yeah, definitely, yeah, 'cause like I personally can't always
579 be like super positive and super encouraging like all the time
580 and the same for her, so I guess it kind of balances things out
581 a bit, yeah. And we're not the only ones like trying to
582 encourage her, like her friends and family back in France do
583 that as well and other people that know about her kind of
584 condition I guess tend to help.

585 **I:** So she does have a lot of people to share this with?

586 **S:** I think she does have a lot of support, yeah, even though
587 like probably in [city] people don't know about it as it's only
588 been like a few months, so before, if we, we've been with her
589 quite a lot since the beginning of the year and we only knew,
590 known about it since a few months so I guess a lot of people
591 that only know her just like that like don't necessarily know.

592 **I:** Has she told you how it felt for her to tell you about her
593 social anxiety?

594 **S:** She didn't really tell us about it but it seemed quite like
595 easy for her and quite natural, just like, I was nearly surprised
596 how easy it seemed like she would just genuinely and
597 randomly say like: 'yeah I will come home and cry' and I was
598 like: 'what?' and she was like: 'yeah, yeah, yeah', like just
599 keep going, whereas I was like: 'oh wow, I had no idea all that
600 was happening, wish I was there, I could have helped if I had
601 known but yeah, it seemed quite easy for her to talk about it
602 but maybe it was because we were at this stage in our
603 friendship where she felt more comfortable about things like
604 that, I guess. Yeah.

605 **I:** Yeah. Alright.

Interview Sabrina

606 [Saying thanks and goodbye].

1 **Interview – Simon**

2 **Interviewer (I):** So to begin with will you just tell me a bit about
3 yourself, so like what you do and how old you are?

4 **Simon (S):** I am 23, just turned, go to [university], studying
5 [subject]. I have a job at [cafe] as a waiter, kind of enjoying it, kind
6 of don't, especially after this weekend; it was so busy. I'm originally
7 from the Isle of Man, been in [city] for four years. Did my
8 undergraduate psychology degree here. Ehm, got no family in the
9 UK, they're all from the Isle of Man, well, the isle's in the UK but no
10 family over here. Ehm, what else do I like doing? I love going out to
11 eat food, I like going out with my friends, going on a nights out.

12 **I:** Okay, yeah, that's fine, just to get a bit more information about
13 you. Okay, so could you tell me a bit about how you became friends
14 with this friend who has social anxiety?

15 **S:** We, ehm. How did it start? We were never really friends with the
16 same people, we were in separate friendship groups and then we
17 slowly started to merge together because we, over summer, there
18 was like a group of us that stayed in summer and we all just like
19 decided to, you know, go out all the time, and we met each other
20 out, and then we thought, we kept going, it was more, it started on
21 a level where we kept going out together so we were always drunk,
22 sought of thing, can I say that?

23 **I:** Yeah, you can say that.

24 **S:** So we were always drinking like, we were always drinking like at
25 night times and then, you know, doing the same thing over and
26 over, then actually started, we were all like "oh, we just go out
27 together, we should do something more, we should chill in the day"
28 so we started chilling in the day time, then we ended up like, a few
29 months down the line, living together (I: Okay). Yeah, so I now live
30 with this person, but yeah, we kinda got close, just me and this
31 person on a one to one and then everyone else in the group kind of
32 like, cause everyone else was like in relationships and stuff so we

33 got close and then we all, like, when uni started again, we all
34 became close sort of thing because uni started and everyone was
35 here and we decided to go out with everyone. And then, yeah, just
36 progressed from then, now we live together.

37 I: Okay, so how long have you been friends?

38 S: We've been friends now for almost, what year are we in? Two
39 years in [counting months] Two years in July. July, maybe a bit,
40 yeah, so almost two years. So quite a while actually, two years is
41 quite a long time if you think about it to be fair, especially when
42 you've been in close proximity with this person, with the person for
43 ages, do you know what I mean? (I: Yeah). But yeah, two years
44 nearly.

45 I: Okay, and how long have you known about this person's social
46 anxiety?

47 S: Straight away. Well, when we used to go out, obviously when
48 people are drinking they're not so anxious, not so anxious, do you
49 know what I mean? People feel so much more comfortable when
50 they have a drink. I know quite a few people, like two or three
51 people, that say they feel so much more at ease when they have a
52 drink because, I know several people I know do have social anxiety,
53 not just one, but I knew almost from the get go. Like, she was
54 always kind of reserved and she's always been kinda shy and she's
55 got like little habits, but like no one we went out with noticed she's
56 got social anxiety unless you tell them, but I've known since, pretty
57 much, we've been friends. It's not too much of a barrier for us
58 'cause if I know, she knows and we feel comfortable [inaudible] so
59 it's kind of alright.

60 I: Yeah, okay, so has she been clinically diagnosed or anything?

61 S: No, the person I'm talking about has not been diagnosed but I do
62 know two people who have been, but I'm not as close friends with
63 them but I do hang out with them too. So.

64 I: Okay, so she defines herself as someone with social anxiety?

65 **S:** Yeah, she says she has social anxiety, definitely, yeah.

66 **I:** Okay, so you have talked a bit about like your friendship and how
67 close you are, so will you tell me a bit about more like what you do,
68 how close-

69 **S:** We always go out, well, most of the time's I'm in uni but when
70 we do spend time together, we go to town, go shopping, go to uni,
71 occasionally a [inaudible] trip to [city], [inaudible] go shopping, if
72 we have like a big event on, like somebody's birthday or- We'll go
73 buy them some presents, we'll go to [city], which is I think [city] is a
74 lot nicer shopping but she doesn't enjoy shopping that much. She
75 kind of doesn't like it, I don't know if it could be the social anxiety
76 thing, could be the fact that she just hates walking around
77 shopping, but yeah, no, she just get a bit fed up with shopping. And
78 we go out to eat a lot like all the time. Ehm, what else do we do?

79 **I:** Are you close so, like, you share everything or-

80 **S:** No, we don't share everything. If she cooks, if one of us is having
81 dinner at home then we'll tell the other one what we're having, if
82 we want to have dinner together then we'll have dinner together.
83 Ehm but we don't share everything, no, 'cause she's got a partner
84 and they're obviously together, like if they cook, I'll cook with her or
85 him sort of thing, but we don't share everything, no.

86 **I:** Okay, so what kind of place does the anxiety have in your
87 friendship?

88 **S:** Ehm, it actually doesn't have that much of an affect to be honest
89 because I know she's like that and when she goes out with say
90 someone like me in a social environment, I think she feels more
91 comfortable anyway and when she goes into town. It's hard to
92 describe her social anxiety to be fair, like when she goes into town,
93 like she's not anxious around people, she does feel uncomfortable
94 around people she is not used to, sort of thing, so she can go to
95 town by herself, it wouldn't be a problem but I think she'd rather go
96 with somebody else, sort of thing, but I don't think it plays that

97 much of a big thing in our friendship, but she does have this bad
98 habit where she pulls out her hair but that might be like an anxious
99 thing, and I have to tell her to stop all the time because her hair, her
100 hair is not real 'cause she pulls it so much, so that's probably a thing
101 'cause she's so anxious, that might be because she's anxious but
102 she's never really said. But she's said she's got it from such a young
103 age and I think, maybe she has said it stems from her social anxiety
104 but that's the only thing she does all the time, like literally, not at all
105 the time, like if she's at home by herself she'll just be like this, her
106 hair, just twisting it all the time, and it's like, if you want your hair to
107 grow out [inaudible]. But yeah, nothing like anything that puts a
108 strain on it, sort of thing. Not at all. But with, I know another friend
109 of mine, do you want me to stick with one person or should I just
110 talk-

111 **I:** No, please just talk about anything you want.

112 **S:** Ehm, I've got a friend who is a guy and you can tell he is kind of
113 social, so, has got social anxiety because he always tries to keep
114 talking in a room full of people, do you know what I mean, do you
115 know when every silence doesn't need to be filled, sort of thing.
116 He's the kind of like, he came over yesterday 'cause he works with
117 another person I live with and like we're all friends, he doesn't
118 make me feel uncomfortable because I know that's the way he is,
119 but because of his social anxiety he tends to carry on talking. But
120 that's just, you just get kind of used to the way people are, you
121 know what I mean, yeah, but then I know another person who
122 doesn't really, who I'm not that close to at all but I know she has
123 social anxiety because she's friends with my other friend who has
124 social anxiety, do you know what I mean, so the girl I live with she
125 has got a friend who's got social anxiety and she's been diagnosed
126 and [inaudible] medication and stuff. She was telling me the other
127 day how like she always feel really uneasy but as soon as she has a
128 little bit of alcohol she feels like everything's fine so that's probably
129 why people feel more comfortable when they have alcohol.

130 I: So what about the friend that you live with, you say that the
131 other, the guy, he talks a lot and she pulls her hair, what else does
132 she do when you can, can you tell that she's anxious in social
133 situations?

134 S: No, 'cause, not really, 'cause she's got a voice, like she is not
135 afraid to voice her opinion, this is the thing as well but she just does
136 have little tendencies to feel, I don't know if it's the way people
137 view her but the only, she's very, very, very social media orientated,
138 she's always on her phone, like literally on her phone 24/7 and has
139 always got it like this [pulls phone close to him] and always doing
140 something. And she's always picking out her hair but that's the only
141 two like characteristics I can really tell, and sometimes when she
142 needs her own space to be fair she takes herself away but I guess
143 that's just what everyone else normally does, 'cause I don't want to
144 try to look all her behaviours and think 'oh it's because she's
145 socially anxious', but no, it's just the hair pulling and maybe she's
146 on her phone quite a lot but I'm not even sure if that's because
147 she's anxious or just because she wants to go on her phone.

148 I: Yeah, so you haven't had an experience where your friend was
149 anxious and you would have to provide support for her?

150 S: Ehm, in term, yeah, I have in terms of her relationship. She gets
151 very anxious in her relationship like if she feels like her partner-
152 Sometimes she feels like 'oh I feel like he's getting bored of me' and
153 she really worries like and comes downstairs and cries so I do have
154 to like, 'You're being silly' like, she just looks for, she looks for
155 things through his behaviours that aren't even there, that people
156 wouldn't see, like just because somebody doesn't replies to your
157 message for a few hours it doesn't mean that they don't love you
158 anymore, do you know what I mean? They've been together for
159 two years now so it's not like that big of a problem and only a
160 couple of weeks ago, she was [inaudible] and he lived in the same
161 house, so like if he didn't like you why would he be living in the
162 same house, I mean just put it out there, so in terms of that, yeah,

163 she comes into my room and I provide support but then as soon as
164 it's fine and she realises she was just being silly then yeah, it's all
165 alright, but sometimes it gets to the stage where you are like: 'how
166 many times do you need to come to me and be anxious and say: 'oh
167 my god, I'm scared he's going to break up with me', 'cause then it
168 just starts boring me a little bit because you're just being a pain in
169 the backside now, but in terms of her relationship mmhm, she does
170 get very anxious, she's always waiting by her phone for like if her
171 boyfriend is at work or he's gone out or something, like she won't
172 let go, and if he's, if he goes out she'll want to go out just because
173 she's a bit anxious about what people might do around him, or I'm
174 not sure if it's not think what he's going to do around other people,
175 it's what other people might do around him, do you know what I
176 mean, but yeah, that's the only, she does get anxious in terms of
177 her partner.

178 **I:** And how do you support her?

179 **S:** Talk to her, tell her she's being stupid, ask why, like try to make
180 her like why, how, how, why would you, cause sometimes like all,
181 like I would see that their relationship is fine but the attention she
182 gets is not enough so I ask: 'what more do you want? How are you
183 seeing it as bad? Tell me it from your point of view, because I don't
184 see it'. I would just make her talk, then eventually she's like, when I
185 tell her: 'you're being stupid', like just wait it out till you get home
186 and just talk about it, then it's always, always fine but just talk to
187 her really.

188 **I:** And is she able to see it from your perspective then?

189 **S:** Yeah, nine times out ten when I've sat there and sat something,
190 she'll be like: 'oh yeah, maybe you're right and na na na', but I can
191 still tell she's really anxious, always on her phone waiting, it's still,
192 but I guess if you're in love with somebody you probably would be
193 kind of anxious around them if you love them that much.

194 **I:** So you do feel that it does help her when you talk?

195 **S:** Yeah definitely, definitely, yeah, it definitely does help 'cause like
196 for anyone who feels a bit anxious anyway, it's nice to have a
197 shoulder or an ear just for someone to listen to your, to what's
198 wrong, do you know what I mean, like I help her that way, yeah
199 definitely.

200 [Interviewer has asked all questions on the interview schedule.
201 Simon and the interviewer talk a bit back and forth about the length
202 of the interview].

203 **I:** Is there anything you want to talk about that you can think of in
204 relation to social anxiety and friendship?

205 **S:** Ehm, social anxiety and friendship, I don't know, it's weird
206 because when you don't, when you feel like you, I've never been,
207 I'm not a very anxious person or socially anxious like I couldn't care
208 what people think that much. What do you mean by social anxiety
209 anyway, do you mean like people who can't be around people or
210 people who just feel slightly anxious, what would you define it like?

211 **I:** Well, the thing is it is mostly people, well in my study, people who
212 are like anxious in social situations and it can be any kind of
213 situation because I wanted to get like a bigger-

214 **S:** Like a big, like social anxiety is such a big spectrum, yeah [I:
215 Yeah], that's why I feel like on a spectrum, on a scale of one to ten,
216 she would probably be about a five because she's not that anxious
217 around quite a lot of people but in certain situations she becomes
218 very anxious, so it's very like situationally specific and it will come
219 out a lot more, but then sometimes I feel like I don't know if, like
220 it's just, I don't know if she plays on it, sort of thing, maybe that's a
221 bit rude to say but I feel like because she's always had this
222 behaviour, and she's always like: 'oh my god [inaudible]', I feel
223 sometimes when it really comes out, I feel like she's just playing on
224 it a bit 'cause how can you act one way in one situation and then
225 another situation make you feel a different way, it doesn't make
226 sense. And especially when she's out and had drink, there is not any

227 social anxiety there, probably still social anxiety with the boyfriend
228 but I think alcohol is definitely a thing that a lot of people use as a
229 means to feel less socially anxious than normally, but yeah, do I
230 know, I'm trying to think of the other two people I know and how
231 they could relate to your study [pause]. It is weird because the girl I
232 live with who is anxious, her friend definitely is, she's diagnosed
233 with social anxiety and since they separated as friends they were
234 really, really close and now the girl who is diagnosed with anxiety
235 does not make that much of an effort and always, like she was
236 telling me she always decline invitations to do things, and like she
237 was saying my housemate who has got, who has social anxiety was
238 saying to me that: 'I understand that this girl has social anxiety but
239 why does she, we were friends for two, for three years nearly and
240 we were like this, we were like twins and now after I've not seen
241 her for a couple of months, she doesn't even want to be with me
242 again because she's socially anxious', so it just goes to show that
243 maybe it does have a big impact on people because if you can be
244 that close to someone, she said they were like sisters for like three
245 years and then the past few months they haven't seen each other
246 and the only time she wants to see my housemate when they go
247 out or like they go for a meal and have some drinks, 'cause alcohol
248 is a thing that makes them feel a lot more comfortable. So I feel
249 like, I feel kind of bad on my housemate because she has social
250 anxiety and another person who has diagnosed social anxiety
251 always like, if someone keeps rejecting your invitations it starts to
252 make you feel a bit like: 'what's wrong with our friendship?', do you
253 know what I mean, so, but yeah.

254 **I:** So is there anything else, like you mention alcohol that makes her
255 less anxious, is there anything else that helps?

256 **S:** That I think makes, ehm [pause] Not that I can think of. I do think,
257 like especially in the uni environment like that's the only way
258 people feel comfortable around people 'cause that's, not that that's
259 all there is to do but when you go out like alcohol cuts off all those
260 anxious symptoms, like even if people who don't feel anxious feel a

261 lot less anxious when they're drunk so you can kind of understand
262 where they're coming from. So I understand why people do need to
263 drink to feel less socially anxious around people. But then they're
264 both in relationships, like one of them is, they've both been in long
265 term relationships, and no doubt that the other girls relationship
266 makes her feel very anxious as well because when I've been around
267 her I've always hear her talk about like relationships problems,
268 obviously makes her feel like more anxious and I don't, don't know,
269 I don't really understand it because I'm not in a relationship
270 personally but I guess it must be something, must be something
271 that triggers her anxiety 'cause they are both kind of similar in
272 regards to their relationships where they become really anxious,
273 which is I think a bit odd. 'Cause you shouldn't feel anx-, if you're
274 with somebody and you think, and you're in love with somebody in
275 my eyes anyway you don't need to constantly feel anxious if you
276 trust that person. 'Cause, 'cause I feel like anxiety comes from like
277 trust issues, that's what I personally think anyway so why would
278 you feel so anxious around somebody that you've been with for
279 two years? Do you know what I mean, that's like a really [inaudible]
280 on the relationship because I don't know, I've been in a relationship
281 and I didn't feel anxious whatsoever, but these girls could have had
282 it since they can remember so it could just be a thing that they take
283 through to all their relationships, but even she said to me before,
284 oh yeah here's a good conversation, we even fell out, me and her
285 fell out last year because [pause] We would hang out a lot and then
286 every single time like she would argue with her boyfriend that's
287 when she, or her boyfriend was at work, she would come and chill
288 and like I'm: 'yeah fair enough if you've got nothing to do and I've
289 got nothing to do, we'll be together but don't make me feel like I'm
290 second best' because as soon as her boyfriend was finished at work,
291 she'd be like: oh I'm going now, alright, see you later. So then I was
292 like: do you know what, I felt a bit like used so I was like: okay, well,
293 I'm not going to start, I'm not going to start making the effort
294 because I felt, I'm not gaining anything from your friendship, you're

295 just using me while your boyfriend's at work and while, or for a
296 shoulder when things are going wrong and a friendship should be
297 two ways, I should [inaudible] provide you support and you should
298 provide me support, so anyway, we have, our friendship group is
299 like me, her and two other girls, and I just like didn't really message
300 her that much but we were still friends, [inaudible] and then we
301 went out one night and then she just started kicking off, like 'you
302 haven't been messaging me, na na na', so obviously felt a bit
303 anxious about our friendship, and I was like: 'well, what do you
304 want me to do, I'm not going to chase your friendship when all you
305 do is like care about your boyfriend and using me for when you
306 need me', that sort of thing. So I reckon she gets very anxious when
307 people, I wasn't really messaging her at all, and I think that made
308 her feel really anxious for her to bring it up and like, we didn't really
309 argue about it, she brought it up and because we were drunk
310 obviously like, we sorted it out the next day, we came over and I
311 said: 'well, this is how you make me feel and this is how I make her
312 feel', but, and she was like: 'yeah but like you can't just ignore me'
313 and I was like: 'you can't just use someone', so we did overcome it
314 but obviously me not messaging her made feel really anxious and
315 she obviously felt like, 'cause she was telling me how like rubbish
316 she felt about it, she felt like I didn't like her anymore, which is
317 obviously symptoms of anxiety when people, people don't like you,
318 so, but no, we did sort it out, but she was saying like: 'I thought all
319 you guys didn't like me, na na na', so that's the only time we've
320 ever argued really and it probably was because she was feeling a bit
321 anxious.

322 **I:** So that anxiousness is not just in relation to her partner but
323 maybe [S: but maybe, yeah] in relation to friends-

324 **S:** Maybe when she realizes someone is upset with her, she, like
325 some people can't see through that and I feel like, sometimes I can
326 be quite, if I give someone the cold shoulder they can usually tell
327 'cause I'm not, I'm not that kind of person so that probably made
328 her feel quite anxious but I'm gonna, if someone's making me feel

329 bad about myself I'm not going to make an effort with them, do you
330 know what I mean, so like, and then she obviously felt a bit anxious
331 about it, [inaudible]. But she obviously needs alcohol to bring it up
332 again, do you know what I mean. So I do think alcohol makes a lot
333 of people, has a lot to do with anxiety.

334 I: So when she comes to you with, for example, with issues with her
335 partner when she's anxious, and you said like: 'oh not again'-

336 S: Mmhhm, gets a bit hideous.

337 I: She's done it a few times so how does that make you feel?

338 S: Like: 'oh for God's sake', because I'm really good friends with him
339 as well it's more like, here we go again, sort of thing, like you keep
340 coming to me with your relationship problems and I really can't be
341 asked to listen to them again because it's literally like around about,
342 you have a problem, you come to me about it, next minute you're
343 fine, it's literally the same, the same, the same and now I've like
344 massive [inaudible] and stuff, like. And even she said, even she said
345 to me before: 'I feel like an idiot coming to your room all the time',
346 like why, why, why do you do it, you're just like, it's kind of
347 embarrassing at the end of the day like if you can't be an adult
348 about it. I'm not sure if it's anxiousness or immaturity half the time
349 to be fair. If you can't be a grown up and have a conversation with
350 your boyfriend, with your partner for two years and you're coming
351 to my room crying, scared about your relationship, what's the point
352 in, like what's the point in being with somebody if you can't sort it
353 out and you just cry all the time. It's pointless. But yeah, it's just
354 annoying, it just makes me feel more annoyed from my point of
355 view because I'm like: here we go again, like sometimes maybe
356 having a friend [I: [coughs] sorry]. It's okay, don't worry. Maybe
357 having a friend, do you want some water? Maybe having a friend
358 that is anxious can be a bit of an annoyance, do you know what I
359 mean, yeah but I guess sometimes you don't realize it but having
360 someone who is anxious around you all the time does get a bit,
361 definitely tedious, now I think about it. But yeah, no, but she's a

362 very good friend, like we're always going to be in a good place but
363 everyone has these little things that are going to annoy you that are
364 going to like [inaudible], you're going to bring it up 'cause you have
365 to but like we are very good friend still and we live together and we
366 still do things together all the time but when things do get annoying
367 it just gets annoying.

368 I: Do you tell her that she's annoying or do you just-

369 S: When she comes down sometimes I'm like: here we go again,
370 what do you want me to do, now I've just got to the point where I
371 just sit down and listen to her instead of, 'cause I can't be bothered
372 given my advice 'cause it's pointless, every time I give my advice it
373 doesn't even go anywhere anyway. She just does what she wants.
374 But yeah.

375 I: Has she, does she want to [pause] She's not diagnosed but does
376 she want to work it since she's saying that she's got social anxiety?

377 S: I don't know, I think she started to grow out of it a little bit, it was
378 a lot worse last year and the year before, like now she is starting to
379 grow out of it and she's got a work based learning with disabled
380 people and she does, for the past, the past few weeks she hasn't
381 actually been that bad at all, like she does still do the thing with her
382 hair but I think that's because she's been like, she's done it for so
383 long but like in terms of feeling anxious, I don't get that much of a
384 knack in my ear, things seem to be alright with her and her
385 boyfriend because she's started to grow out of her anxiousness and
386 she's got like work base-, maybe it's when she's got distractions like
387 work based learning, uni work, all that kind of stuff but I guess, I
388 know uni work makes her feel more anxious, she always cries about
389 her uni work but that's like it's your own fault for leaving it last
390 minute, sort of thing, do you know what I mean, so can't really, you
391 can't really relate that to social anxiety leaving it to the last minute,
392 do you know what I mean, so I don't know. I'm trying to think of the
393 other boy, yeah the other guy, so I know another guy with social

394 anxiety and he is very like crude and takes drugs every now and
395 again, am I allowed to, am I allowed to say that?

396 **I:** Yeah, you're allowed to say anything you want, that's fine.

397 **S:** He takes, I know he takes drugs but I don't if it's to make himself
398 feel more comfortable but it probably makes his social anxiety
399 worse because even he said to me before, he said to me before like:
400 'oh yeah mate, sometimes', like I don't know, and he smokes weed
401 all the time which isn't going to help, is it? Like if you got social
402 anxiety weed equals paranoia, more social anxiety, but then when
403 you're in a one to one with him you feel comfortable around him
404 and he's not smoking and he's not drinking, 'cause he's not like a
405 chronic smoker and drinker, he does go to uni but when he's
406 around people he feels comfortable around he's alright to be
407 around as well but he just chats your ear off, probably to make
408 himself feel more comfortable, do you know what I mean, because I
409 don't know him that well either but I do know he recently got a job
410 and stuff, which is probably going to do good for him.

411 **I:** So with him, have you experienced his anxiety in some situation?

412 **S:** Ehm, trying to think [pause]. Probably in a room of people where
413 someone's made him feel a bit uncomfortable but nothing I can
414 think of. But the way he deals with it is just: 'oh fuck', oh [both
415 laugh] 'oh fuck you mate', do you know what I mean, when you
416 make him feel uncomfortable he acts just like it's a joke but he's
417 definitely got, I know, the reason I know he has social anxiety is
418 because the other girl, not my housemate, the other girl, those two,
419 I was at a house party with those two and they were obviously
420 getting along, they were talking and they were both: 'oh yeah, I've
421 got social anxiety', which is like how I know the three of them, so
422 they both have social anxiety and the two people, not my
423 housemate, the two, the other girl and the guy I know, they, she
424 didn't like him at first 'cause she thought he's so annoying and then
425 when she found out he had social anxiety her barrier came down
426 and she started to like him then, like she really didn't like him at

427 first 'cause we were sat on a bed together when we were all
428 drinking and smoki-, and like we were at her house party so we
429 were all just having fun, she's like: 'oh he's really annoying, he's
430 really annoying', then she found out he had social anxiety and then,
431 maybe it's because she knew he had the same label or something
432 like that, she might have: 'oh I can relate, he's like this because of
433 his social anxiety', maybe he's so loud because he does feel socially
434 anxious, do you know what I mean, 'cause I guess some people are
435 more out there or some people revert into shyness because social
436 anxiety can make you do a bit different things, like some people do
437 go in to themselves and some people go out of themselves, but
438 with him, because he does get like really, really drunk sometimes
439 it's just a bit, he just gets a bit messy and sometimes spills drinks
440 everywhere so it gets a bit annoying, like when he comes over to
441 our house, say for example after you've been out for a night out
442 and we all go back to ours or something it's an annoyance because
443 he's like so loud and so rowdy because he's, don't know, just gets to
444 be a bit of strain on, you just don't know what he's going to do next
445 sort of thing, which is a bit annoying, whereas the other girl like
446 she's, not my housemate, the other one, she's such a laugh, when
447 she's had a drink she's such a laugh, she's so chilled out, obviously
448 makes her feel so relaxed and she doesn't, and the only time I've
449 been in an anxious situation with her as well is to do with her
450 boyfriend, 'cause we were at a house party once and we went
451 upstairs 'cause I was really drunk and so was she, and we went
452 upstairs and she was like: 'oh [xxx] is doing', am I allowed to say
453 names?

454 I: Yeah, I'll take them out.

455 S: And she was like: 'he said he's mad at me for this, na na na', I was
456 like: bloody hell, that does not help, if you feel socially anxious this
457 whole, this situation is not going to make you feel much better with
458 your boyfriend having a go at you and like I just felt a bit sorry for
459 her because I don't know her that well, I was just like: 'oh you'll be
460 alright, don't worry', but I guess I feel like a lot of people with social

461 anxiety worry a lot about everything, they're such worriers,
462 whereas when I compare it to myself I just couldn't care less about
463 everything, as long as I know I'm alright doing what I'm doing, I
464 don't care about anybody else, whereas they all like: 'oh my god,
465 I'm worried about this, I'm worried about this', like that's such a
466 difficult way to go through life.

467 **I:** And do you find it difficult to help in situations like that because
468 you don't really understand or-

469 **S:** It's not that I don't understand it, it's just that I don't see why
470 they're worrying so much all the time about things that are
471 completely pointless so I just try to be the best friend I can and just
472 listen rather than, obviously I would never judge them 'cause
473 they're my friends, like I'm not a judgemental person but I just
474 sometimes don't understand why they feel the need to worry all
475 the time. Doesn't make any sense.

476 **I:** Okay, do you have anything else you want to add?

477 **S:** I don't think so.

478 **I:** It was really good.

479 **S:** I hope you got a lot out of it.

480 [Interviewer and Simon talk a bit about the research question]

481 **S:** I hope I helped, I feel like I was talking a lot about alcohol, that's
482 probably a big thing, but I think that's a big thing anyway, like if
483 there's one thing that did make people feel less anxious it's a
484 hundred percent alcohol. But I can't think of anything like, excuse
485 me, because our friendship is not made difficult by it, sometimes
486 it's an annoyance, do you know what I mean, but it doesn't make
487 our friendship difficult because if it made out friendship difficult I
488 probably wouldn't be friends with them, because I don't need, my
489 personal view is if someone's going to make, if someone's, if her
490 anxiety was so bad that it made you feel anxious like that's not
491 what friends do, you might have a, friends don't make friends feel

Interview - Simon

492 anxious, more and more anxious, friends, I make her feel at ease
493 obviously but if she'd start making me feel anxious I'd have to tell
494 her: 'you're making me feel too anxious', 'cause if it was someone
495 who was like picking their hair out all the time and really worried all
496 the time around you, you'd start feeling a bit the same, wouldn't
497 you? So, but yeah, no, I think, think I've covered everything, I don't
498 really know what else to talk about.

499 I: That's alright.

500 [Interviewer says thank you and they say goodbye].

501

Interview Taylor

1 **Interview – Taylor**

2

3 **Interviewer (I):** So, to begin with will you just tell me a bit about
4 you? What you do?

5

6 **Taylor (T):** Ehm, I am Taylor and I study English Lit and Creative
7 Writing at the [university], like I just finished my final year and,
8 yeah, well, that is pretty much it for the academic part, and uh,
9 yeah apart from that, I like, I don't know, I like, I've got lots of
10 different hobbies. Yeah.

11

12 **I:** What are your hobbies? If I can ask.

13

14 **T:** My hobbies, [inaudible] specifically like right now it is Kung Fu
15 and Jujitsu, yeah, I like the, not, I don't like the fighting, like the
16 sports fighting side of it, I like the artistic, spiritual idea behind it, I
17 love listening to music, like all kind of music, anytime, any place,
18 and uhm, what else, what else, reading obviously, I'm reading a lot.

19

20 **I:** Yeah, alright, so can you tell me a bit about how you became
21 friends with this person who has social anxiety?

22

23 **T:** Yeah, so I met her, actually my first, it was my first seminar of
24 Poetry in first year. We shared two modules; Poetry and Dramatic
25 Writing, and I met her there and we just like, we like become, we
26 became kind of friends because we wrote the same kind of stuff,
27 you know always kind of twisted, like funny stories but like with a
28 twist and we became friends through that. Through Facebook first
29 because she was already really shy, she wouldn't, she wouldn't get
30 out of her accommodation a lot, so we made acquaintance through
31 Facebook like became friends through Facebook and through our
32 seminars, but it grew, it grew like as a friendship a bit later, it was in
33 second year, I moved to, you know, like you have to move to your

Interview Taylor

34 own accommodation for second year, so I moved into
35 [accommodation], I don't know if you can write that down, anyway
36 I moved into a place [I: Yeah, that's fine] and she moved, I told her
37 where I was moving and she moved right next door, like right next
38 door but I don't think it was a coincidence, you know, she like, yeah,
39 anyway, so she moved right next door, I think that's because I was
40 kind of the only friend she had and she wanted to feel, ehm, when
41 she was coming back for the second year she wanted to have like
42 some [inaudible], so knowing someone before the start of the
43 course. So, yeah, and that's where we became friends because I,
44 she was like with her social anxiety she had like these kind of
45 anxiety attacks basically that could like come for whatever [reason],
46 like she would just go shopping, food, all this kind of stuff, and she
47 would have, she would have an attack on the way back and then
48 she would just knock on my door and I would like comfort her and
49 tell her it was going to be okay. Usually I would use kind of a sense
50 of humour, like to make her feel like okay, instead of like letting her
51 be swallowed by the attack, like the anxiety attack, I would use a
52 sense of humour to like deflect her attention on something else,
53 yeah, so that's how it grew basically. Our friendship, yeah.

54

55 I: Okay, how was it for you that she was coming to you for help and
56 support?

57

58 T: I think, I don't know, I think, well, she was from another place,
59 like she was, she was, like she's British but she's also been living
60 abroad before, her whole life so I kind of could like relate. At first I
61 was like she's, it's new, it's all new and stuff, and I'm older, I started
62 my course at 21, she was starting 19, 18 years old, so it's kind of like
63 a big change but I didn't realise at first that it was social anxiety at
64 all, I just thought it was like kind of some anxiety attacks based on
65 the fact that she was completely overwhelmed by the world around
66 her, but like. Yeah, I think I took it quite fine, it was more difficult

Interview Taylor

67 later on because she would close herself so she wasn't talking
68 about what was wrong, she was just having the anxiety attacks but
69 not talking anymore. [I: Yeah]. So it was harder to like find the right
70 words but uhm, yeah, I just I'm fine with that, I think, I think it's
71 kind of, I don't know, well it's again the Marshelat [inaudible]
72 philosophy where you like help one another because you might
73 need help later on, you know what I mean, so you [inaudible]
74 basically that, so yeah, I wasn't like annoyed or anything or.

75

76 I: No. So when she came to you how, you said that you tried to
77 distract her a bit by being funny, can you tell me more about that?

78

79 T: So, well, I knew, I knew her like for example movie taste or this
80 kind of stuff, she, she loved animes, all this kind of stuff, animes in
81 movies. And like always like I said like [inaudible] spooky movies,
82 thrillers, and she always had this kind of dark sense of humour so I
83 would just basically I would like mention that kind of stuff, like
84 mention movies or quotes from movies or like make her, in a way I
85 would like make her life, what was, what was happening in her life
86 relate to that kind of events, so there was like an anime she liked
87 and in this anime for example the character obviously grows, I
88 would say grows wiser through the episodes and I was kind of
89 telling that, telling her that it's okay to have these kind of
90 breakdowns, melt downs, people are too harsh on themselves
91 sometimes, they're like: 'everyone is functioning around me and I'm
92 dysfunctional and that's wrong', and I was like: 'it's normal to go
93 through these stages, the only important stuff is to want to get out
94 of them', yeah, so yeah I was using sense of humour and that kind
95 of, and then she would make fun of the fact that I was kind of, in
96 that anime-thing there's like a very old character, like in you know
97 Kung Fu Panda or something like that, [I: Oh yeah, the wise man] so
98 she was feeling like I was the master [Both laugh]. Yeah.

99

Interview Taylor

100 I: Yeah. And how did that, how could you, could you feel that it
101 helped her?

102

103 T: Yeah, I think, I think sometimes just even the presence, knowing
104 that, sometimes she didn't even have to come over, she would just
105 tell me on Facebook that she was feeling low and this kind of stuff,
106 so I would like lift her spirits online, just knowing that I was right
107 next door, sometimes she wouldn't, she wouldn't even have to like
108 come over, she would only come over when it was like real, real
109 meltdown.

110

111 I: Yeah, can you tell me about a specific experience where she
112 visited you and had like a panic attack or she was feeling very low?

113

114 T: A specific one, because she was on her own, she had a friend
115 who was, I wouldn't say it was a close friend but it was a friend who
116 confided in her and she was, this friend was going kind of through a
117 suicidal stage and so she told her, basically she wrote something on
118 Facebook that was like a cry for help and [name of his friend]
119 phoned her for a few hours telling her to, I said her name again, I'm
120 not supposed to [I: That's alright, I'll take it out] so yeah, I just had
121 to like. So she, she like called her and told her it was okay and
122 everything was going to be fine and she was there for like a few
123 hours and then afterwards, obviously, she got the consequences of
124 that, she had like her own meltdown and she, she went to see me
125 and tell me what was happening and if I could like stay available
126 throughout the night because she had to stay in contact with her
127 friend on the phone, and so she was like she, I think, I think she
128 was, she wanted to help other people but sometimes she had to
129 deal with her own social anxiety, anxiety attacks and I think that
130 really like took a toll on her because she wanted to be there for
131 people but at the same time she needed someone to be there for
132 her and she didn't want to be, to appear weak, so comforting, like

Interview Taylor

133 the comforting was basically like I said a sense of humour and hugs.
134 As, as, as simple as that, yeah, yeah, so that's a very specific event
135 when but what can I say more about that, ehm, I think [pause] yeah
136 I think it's, it's telling things, you feel like you are repeating yourself,
137 you know, that it's going to be okay and it's no more, but I think
138 that's something that they need to hear, you know, like it's just
139 reco-, comfort them in that, in that way, because it's, it's, it's silly
140 but it's just when the words are said out loud they have more
141 impact than when they are just written, or like, you know.

142

143 I: Yeah, and do you think so, the fact that you were neighbours, that
144 had a great impact on her?

145

146 T: Yeah, I think so because she had, like she had a tendency to shut
147 herself off from the rest of the world, so she would spend
148 sometimes days, only like go outside to shop for food, she would
149 spend days in her apartment, sometimes even she would ask me to
150 – when I was going shopping for food - to like get her stuff and then
151 she would pay me, so she would stay like really, really close(d)
152 because anything could trigger like an, an anxiety attack, uhm, and I
153 think the fact that I was just right next door, sometimes even like,
154 the walls are very thin so you hear the other person moving, so
155 sometimes she would know when I was home and when I wasn't
156 and obviously when I wasn't home, she would like feel like, she
157 would always like constantly sometimes ask 'would I be like there
158 tonight' or this kind of stuff, she wouldn't even like be there or
159 come to see me, just knowing that I was there, and I think that idea
160 of a presence that she could count on if she needed to like really,
161 really helped her, especially throughout the end of her dissertation
162 and stuff, yeah.

163

164 I: Oh yeah, so was she ever diagnosed with social anxiety?

165

Interview Taylor

166 **T:** Yes, she was, she was like doing, uhm, how is it called? Not
167 counselling, it was therapy sessions and she did them for, during
168 first year, she stopped in second year, which she said was a mistake
169 and she took them again in third year and yes, she was diagnosed
170 with social anxiety. Not just social anxiety, social anxiety and
171 something else that she told me about, I can't remember the name
172 of it but it's something that made her have like meltdowns, even
173 like without being, I think it's like a branch, there's like diff-, you
174 probably know better than me, there's different branches in social
175 anxiety and it was one where she would trigger, without even like
176 being surrounded by people but just being invited by the people,
177 she would just be unable to go because she would stress about like,
178 anxiety attacks, what would happen if she would go, so yeah it was,
179 it was, it's a very, very, it was not just like a small one, it's a very,
180 very like, how do you say that, [pause] developed symptoms of,
181 yeah, yeah.

182

183 **I:** Yeah, so when she, could you feel a difference between when she
184 was in therapy and when she wasn't?

185

186 **T:** I think in first year, I think in first year it helped her and I think in
187 first year she was, she was not worried too much about work so she
188 would enjoy her time with people more and she wouldn't, at this
189 time, I don't think, she comes from a place where everyone know
190 each other, it's a small island and stuff, so she didn't realize at first
191 that people were judging I think, and when she realized that
192 throughout second year, uhm, it like, that's where her social anxiety
193 started to blossom like very fast, and I think second year it was, I
194 know, it's very gradual, she stopped therapy sessions but it didn't
195 have an impact directly when she stopped it, stopped it like
196 growing, you know what I mean, third year was definitely the worst,
197 she was always in like very, very low places and she was stressing
198 about the fact that she had to come home, 'cause she had a

Interview Taylor

199 contract, she has to come home for three years now after her three
200 year scholarship so she was thinking about: 'everyone's going to
201 forget about her, and her friends don't really want to see her
202 because she's going to, she's going to leave' and, so yeah I think, I
203 think we can like relate to that a bit, you know the idea that we're
204 only here for a time but these people have been living here there
205 whole life, so when we come and go, basically they're going to
206 forget about us, that's like a worry, that's probably like any person
207 that travels, so yeah, I think that her third year was the worst I think
208 because of that partly.

209

210 I: Yeah, alright.

211

212 T: Tell me if you want more of these specific stuff.

213

214 I: I do like specific experiences [T: Okay, well] you've had and how
215 you provided support.

216

217 T: Well, recently for example, I can use one very, very recent,
218 there's been like sightings in [city] of a guy wearing the old [I: Oh
219 yeah] [a guy wearing a plague doctor mask], yeah, and she, I was
220 like organising for her and another friend kind of a trip into town,
221 you know Starbucks or, it's, when you organise something like that
222 it has to be very specific with people with social anxiety, they have
223 to know exactly where they are going to go, what kind of places and
224 around what time, so I was like: 'Starbucks, around 5.30pm'
225 because it's where the place is starting to empty, you know it's
226 worse during the afternoon, and she said that, she was, she didn't
227 say at first that she was worried about that person [the man
228 dressed up as a plague doctor] because she thought it would be
229 silly, so she was like, like asking like specifics as well like: 'how long
230 are we going to stay there, where are we going to stay, you know in
231 the place, are we going to stay close to the window, or', this kind of

Interview Taylor

232 stuff, so I said: 'no, we can stay in the back, it's fine', and then I,
233 she, she told me that, like because I pried a bit, she told me that it
234 was because there was these sightings of this medical, old school
235 medical guy wearing this disguise and it was, it was creeping her
236 out a lot and she had been having a few anxiety attacks for the past
237 few days because of that, and she wouldn't, she had nothing to eat
238 anymore because she hadn't gone shopping because of that, so I
239 told her that it was going to be fine because, like again I tried to, I
240 looked into the guy wearing stuff and I just said: 'it's probably
241 someone creating a buzz like for the clown', like a few years ago
242 there was a clown in [city] and it was, it was someone creating a
243 buzz, and I showed the, the picture of the like this picture of this
244 guy, it's always, always taken in daylight, so I was like; 'it's, it's
245 something that's made up, you know, like he's, he's posing for the
246 camera basically in broad daylight so that's probably nothing, but
247 like if you really don't feel like okay with going, it's fine, but it's
248 going to be just the three of us, we're going to stay at the back of
249 Starbucks and it's still daylight until like late, so you should be fine',
250 and just saying that it was like [snaps fingers] gone. [I: yeah]. Yeah,
251 uhm, yeah, so that's one of the specifics, I could tell you.

252

253 **I:** So when you went out to Starbucks, how was it? How did it go?

254

255 **T:** Once we had ordered our stuff and went in the back she was like
256 fine, yeah, the important stuff is always take their mind off of kind
257 of stuff and there was like few people so she wasn't feeling like
258 judged or anything, it was the three of us: her, a friend she knows
259 very well and me, so she was like in a complete comfort, like fine
260 zone but you have to keep that, especially when there is these
261 events where there's like people like that [inaudible] to town
262 wearing costumes, you have to like keep them in the zone where
263 they're fine, yeah, and keep their mind off of it, yeah.

264

Interview Taylor

265 I: And what do you, what do you think of your role in this situation?
266 How do you feel about that?
267
268 T: It's a complicated one because sometimes you're afraid you're
269 not going to say the right thing, you don't want to make it worse,
270 one time I made it worse because I down, I think that's the word,
271 downplayed it, the importance of her dissertation, I said: 'it's fine,
272 it's dissertation but you're going to be fine, you're doing your best
273 and no one's going to judge you', and it was the wrong words
274 because her parents are expecting a lot from her so, even if you
275 know the person well sometimes you're just afraid of saying the
276 wrong words and make it worse so you have to be very careful and
277 it, I think it takes its toll on you as well, you know, because you, you
278 like, I think it's empathy basically, you feel like if you're not,
279 sometimes you're very tired, I'm going to take an example from the
280 dissertation, so I was going through *my* own dissertation and I was
281 very, very tired and when someone's having an anxiety attack you
282 know you have to give more energy, and you're like you feel like
283 already drained, you don't give as much as you usually do, and the
284 [inaudible] basically because I wasn't there the way she needed,
285 needed to, so yeah, I think it's like ups and downs as well, and you
286 feel, it's weird because when she's fine and when she has like,
287 when she manages to, she managed liked three times in like the
288 past five weeks to go out, she's not drinking, but to go out and it
289 was a real accomplishment for her and it's, it's nice because when
290 they manage to like go out in the world like that and just not having
291 attacks and stuff like that, it makes you feel better as well, I mean it
292 makes you feel happy, so it's rewarding in a way, I would say, but it
293 takes its toll as well a lot because when you're at your lowest or
294 when you're as well like tired, because these attacks they're
295 random, so they're not necessarily happening when you're at your
296 best, yeah, so yeah.
297

Interview Taylor

298 I: Yeah. So is it challenging?

299

300 T: It is. It is challenging I think. It is challenging but, I don't know, it's
301 just, it's challenging but I wouldn't, I wouldn't ever give up on
302 someone like that because it's, I think that's what makes us like
303 that's the basic of human beings, so if we stop doing that there's no
304 point in being humans basically so in a way I would say that [taking
305 care of each other], like, when social medias are concerned, for
306 example Facebook or that kind of stuff, I would say that that's the
307 only way, the only moment I would say that I would sing the praise
308 of Facebook because it allows you to be constantly in contact, in
309 touch with them even when you're like away, you know like,
310 whenever I was in France and this kind of stuff, so that's a real good
311 support because I don't know how I would be able to like help her,
312 you know like, without this kind of stuff she would probably have,
313 she would probably have to like, like she would need more my time,
314 direct time, and sometimes you just can't, you know when you're
315 working and stuff, and I think the ability to comfort people through
316 these devices is very helpful, you know, helps you a lot, but at the
317 same time I don't know, I think it helped me grow as well in
318 understanding people and I don't know how, I don't know how it's
319 going to sound, you know I do, I do creative writing and I think
320 sometimes I use that, I use that like that's something you can't
321 invent, can't create, can't make up, and sometimes I'm like: 'well,
322 my character is going to react like that because that's how she
323 reacted' and, and you're like, in a way you feel better about your
324 writing because you actually feel like you can raise awareness about
325 it, indirectly, without mentioning the person, so I don't know, I feel
326 like it's, it's, it was a hard, hard experience sometimes, especially
327 this year, but it's worth like help people like that, because, yeah,
328 and she wants to help people as well, she'd feel like if you help her
329 solve her issues, she's going to be more up to help other people and

Interview Taylor

330 she's going to feel better about herself and I think, I think that's the
331 best therapy, you know, as well.

332

333 I: Yeah, so does she help you too sometimes when you're down as
334 well or?

335

336 T: I don't like, I don't, I don't like confide, I can't confide like the
337 way, I don't go to people because I haven't been, I think that's
338 because I haven't been, I don't have social anxiety to begin with so
339 it's probably different stuff, when I have these, I don't know, when I
340 have these, I just listen to music or take it out on a punching ball,
341 punching bag, you know what I mean, I have a different, I think
342 people have different ways of coping and I think it's fine because, I
343 don't know how to say that, in a way since I, that's my way of
344 coping, I wasn't very, sometimes I think I wasn't very [inaudible]
345 empathy for other people because I was like, well, in my head,
346 before I knew her, I was like, well, just like: 'pull yourself together',
347 you know that's the kind of stuff, 'pull yourself together, it's fine,
348 like go punch a punching bag' this kind of stuff, knowing her made
349 me realize that people have different ways of coping and I got a
350 very, very deep insight of how she, on her struggle and I think it
351 helped me understand other people as well, you know and help
352 them, be a better listener basically, so that helped me a lot with
353 that, yeah. Definitely.

354

355 I: So you feel like your friendship with her has made a difference for
356 you as well?

357

358 T: yeah. I think you, you get as much, even if you don't realize it
359 first. At first you're like really thought you're just here for them, I
360 think you realize you get as much from it as they get from it. And
361 she wrote, every like Christmas or something like that, she'd write a
362 letter to say thank, thanks, and that's very rewarding in a way

Interview Taylor

363 because you don't, sometimes you're here for them and it doesn't
364 have as much impact on you as it has on them so you don't
365 remember, they remember *every* moment you've taken care of
366 them so when they write all that down in a letter you realize and
367 you're like, you realize you're like, you've been a, maybe a better
368 person than you thought you were, yeah, so it's very rewarding I
369 think. I think it's just, it's rewarding but it's not, you shouldn't like, I
370 don't know, you shouldn't like go fish for that kind of attention, you
371 know I mean like help people just for the sake of it, but I think it's
372 normal to feel better about helping people, I think people should
373 like feel, feel good about that, you know, they should let
374 themselves feel good about that, you're helping someone, so
375 someone to feel good about it, it's not just, you know, building your
376 ego or anything, and then in return you realize that she's bringing
377 something to you that's very important like empathy and being able
378 to understand other people, that's something that helped me every
379 day in life in my relationships with other people, like even if you
380 don't mention that [in the dissertation] like [his girlfriend] for
381 example, as, as simple as that, and in my writing as well.

382

383 **I:** That sounds really good. With the list and everything, uhm, so do
384 you have more specific examples?

385

386 **T:** Let me think. I can give you an example of how they use, they
387 tend to, people with social anxiety who have few friends tend to
388 use their friends, their only friend as an emotional punching bag
389 sometimes. So first year in Dramatic Writing, obviously that's
390 something very dangerous for people with social anxiety because
391 we have these workshops where we have to share our work with
392 other people and it's not just a story, it's characters talking and you
393 can definitely, I think, well, that's how I felt, and I think that's how
394 she felt as well, she felt that people would see through the
395 characters and see how the characters relate to her and that it's her

Interview Taylor

396 problems and would judge, and at one point she, she shared
397 something about like her, the com-, the complicated relationship
398 she has with her parents and she felt like people were judging on
399 that, so she, she got very upset and she got angry and I tried to like
400 to say something comforting with like a sense of humour this time
401 as well at first, and I think since we didn't really know each other
402 she wasn't really getting my sense of humour, she wasn't really, I
403 think maybe she thought I was making fun of her or something and
404 she like took it out on me on Facebook and face to face as well, but
405 then she felt like really, really bad about it and I think she realized
406 at that point that, I don't know how to say that but like, she realized
407 that the problem of having one person to count on is that you can't
408 take it, when you're angry you can't take it on, she couldn't take it
409 out on other people because she didn't know them and she would
410 be afraid to like be judged by them, but she knew that she could get
411 upset against me, with me because I would forgive her, and
412 sometimes like, I don't know how to explain that clearly, I
413 remember very specifically thinking at that point, since I didn't
414 really know what she had, yeah, social anxiety, I thought I'm not
415 going to be a punching bag, so I remember like kind of taking my
416 distance from her and then she apologized through Facebook and I
417 realised that it was, it was a way for her to like to cope and knowing
418 that she could like, I don't know, it's very, it's like, I wouldn't say it's
419 messed up, but knowing that she could take it out on someone and
420 that person is going to forgive her was very important for her, so
421 when she would get like that, very upset and very angry, I would
422 know that it was just momentarily and I would know that it wasn't
423 against me, you know, it wasn't directed towards me, most of the
424 time it was during an anxiety attack against someone else but it was
425 directed towards me because she knew I could cope with it and
426 could forgive her, so yeah, it was, I don't know how to, these
427 people, like it's very brave for a person with social anxiety to take
428 that kind of course, seminars where you have to share your own

Interview Taylor

429 feelings and emotions with other people but I think they have to
430 have this kind of like rock, they have to think, even though I'm not a
431 rock, I have my meltdowns and stuff like that, they have to thin
432 they have that rock to count on, yeah, it's only the way you present
433 yourself, you know what I mean, you don't have to be 24/7 a rock
434 but you have to make them think you are, it's very important, so
435 that's what I learned at this point in first year. Yeah.

436

437 **I:** Yeah, so you said that you, at the beginning you didn't know that
438 she had social anxiety-

439

440 **T:** No, I didn't know. I didn't even know what it was to be honest.
441 You know it's only what you see depicted in movies most of the
442 time and it's mostly warped, it's not real, so yeah, I didn't, I didn't
443 really know that, I think I realized, I realized, I knew she had
444 something specific in second year but I only realized during the
445 Madness module in third year, we had like a Madness module
446 where it was basically all about mental illnesses and I think it helped
447 her as well, that's, I think that's important, I think she didn't really
448 know what she had, you know even the counselling sessions didn't
449 really, she couldn't really like picture, like really understand what
450 she had, and with the Madness module we studied other people
451 and other characters with that kind of issues and I think it made her
452 understand better her problems and be able to cope with it better,
453 and you know, in a way as well manage her expectations towards
454 me, you know, so she wouldn't know if she was like asking too
455 much or not, and in first year and second year she would never
456 realize that sometimes she was asking way too much, basically she
457 was, like for example when she would ask me to go shopping for
458 her and then like call for, or stay the whole day in my room because
459 she wasn't feeling well and she might have to go to the GP, so she
460 would ask me to stay the whole day, like a whole for example
461 Sunday or Saturday when you want to go out and this kind of stuff,

Interview Taylor

462 you know what I mean, so that's, that's, that's, that's the kind of
463 thing and then she realized in third year that, through these other
464 characters and cases, that she was maybe asking too much and in a
465 way it made her reflect on her own social anxiety and how she
466 could, it's funny because it's all, it's very altruistic in a way, made
467 her realize, she needed me but she wanted to be able to like make
468 me not, she didn't want to put like too much on me when she
469 realized, I don't know how to explain that, specifically third year
470 made her realize that you have to take care of your rock basically.
471 Yeah.

472

473 **I:** To be able to get that support back [T: Yeah exactly]. And so you
474 felt a difference there too?

475

476 **T:** In third year, definitely, it was like I would say that the lower, the
477 low, the low moments were lower than ever but the high moments
478 were higher than ever as well, so basically when she was feeling
479 extremely low she would be very, very needy, yeah, the word, but
480 then afterwards she would be, she would like be grateful and
481 realise, you know, I remember in first and second year, like that's
482 something I forgot to mention, she wouldn't, I think, I know how
483 bad it sounds because it's supposed to, because you're supposed to
484 feel better about it just because you're helping the person, but as a
485 human being you like being thanked in a way, even if not through
486 words, you know if it's just through gestures, and in first and
487 second year she wasn't realizing how much I was helping her and in
488 third year she realized that, and like I said, she felt like very, very
489 low, she went through her worst places because of dissertation and
490 the fact that basically in third year everyone wants to, by the end of
491 third year everyone wants to meet and have parties and stuff, and
492 she knew she was going to go and she felt like she was left aside but
493 at the same time she knew she was part of the problem because
494 she wouldn't join, you know what I mean, she feels like she's left

Interview Taylor

495 aside but at the same time she doesn't want to join, so yeah, so it
496 was one of the worst places but that's when she realized as well
497 how much I had been helping her and I think, even if it sounds bad
498 in a way, I think that's very rewarding when you finally, like when
499 the other person finally realizes how much you've done for them,
500 you know, so it's, it's both ways, I think it's mutual, you know even
501 if some people say: 'oh I've been there for them and they've never
502 like given me anything in return', that's not true because if it was
503 true, they wouldn't have stucked, you know, around, you only do
504 that because you get something in return as well and that's
505 something that you grow as as a person, I think, you grow as a
506 person, yeah.

507

508 **I:** So how, will you tell me more about how it feels, you said that it's
509 rewarding, can you tell me more about how, what that meant to
510 you when she realized how much you've helped her?

511

512 **T:** Yeah, I think, as simple as sometimes you feel like you, I don't
513 know, you're help-, sometimes, it might sound a bit selfish,
514 sometimes you feel like you are helping people and you get nothing
515 in return and you're like: 'okay, they're having these problems but
516 what about me?', you know, but then I realized that it was, in a way
517 it was my own fault because unlike her, she would come for help, to
518 ask for help, I wouldn't do that so basically it's, people can't know if
519 you're going through a bad phase if you don't give hints and I know
520 I can't do that like because that's who I am so knowing that like,
521 knowing that I was doing something, I was making her life better
522 helped me actually solve my problems, you know when I was
523 feeling like shit and stuff like that, yeah but you're making, even if
524 you're feeling low or this kind of stuff and if you feel like right now
525 you don't want to help or I'm going through bad stuff as well,
526 you're making her life better so that should make you feel better
527 and it's natural, like I don't know how to say that, it's just, it's just

Interview Taylor

528 sometimes you feel selfish because you're like, you're like: 'oh, I
529 helped her so I'm a better human being' but if it makes her feel
530 better there's nothing wrong about that, you know what I mean,
531 there's nothing wrong about feeling better about helping someone
532 if that actually works, it's bad when you start like I said fishing for it,
533 fishing for like compliments or, yeah. But I would never ask for like
534 the letter she would write and stuff like that, and sometimes I'd be
535 like even too, I wouldn't say like, it's too overwhelming, like you
536 read that I you're like I don't remember, I don't, that's not how I
537 perceived it, sometimes you would just like, it's going to sound
538 weird but sometimes they feel like shit so they send you something
539 on Facebook and you, you're like very tired and you just send
540 something but like you don't really mean it, you know what I mean,
541 you just send, you just send for example: 'oh it's going to be okay,
542 you're like, you're a great person and you've like, you've just been
543 building your, your, your weapons to like fight life', you just say
544 stuff that is so basic but it makes, it makes a real impact on them
545 and they like genuinely feel the change, and you're like I just did
546 that and it wasn't like, it wasn't like, you didn't like really mean it in
547 a way, and then in the letters they mention that kind of stuff and
548 you realize that it meant much more for them than it meant for you
549 and they see you as a better person than you actually like see
550 yourself [I: Okay yeah] so being, I don't know like, seeing that
551 perception of yourself through the eyes of another person is really
552 rewarding as well. Yeah, and it helps because sometimes you're like
553 you don't feel like you're actually making a change or sometimes
554 I'm like: 'oh I'm helping them but like, it's like, you know, it's not
555 really har-, how do you say that, not really heartfelt' it's like, I'm not
556 really putting any effort into this, I'm just being almost like a robot
557 but just the idea of being there it helps them, yeah. So, yeah.
558
559 I: So she is giving you a letter, how else does she tell you that she's
560 happy for your support? Does she like tell you face to face?

Interview Taylor

561

562 T: Oh she, yeah, like more, not in first and second year and not in
563 the beginning of third year but like more as we approached the end
564 of the year like right now, she was more able, like I said she was
565 very shy as well and social-, and she would be afraid even of, when
566 she would give me the letter like she would like give them, like put
567 them in my post box or like through my door, she wouldn't, she
568 would never be there to see my reaction and she would even make
569 fun of herself in the letters, being like: 'oh it was embarrassing, like
570 it was bit cheesy, all this kind of stuff', but I think she realized, I
571 make her realize that it was okay to talk about what you feel, I don't
572 know, sometimes it's a bit better, like come to the person directly
573 and talk to them, when it's through texts and stuff like that some
574 emotions don't really pass through it so I think it's yeah, I think she
575 realized that and she was more ready to talk about her feelings at
576 the end of the year, like these, like the stuff I told you about with
577 the doctor in Starbucks, it was, it was yesterday, and the letter was
578 yesterday evening as well, and I'd send her like an answer, like
579 saying thanks for the letter and that she shouldn't be too harsh on
580 herself, she should accept sometimes to be in low places, the only
581 thing she had to do is want to get out of these places, and she came
582 at the door and like she said, she said but in her own way, she's not
583 good with words like spoken words so she, I could see, like it's, it's,
584 it's just gestures and a look, all this kind of stuff, and I could see she
585 was being thankful and that's, sometimes that can mean the world,
586 you know just seeing the expression on someone's face, yeah, so
587 that's, yeah that's, I don't know, I don't know why people, I know
588 it's, it might feel like an effort. If you told me in first year that I
589 would have to go through all these stages with her for three years I
590 would, I might have run away, you know what I mean, basically but
591 I think it's worth, but I think it's worth it, I think people need to
592 realize that in helping other people, like that, people with social
593 anxiety, people with a different issue than you you're helping

Interview Taylor

594 solving your own issues which are different but like, yeah, just
595 helping each other basically in different ways, I was helping her by
596 being there for her and she was helping me by making me realize,
597 like giving me an insight in like her own way of coping, her own way
598 of, like her own issues basically and it was given me an insight on
599 my own way, basically helping her coping with her issues made me
600 approach mine differently. Yeah. Yeah.

601

602 **I:** Yeah. So what know when you're going back to France and she's
603 going back to-

604

605 **T:** She's going back to [city]. Where she's going to, it's fine because
606 she finds work, she found a job, she's very stressed about the fact
607 that she has to, you know when you basically go back to your
608 parents after having done three years on your own, you feel like
609 you're going to fall back into your old habits, but I told her it was
610 going to be okay because she was not the same person as she was
611 three years ago, now she had the tools, like she, I did, I told her it's
612 going to be as hard as, it's going to be hard and difficult, like
613 knowing, even if you're a changed person it's not going to make the
614 problems easier, it's just going to make, you just have the tools to
615 face them now, and I think she's ready, really, like yesterday
616 evening she really looked ready, she looked ready both to face the
617 obstacles and also ready to, she basi-, oh how to say that, she felt
618 ready to accept that she was going to go through bad, you know,
619 moments, like bad, she was going to have to go through bad places,
620 bad stages, but she accepted that now, I think the, what she had
621 through these three years was that she didn't accept being, feeling
622 weak basically and having this social anxiety, and that is something
623 she has to live with, I told her it was going to get better because she
624 was definitely on her way, if there's a sort of recovery, I don't know
625 if there's a sort of recovery from that kind of issues, but there's a
626 way of coping with them and I think she is definitely equipped now,

Interview Taylor

627 she's going to go through bad moments because she's only like 21,
628 22, I think 21 but I think she's ready now and I told her that, I was
629 only going to be, always going to be like in touch with her anyway,
630 now that we've got Skype and that kind of stuff, it felt a bit silly to
631 Skype when you were right next door, but I think that's something,
632 knowing that I'm going to be able to like talk to her and make fun
633 about the fact that I'm the old Master with the beard and stuff like
634 that, it's just comforts her in a way, yeah, it's just knowing that
635 someone is there for them, help them go through bad moments
636 and I think sometimes it helps them like dodge the anxiety attacks,
637 you know what I mean, I think they, these anxiety attacks are
638 triggered when they realize that when there's, no one's going to be
639 there to have them go through them, and when they know
640 someone's there it just calms them down, I think, yeah, so yeah.
641 Think she's equipped now but yeah, I think it was like a, it was a
642 long road, yeah, for her, yeah. Three years, I don't think we all go
643 through these three years the same way, I know that I went at uni
644 for three years at 21 and I think it helped me get the best out of it
645 because I was, I had already made the mistakes she made, you
646 know what I mean, through these three years before uni so like I
647 was working and stuff like that so it's a completely different
648 environment, so I think I was better equipped to go university and I
649 think people don't realize that, some people are too young to go to
650 university. You know they say university is the normal, the stuff that
651 follows A-levels and stuff here, but 18 years old is way too young to
652 get thrown into this world of societies and, and, you know groups
653 and yeah. Definitely.

654

655 **I:** Do you feel like that affected her in any way with the societies?

656 [T: Yeah] It's very social to be at uni.

657

658 **T:** Yeah, she felt like she had to belong to a group otherwise she
659 wouldn't want to belong to any and the problem is she like

Interview Taylor

660 [inaudible] wanted to try everything, but every time she did that
661 she felt like she wasn't, like basically these societies if you just join,
662 if you join several of them they feel like you are betraying them
663 because you have to be, you have to have the hoodie of the society,
664 all the sports you are joining, you know you have to be part of that
665 group, and she didn't want to be part of that, she wanted to have
666 friends from different places and different backgrounds and I think
667 university doesn't always allow you to do that, and I think her
668 mistake, even if she had social anxiety, her mistake was to choose a
669 flat, like in second and third year where she was on her own in it,
670 you know an apartment like that where you have people from
671 different, with backgrounds, problems and different personal ideas,
672 sometimes it's tough but when you need people to talk to they're
673 there, and I think her mistake, even though I was there I am still a
674 guy and I think she would have used, she could have used someone
675 who could go through the same kind of, because sometimes I didn't
676 have necessarily the words, you know, or I'm like kind of a bit too,
677 you know like: 'pull yourself together or' kind of like, I think
678 someone close to her, I think a girl would have been a real help [I:
679 Yeah] Yeah sometimes.

680

681 I: What do you think the difference would be there?

682

683 T: I think, I think girls have kind of words because guys think that
684 they have to keep this manly, you know, presence, so I think I was
685 basically like there as a big brother but she could have used a big
686 sister as well, and sometimes I was a bit too, I wouldn't say too
687 harsh but I was like, sometimes I tend to like try to kick people in
688 the butt to make them, you know, like pull themselves together and
689 I think, it's kind, it's a problem of phases, sometimes she needed a
690 kick in the butt, like you know, but sometimes needed just nice
691 words, and sometimes I wasn't on the same phase as them, as her,
692 you know what I mean, so I would kick her in the butt,

Interview Taylor

693 metaphorically, when she would need kind words, and I would give
694 her kind words when she actually needed to like you know be
695 woken up, a wakeup call, so, I don't know if it's based on my
696 personality or if it's a difference in the sex but I think even though
697 we're equal we're still different in the way we function sometimes
698 because of society, like we have to, sometimes I felt like I could
699 have comforted her the way she needed to but I was, there was
700 kind of a wall because, because I was a guy and she was a girl, you
701 know what I mean, and that was, I didn't mention that, but there
702 was a diffi-, like there was a problem at some point in the beginning
703 of third year because she started developing feeling for me, feelings
704 for me because I was the only person that was there for her, you
705 know what I mean, and I knew that, I knew that there wasn't, I
706 knew that what she mis-, what was mistaken for like gratitude and
707 friendship, she was, she was mistaking the gratitude and friendship
708 for kind of other feelings so it was kind of hard stuff to go through
709 as well, to deal with you'd say.

710

711 **I:** How did you deal with that?

712

713 **T:** At first it was easy to deal with because I wasn't in a relationship
714 and then when I got into a relationship I like, she went through one
715 of her worst stages because she was afraid, because I was in a
716 relationship, I wouldn't be there for her anymore, yeah, she was
717 really, really afraid of that, she was afraid that I had someone now
718 so she would like get in the background, but she didn't like realize,
719 that's what I told her, I was in a relationship but she [friend with
720 anxiety] was my friend so that's two different, completely different
721 things and for example when I was with [girlfriend] sometimes I
722 would put my friendship with this girl before when she was having
723 anxiety attacks because I knew she would need more, need me
724 more than my girlfriend would need me at this point, you know
725 what I mean, that's kind of, like I said, you're being torn between

Interview Taylor

726 two, and that can create tensions that wouldn't have been there if I
727 would have been a girl, you know what I mean, that's kind of the
728 stuff I was talking about.

729

730 **I:** Yeah, yeah, alright, I was thinking about something I wanted to
731 ask [T: Yeah tell me] but I forgot it. So I'm going to ask you
732 something else and then [T: Okay see if it comes back] I'll get back
733 to it. So, can you tell me if you experience that being friends with
734 someone socially anxious is different in any way to being friends
735 with someone who's not?

736

737 **T:** Well, I think it is because, it's a kind of best friend relationship
738 but different from the usual idea of people having a best friend,
739 when you're just friends it's like, I don't know how it is in Denmark
740 [where the interviewer comes from] but here people use friend a
741 bit too much, in France we use acquaintance when we know
742 people, I think most people, you don't know them really, you only
743 know the face or the mask they wear when you go outside with
744 them, when you go to party with them, you go to the cinema with
745 them and stuff like that, being friend with someone with social
746 anxiety is like, is like creating a relationship that's almost like close
747 to something as a big brother or child, parent-child relationship, I
748 would say because sometimes you feel like, sometimes you have to,
749 sometimes you have to be there for them just like they were your
750 young, your younger brother or younger sister, so it's really
751 different, you feel like you, there's a word for it, you're responsible
752 for them, you're not responsible for your friends, you know what I
753 mean, you're only responsible for your friends when they get
754 completely wasted and they start throwing up everywhere, that's
755 the kind of moments where you're responsible for them but that's
756 only a physical moment, with that person, my friend, it was like
757 feeling I was responsible for her both psychologically and physically,
758 so when she need support more psychologically, when she was,

Interview Taylor

759 needed like psychological support, like I said sometimes it wasn't
760 even about being there like physically, it was just by being there
761 psychologically on Facebook and, so it's different, it's a completely
762 different friendship, it's, you don't, you see them as friends, you see
763 them as, they're your friend but you see them as something else as
764 well, someone like, they're your friend, they're like your, your, like I
765 said, almost like a family member, yeah, you're responsible for
766 them, that's, that's the, you know the ancient, the ancient way of
767 thinking is that when you have a friend like that you're responsible
768 for them until like the end basically, yeah, yeah. So that's kind of
769 how I feel, yeah, I don't think I could like ever, I've made friends
770 here that I will probably forget about and they will forget about me
771 because of the distance, with people, persons like that you've
772 created, you've bonded through difficult, through hard times so I
773 don't think you can ever like end that friendship, yeah.

774

775 I: It's very, very close?

776

777 T: It's close but not close in a, I don't, like I've never been close-
778 close to people in my life because I haven't like, there's a lot of stuff
779 we haven't talked about, like there's a lot of stuff you've mentioned
780 to me for example your boyfriend or girlfriend, that's the kind of
781 closeness I don't have with her but I have, sometimes she, just a
782 few words and I know exactly what she's going through and I know
783 what I have to say, that's that kind of closeness, so you know, you
784 know them, you know how they function, they haven't told you
785 everything about their life but you don't need that, you don't need
786 to know that necessarily, yeah, so that's the kind of closeness of,
787 it's an emotional closeness, not a, not a, like you know not a
788 closeness of like knowing what they like, knowing what they like to
789 wear or what movies they like to watch, it's a different kind of
790 closeness, it's emotional.

791

Interview Taylor

792 I: Yeah, alright, I remembered my question.

793

794 T: Go for it.

795

796 I: Because you said the thing about providing support and balancing
797 like kind words with a kick in the butt [T: Yeah, mmhmm] can you
798 tell me more about that?

799

800 T: Okay, so yeah, definitely, well, sometimes the way, I wouldn't, I
801 wouldn't have been able to perceive that in first and second year
802 because I didn't know her enough so I was like I said really afraid of
803 saying the wrong stuff and then I started to perceive that
804 sometimes she was, when she was feeling, for example for her
805 dissertation, when she went through her dissertation, when she
806 was feeling, sometimes she was feeling very, very low and she
807 would, she wouldn't be able to go to the library and would have
808 anxiety, like social, like these social anxiety attacks because she
809 wanted to work surrounded by people but she couldn't because she
810 would sit in her apartment and she would be like: 'oh, I can't work,
811 it's not like, it's not working' you know, but she wouldn't, in these
812 moments it would be hard to tell if she was an anxiety attack or if
813 she was just having like what other people have sometimes, you
814 know, just feeling low or feeling lazy and tired and it was just like,
815 fishing for, fishing for like comforting words, in these moments at
816 first I was like comforting her and I would, I would notice that it
817 would just make her, there's a word for it, wallow, I think that's it,
818 there's a word like, wallow more into her like, like feeling anxious
819 and stuff, she would just wallow in it and just complain even more
820 about it and I would know it wasn't exactly the kind of other anxiety
821 attacks she would because usually after an anxiety attack she would
822 feel better, she would breathe and she would like try to like, you
823 know, comfort herself, like: 'okay, it's going to be fine' and stuff like
824 that, and these moments she would like wallow in that so I would

Interview Taylor

825 realize that she actually needed to, I wouldn't say harsh words but I
826 would be like: 'okay [name of friend], stop complaining now, you
827 need to realize that this assignment, you can't always feel at your
828 best at this assignment so you just, like, take a break, like take like,
829 work an hour, take fifteen-twenty minutes break, work another
830 hour, take a break', like I would like give this kind of advice but I
831 wouldn't like be, I wouldn't like say for example: 'oh, you're right,
832 that's tough, you know, dissertation is hard', I wouldn't do that, I
833 would be like: 'that's something you have to do, you can't do
834 anything about it, you have to do it anyway', so I would be like, it's
835 like kind of a wakeup call, yeah, I would be like, would shake her
836 basically instead of hug her in a way, psychologically but like I
837 mentioned sometimes I wouldn't be in a phase, you know when
838 you're feeling tired and stuff like that you tend to be more harsh,
839 and sometimes she would need, she would have an anxiety attack
840 and she would actually need comfort and I would give the kind of
841 military comfort, basically, wakeup call that she wouldn't need, and
842 sometimes it was the opposite, I would have been, I would have
843 comforting words and she would actually need a wakeup call so like
844 I said it's, it's something very, very hard to balance but I think this
845 is, like some people, like when we did Madness and this kind of the
846 module, I think, well, I have a first-hand experience with it with her,
847 sometimes they don't just need comforting words and hugs,
848 sometimes they really need someone that's there like I said to kick
849 them in the butt, like parents would do, some parents would do,
850 but their parents are not there, you know what I mean, so
851 sometimes she would need that and I think it's very important for
852 people dealing with other people with anxiety attacks, dealing with
853 friends like that, they need to realize that they just, they don't just
854 need someone that's there for them and like comfort them in bad
855 moments, they need someone that's also there to like get them out
856 of the mud or, you know, like I said kick them in the butt
857 metaphorically to push them forward, to force them to go forward,

Interview Taylor

858 yeah, I think it's important. Definitely. Not let them overindulge,
859 you know what I mean, like I said it's fine to be in a low place but
860 you have to want to get out of it, that's how, what I would repeat,
861 it's fine, sometimes there can go weeks where you feel like shit,
862 that's fine, just work towards a better state of mind, yeah.

863

864 I: And balancing between these two kinds of support, how do you
865 find that?

866

867 T: How do you find the balance, I think you, I think you sense it, you
868 know I think you sense it because when it's a proper full-blown
869 anxiety attack you know it, they just, they panic, they become
870 incoherent, you know, they ask for, they become incoherent about
871 stuff that wouldn't matter in another moment, you know like for
872 example someone bumped into or someone just winked at her at
873 the shop and it just you know, she got scared, all this kind of stuff
874 and it's, it's something that wouldn't have bothered her in a better
875 set of mind but that's bothering her now, I know it's not
876 overindulgence, I know she's having something she can't control
877 and I think in these moments you have to be there for her and just
878 listen sometimes, not even say anything, just listen, and in other
879 moments they're like, in these, sometimes when I wasn't sure I
880 would check, I would knock on her door and I would like assess, and
881 I would know because for the anxiety attacks she would have like,
882 she would shake, she would like be completely, like she would
883 sweat, shake, she would be like I said incoherent, she wouldn't
884 know what to do, where to sit, yeah, and when it was just like
885 basically being like, because she would also, I didn't mention that
886 but she wouldn't sleep well and with lack of sleep comes tiredness
887 and obviously she sees everything with a bad filter but you know:
888 'the world is shit' and you can't deal with normal stuff and
889 sometimes she would just be like, she would have, I wouldn't say
890 like normal problems where you have to do dissertation, you're

Interview Taylor

891 stressed, this kind of stuff, in that kind of moment I would know it
892 wasn't based on her social anxiety, it was just a human stress and in
893 these moments that's a wakeup call she needed, yeah. And I think
894 she would feel grateful for that, not in the moment, you know in
895 the moment she would like, kind of be like: 'that's not really what I
896 need' but then later on she would realize, she would always realize
897 that that's what she needed, yeah, but it's very hard to balance so
898 like I said you have to assess it, you can't assess through text or
899 Facebook, you have to assess it because like I said there is, when
900 they have these social anxiety attacks they have not just a
901 psychological reaction, they have a proper physical reactions to
902 that, they're like completely lost, yeah, and you can tell the
903 difference between an anxiety attack and just a stress meltdown,
904 you know, even though sometimes they're linked it's hard to tell
905 the difference. Yeah.

906

907 **I:** Alright, that's really interesting! I don't really have more
908 questions but if you have anything else that you can think of that
909 we've talked about and you want to talk more about, or anything I
910 should know on this subject.

911

912 **T:** What is exactly your focus?

913

914 **I:** My focus is how friends provide support for someone with social
915 anxiety and how they make sense of providing that support.

916

917 **T:** Okay [pause] I would say that, I'm trying to think of something
918 that would like direct, well, if I understand correctly it's about the
919 person with social anxiety but it's also about the perception of the
920 other person.

921

922 **I:** It's mostly about your [T: My perception] perception of being in
923 this friendship, yeah.

Interview Taylor

924

925 T: Okay, so maybe I haven't talked enough about that, like my
926 perception, I don't know.

927 I: It would be great if you would talk more about it.

928

929 T: Okay, so my perception of it, I think it's, if it's something you
930 don't have, social anxiety, I think it's almost impossible, it was
931 impossible to me, I couldn't say, I couldn't say, I couldn't say when
932 she was like having a social anxiety attack, I couldn't say: 'I know
933 what you feel, or I know what you're going through' because I
934 didn't know, and I wasn't lying, I wasn't lying to myself about that
935 or lying to her, to her I was like: 'I don't know what you're going
936 through' but whoever you are, whatever you are, whatever you,
937 you can always like comfort people, it's like it's silly because some
938 people feel like: 'oh she has like social anxiety or he has social
939 anxiety and I can't really think about it, I don't know the words, I'm
940 not a therapist or anything' but that's not how it works, they just
941 need someone who is here to listen and they just need presence,
942 and the way I perceived it is that it's good sometimes to feel like
943 you're making someone's life better, you know what I mean, even if
944 you don't have, I have no qualifications or anything, you know what
945 I mean, and sometimes her sessions would go very badly because
946 the, her like therapist, her therapist wouldn't say the right words or
947 wouldn't tell her what she wanted to hear, and I feel sometimes
948 you're like: 'okay, I'm able to, I'm more able to', everything the
949 therapist say, that they need to have like a very distant emotional
950 relationship with their patient, maybe that's true, so maybe we
951 need both for a good balance, we definitely need a friend that
952 understand, understands you and who's just able to listen and tell
953 you like I said, sometimes a wakeup call but sometimes you have to
954 tell them what they want to hear, you have to tell them that it's
955 going to be okay even if you have no idea if it's going to be okay or
956 no idea what you can do, and just that, the way I perceived that is

Interview Taylor

957 that, I don't know, it just makes you feel, it's silly but it makes you
958 feel better 'cause you're actually making someone else's life better
959 and just by being yourself, you know what I mean, you don't have
960 qualifications, you don't need qualifications, you don't need to go
961 to like huge lengths to help them, you just need to be a human
962 being basically and understanding that is just, it makes you feel
963 better about yourself but about humanity as well, you know, just
964 realizing that sometimes people they don't need like, they don't
965 need huge stuff to be done for them, they just need someone to
966 listen to the and be there for them, yeah. And especially for social
967 anxiety, I think it's like, specifically, I have like, the kind of stuff she
968 said specifically to me was that she couldn't be with more than four
969 people, or three people, because after that point she would feel
970 judged and that's because people act differently when they're in
971 more, in bigger groups, and that's when I realized that, sometimes
972 people are like: 'okay they have social anxiety so they need to be
973 left alone' but no, they need to have a presence but that's a small
974 presence, they don't need to be like surrounded like you see in
975 movies by all these friends and all that family, that's too much,
976 that's overwhelming, they just need that one person, or that two
977 people that are there for, for, for them, and I don't know, it's like,
978 another way of how I perceive it, like I said you feel like you're
979 need, you know what I mean, even if you have, even if you're failing
980 at your, at your degree or anything, you feel like you're making a
981 change, yeah, for one person, and some people are like they see
982 too big, they're like: 'oh, I want to change, I want to change like, not
983 the world but I want to change the perception of thousands of
984 people' but it starts with just one person, you know, your
985 understanding of that person, and I feel like I said I'm writing and I
986 wouldn't be able to like feeling I was raising awareness to a larger
987 group of people if I hadn't had that hindsight, that insight I mean,
988 in, in my friends social anxiety, you know what I mean, so
989 sometimes it's not about surrounding these people with lots of

Interview Taylor

990 friends and stuff like, it's just a one on one kind of relationship and
991 that one on one relationship give you better understanding on a
992 larger scale, yeah. And it helps you as well. I don't know, well, like I
993 said, it's, when I say that I just feel selfish, you know, when I say
994 that it brings something, it's rewarding, but I think if people
995 accepted that, accepted that that's the [inaudible] kind of reward,
996 like buying a gift for someone and seeing them happy about the
997 gift, that's rewarding, that's completely different, people need to
998 realize that you can get as much like from helping someone you can
999 get as much in return, and that's that kind of reward, you shouldn't
1000 feel bad about yourself about it because that's how you build your
1001 own character and your own understanding of people, your
1002 empathy basically. Yeah. [I: Yeah] Is that enough, good?

1003

1004 **I:** That's definitely, that is really, really good, it's really interesting
1005 everything you've said.

1006

1007 **[End of interview].**

1008

1009

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1013