

*Social Development***Social Situations: Anxiety Issues**

Developed by the Project Work Group

(Note: There is a vignette on the DVD based on this material.●)

Individuals who have fragile X syndrome can sometimes become anxious and nervous in social situations. It is important to help them learn to interact in appropriate ways, especially as they get older. One technique to address nervousness is deep breathing.

Helper: Nick, is everything all right? You look upset.

Nick: [Grunts]

Large groups of people make Nick nervous, and he may not know how to ask to leave. In fact, he may be able to communicate in such situations only with a grunt or even by yelling.

Helper: You know what? Large groups of people can make me a little nervous. Sometimes I feel confined and I want to yell. But usually all I need to do is take a few deep breaths—it really helps to calm me down. Do you want to try it?

Nick: [Taking deep breaths] That feels better.

Helper: If you need to, you can tell me, “There are too many people around. I want to leave for a while.” We can go outside for a bit, or even go for a short walk.

Nick: I'll try it. Thanks!

Nick may need to practice these skills with his helper when he is at home. His helper may need to prompt him the first few times he is in a large group. Eventually, Nick will do it on his own. This is a great skill for him to develop, and is important in developing his independence.
