

Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Am I Experiencing Social Anxiety?



Description

Social anxiety disorder is characterized by persistent fear or anxiety concerning social or performance situations that is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the situation or context. Social anxiety is experienced by between 2 and 7 people out of every 100 (Stein, 2016; Kessler et al, 2005) but like many anxiety disorders, it is under-diagnosed and often goes unrecognized (Kasper, 2006).

DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder include:

- Marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others. Examples include social interactions (e.g., having a conversation, meeting unfamiliar people), being observed (e.g., eating or drinking), and performing in front of others (e.g., giving a speech).
- Relevant social situations almost always provoke fear or anxiety.
- The fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the social situation and to the sociocultural context.
- Relevant social situations are avoided or endured with intense fear or anxiety.
- The fear, anxiety, or avoidance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
- The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is persistent, typically lasting for 6 months or more.
- The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication) or another medical condition.

The ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder include:

- Marked and excessive fear or anxiety that occurs consistently in one or more social situations such as social interactions (e.g., having a conversation), doing something while feeling observed (e.g., eating or drinking in the presence of others), or performing in front of others (e.g., giving a speech).
- Concern about acting in a way, or showing anxiety symptoms, that will be negatively evaluated by others (i.e., be humiliating, embarrassing, lead to rejection, or be offensive).
- Relevant social situations are consistently avoided or endured with intense fear or anxiety.
- The symptoms result in significant distress about experiencing persistent anxiety symptoms or significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. If functioning is maintained, it is only through significant additional effort.

Am I Experiencing Social Anxiety? is an indicative screening tool, designed to help clients self-assess whether they might meet diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder or whether their experiences might warrant further investigation. It is not intended to give a formal diagnosis or provide a measure of severity.

Instructions

Suggested Questions



Some people who report similar experiences to yours have a condition called social anxiety. Would you like to try a short quiz that could give us an idea whether this is a problem that troubles you?

References

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Social anxiety should only be diagnosed by a mental health professional or a doctor. However, answering the questions below can give you an idea of whether you might find it helpful to have a professional assessment.

I avoid situations where I might be the center of attention.

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Fear of embarrassment causes me to avoid doing things or speaking to people.

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

When I'm with other people I worry about being embarrassed, looking stupid, or doing something to humiliate myself.

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

If I have to endure a social situation, it makes me feel very anxious.

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Speaking in front of a group of people makes me feel anxious.

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

If you answered 'often' to most of these questions, and you find that these fears cause hindrance in your life, you might be experiencing social anxiety. You might find it helpful to speak to your general practitioner, or a mental health professional about how you're feeling.

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