

# Social Anxiety Disorder



## What is social anxiety?

Social Anxiety Disorder, also known as Social Phobia, is a clinical condition defined by the fear of being judged or embarrassed by others in social settings. Social anxiety is much more than feeling shy or nervous when meeting new people

and can be very impairing as it limits one's functioning and social interactions including at work and school. People with social anxiety worry about these types of situations regularly and their anxiety may actually prevent them from participating in activities that might require interacting with others. While many people with social anxiety recognize that their fears are excessive, they have a very difficult time controlling their anxiety. Similarly, people with social anxiety often desire to have closeness with others and be included in groups despite high levels of anxiety.

## What causes social anxiety?

The cause for social anxiety is not fully known, but is thought to involve a combination of neurobiological, cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors. Social anxiety sometimes runs in families and usually begins around adolescence. The following situations may contribute to its symptoms:

Speaking in public

Using a public restroom

Interacting with strangers

Eating in front of others

Ordering food at a restaurant

Calling someone on the phone

Initiating a conversation

Attending a social event or gathering

## What are signs and symptoms of social anxiety?

- ↳ Feeling fearful or anxious around other people
- ↳ Feeling unsure about what to say or how to act around others
- ↳ Feeling self-conscious about appearance
- ↳ Blushing or sweating when in social situations
- ↳ Difficulty initiating conversations
- ↳ Difficulty making or keeping friends or romantic relationships

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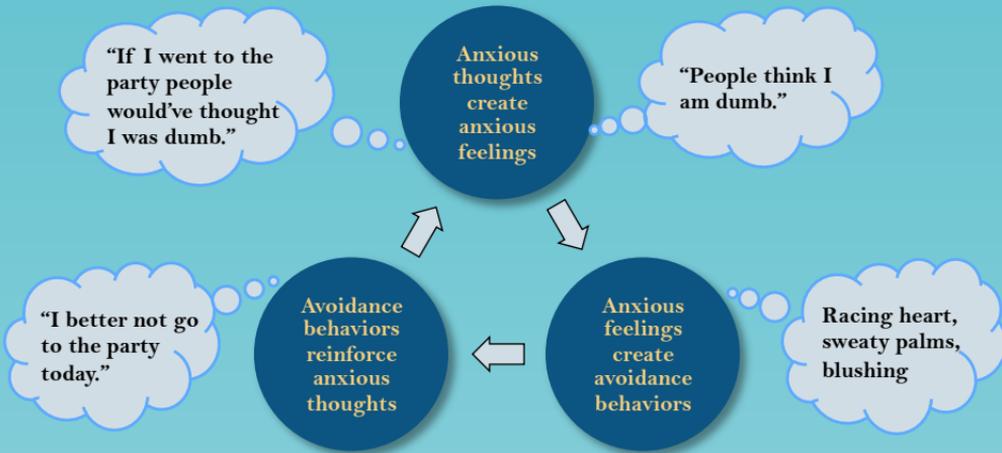
## How is social anxiety treated?

### Psychotherapy

Therapy can help improve anxiety by teaching effective coping strategies for dealing with the emotional and behavioral impacts of social anxiety. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a particular type of therapy found to be the most effective in treating social anxiety. CBT can help you change distressing thoughts and face social situations that you may have been avoiding.

### Medication

Certain medications may help treat symptoms of social anxiety. A type of medication called Serotonin-Selective Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) are considered the first-line medication treatment for social anxiety disorder. Be sure to talk to your doctor to determine if medication is an appropriate option for you.



## Who do I contact to find out more?

Referrals for therapy and medication management can be made by physicians, mental health professionals, other allied health professionals, or from a patient or family directly.

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