



Social anxiety

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Some Symptoms of Social Anxiety		
Physical	Thoughts/Fears of	Behaviors/Actions
		
Racing heart Pounding heart Upset stomach Blushing Lump in your throat Dry mouth Sweating Trembling Shaky voice	Judgment by others Humiliation, embarrassment Being tongue-tied Making a fool of self Being found unattractive, stupid, boring etc., Shouldn't,, couldn't must not make a mistake in public	Avoid social situations (excuse, turn down) Arrive late, leave early Drinking to be prepared Offering to do the dishes so you don't have to make conversation Avoid eye contact Avoid telephone calls

Social anxiety is the fear of social situations that involve interaction with other people. You could say social anxiety is the fear and anxiety of being negatively judged and evaluated by other people. Being nervous or uncomfortable in a social situation can cause anxiety. Maybe you've clammed up when meeting someone new or gotten sweaty palms before making a big presentation. Public speaking or walking into a roomful of strangers isn't exactly thrilling for everybody, but most people can get through it. For many of you giving presentation in a class can be a problematic. This is social anxiety. You can call it social phobia as well.

Task: please google the term "phobia" and "fear" and differentiate them.

When Does It Happen?

Anyone with social anxiety may have different experiences it in different ways. But here are some common situations that people tend to have trouble with:

- Talking to strangers
- Speaking in public
- Making eye contact
- Entering rooms
- Going to parties
- Eating in front of other people
- Going to school or work
- Starting conversations
- Giving answers during lectures

Task: please identify the situations in which you are uncomfortable in your own life.

All socially anxious people have different reasons for being nervous about certain situations. But in general, it's an overwhelming fear of:

- Being judged by others in social situations
- Being embarrassed or humiliated -- and showing it by blushing, sweating, or shaking
- Being the center of attention

How It Affects Your Life?

Social anxiety disorder prevents you from living your life. You'll avoid situations that most people consider "normal." You might even have a hard time understanding how others can handle them so easily.

When you avoid all or most social situations, it affects your personal relationships. It can also lead to:

1. Low self-esteem
2. Negative thoughts

3. Depression
4. Sensitivity to criticism
5. Poor social skills that don't improve

Task: Please recall the experience from your own life related with social anxiety and its consequences.

Social Anxiety Disorder

Social anxiety disorder according to DSM 5.

DSM 5: a diagnostic and statistical manual for mental disorders.

Everything which is classified in DSM 5 is accepted in the whole world.

Task: please gain insight about DSM 5 and explain it in one paragraph. Paragraph should not be more than 5 lines.

According to the DSM-5, (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition), there are a total of ten diagnostic criteria for Social Anxiety disorder:

1. fear or anxiety specific to social settings, in which a person feels noticed, observed, or scrutinized. In an adult, this could include a first date, a job interview, meeting someone for the first time, delivering an oral presentation, or speaking in a class or meeting. In children, the phobic/avoidant behaviors must occur in settings with peers, rather than adult interactions, and will be expressed in terms of age appropriate distress, such as cringing, crying, or otherwise displaying obvious fear or discomfort.
2. typically, the individual will fear that they will display their anxiety and experience social rejection.
3. social interaction will consistently provoke distress.
4. social interactions are either avoided, or painfully and reluctantly endured.
5. the fear and anxiety will be grossly disproportionate to the actual situation.
6. the fear, anxiety or other distress around social situations will persist for six months or longer and
7. cause personal distress and impairment of functioning in one or more domains, such as interpersonal or occupational functioning,

8. the fear or anxiety cannot be attributed to a medical disorder, substance use, or adverse medication effects or
9. another mental disorder, and
10. if another medical condition is present which may cause the individual to be excessively self-conscious- e.g., prominent facial scar, the fear and anxiety are either unrelated, or disproportionate. The clinician may also include the specifier that the social anxiety is performance situation specific - e.g., oral presentations (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Prevalence

It is more common in females than in the males.

Risk Factors

The DSM-5 notes that temperamental qualities of fear of poor social evaluation is a risk factor for the development of social phobia. Child maltreatment, including peer abuse is a correlational risk factor for social phobia. There appears to be a genetic basis, though it could be speculated that social anxiety is also a learned behavior. Obesity has been identified as a risk factor in teens, as teens who are obese may experience peer rejection and develop social anxiety as a learned behavior.

Comorbidity

Comorbidity occurs with other anxiety disorders, depression and substance abuse disorders according to the DSM- 5. Other anxiety disorders can accompany Social anxiety, and social anxiety can lead to depression, due to loneliness, isolation, and inability to make social contacts. People may use drugs or alcohol in an effort to reduce their anxiety in social situations.

How to deal with social anxiety?

- Medicine
- Cognitive behavior therapy
- Acceptance and commitment therapy
- Psychoanalysis
- Group therapy

Medicine

several different types of medications are prescribed to treat SAD. Each has its advantages and disadvantages depending on your particular situation. Medicines will be beneficial in severe conditions.

Task: please find the role of Serotonin-Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs) in SAD (social anxiety disorder) answer should not exceed three lines.

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT is the first-line psychotherapeutic treatment for SAD. It is a form of psychotherapy designed to modify your thoughts and behaviors in order to positively influence your emotions.

3 Types of CBT Techniques

- 1. exposure**
- 2. cognitive restructuring**
- 3. social skills training**

Exposure

Exposure can take place either through imagining or experiencing a specific performance or social situation in real life. If you have extremely severe social anxiety disorder, you may begin with imagined exposure and eventually progress to real-life exposures.

The underlying principle of exposure therapy is that through practice and experience, you will become more comfortable in situations that you would otherwise avoid. Below are some exposure exercises that you can practice on your own. For example, if you avoid giving presentations or answering the questions in the class you have to imagine it in the first step for several times. After imaging you must have to practice in front of your family members only. In the third step you have to practice it in front of your friends and relatively a larger group. In the last step you have to try it in front of the whole class.

Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring focuses on the cognitive symptoms of SAD: Poor self-concept, fear of negative evaluation by others, and negative attribution bias

(attributing positive outcomes to chance and negative outcomes to your own shortcomings). Cognitive restructuring involves a series of exercises designed to identify negative thoughts, evaluate how true they are, and construct alternative thoughts to challenge original thoughts.

Social Skills Training

Social skills training involves various exercises such as modeling, rehearsal, and role-playing designed to help people learn appropriate behaviors and decrease anxiety in social situations. Areas that might be targeted for social skills training include eye contact, conversation, assertiveness, and telephone calls.

Task: please make a hypothetical CBT plan. Imagine a person or yourself with social anxiety. Plan an exposure treatment. Construct a cognitive restricting sheet. Design a social skill training exercise.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Through ACT, you learn how to accept negative thoughts and anxiety rather than trying to eliminate them. Therapy usually involves experiential exercises (in which you will take an active part), values-guided behavioral interventions (learning about what you value in life), and mindfulness skills training (becoming aware of the present moment).

Principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

There are six core principles of acceptance and commitment therapy. Below is an explanation of these principles and how they apply to the treatment of social anxiety disorder.

1; Cognitive Diffusion

Cognitive diffusion involves separating yourself from unpleasant "private experiences" such as thoughts, feelings, images, memories, urges, and sensations.

- If you typically have thoughts such as "I have nothing to say," or "Everyone thinks I am boring," your therapist will ask you to add the words "I am having the thought that..." to the beginning of these sentences.
- The new sentences "I am having the thought that I have nothing to say" and "I am having the thought that everyone thinks I am boring" give you some distance and reduces the impact of your thoughts so that you can see them as just words.

2.Acceptance

Acceptance means allowing your unpleasant internal experiences to come and go without trying to control them. Doing so will make them seem less threatening and will reduce their impact on your life. you have to accept unwanted experiences that are out of your control rather than struggle against them.

3.Contact with the Present Moment

Mindfulness refers to living in the here and now. You have to practice engaging in the present moment instead of becoming lost in your own thoughts. In the case of social anxiety, mindfulness can help you to be present in social situations and experience them to the fullest extent.

4.The Observing Self

You have to notice that you can observe yourself thinking. You are in control of your thoughts; they are not dangerous or threatening.

5.Values

You have to identify what you stand for, what is important to you and what has meaning in your life. In SAD you have to realize it that building relationships is important. Your performance in the present situation is important.

6.Committed Action

you have to commit yourself to action that is in line with your values, even if it causes you some distress. For example, someone with social anxiety disorder may set a goal to get together with a friend once a week and share something personal about themselves. Committed action involves setting goals based on your values and taking steps to achieve them. Being fully present in social situations is a form of exposure therapy and over time will reduce your anxiety. Taking action despite anxiety is another form of exposure therapy.

Task: assume a situation in which one can face social anxiety. Make an ACT sheet using 6 principles.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis involve a therapist helping you to understand underlying issues from childhood that may have contributed to your social anxiety. It is most useful for people who have faced some continues negative comments in their childhood by

their parents, teachers, cousins or relative. Comparison between children can also lead towards social anxiety disorder. Psychoanalysis will explore such events and resolve them. There is no reality in such evaluations. The main goal of psychoanalysis is to look for the evidence behind such negative comments.

Group therapy

You can seek help through joining different support groups. In such groups all participants have similar disorder.

Why Group Therapy helps with Social Anxiety

- You are not alone (group participants are also experiencing social anxiety)
- Learn through watching others
- Learn through helping others
- Easily practice facing fears in a safe, supportive environment
- There is accountability and encouragement when you are able to make your goals public

Please talk to someone if you have social anxiety disorder or a social anxiety. Meet a psychologist. Talk to your family. Seek help from friends. Don't feel shame about it. You can resolve everything because you are capable of overcoming your weakness.