Information Handout

Professional Version | US English

Recognizing Social Anxiety Disorder

PSYCHOLOGY**TOOLS**®

Description

Psychiatric diagnostic frameworks serve multiple purposes. Classification of mental disorders enables clinicians and researchers to speak a common language when describing patterns of experience and behavior, guides appropriate treatment interventions, and acts as a coding system for insurance purposes. The success of these classification frameworks has varied across diagnoses but in the best cases has led to improved understanding and treatment of conditions, and has helped many service users who find such classification helpful (Perkins et al, 2018).

Diagnostic frameworks are not without controversy. They have been criticized on grounds of reliability, validity, and distortions due to commercial interests (Zigler & Phillips, 1961; Frances & Widiger, 2012; Bell, 2017). Perhaps most importantly there are instances where they have had, and continue to have, extremely negative effects upon service users (Perkins et al, 2018). Diagnosis is not the only way of understanding people and their experiences. Many clinicians and their clients find that attending to our personal stories and narratives is a helpful approach, and psychological formulation is one technique for bringing together information about what has happened to an individual and the sense that they have made of it (British Psychological Society, 2018).

Notwithstanding the above caveats, the '*Recognizing…*' series from Psychology Tools is designed to aid clinicians' understanding of the similarities and differences in the way that the two primary psychiatric diagnostic systems classify mental health problems. Their formatting for aid of comparison means that some detail has been purposefully excluded, and clinicians are encouraged to refer to the original source material for formal diagnostic purposes.

Social Anxiety Disorder is characterized by fear regarding social situations and individuals with social anxiety are concerned about negative evaluation from others. *Recognizing Social Anxiety Disorder* compares the DSM-5 and ICD-10 criteria for social anxiety and the *Social Anxiety Disorder Checklist* is an assessment tool for clinicians.

Instructions

The '*Recognizing…*' series from Psychology Tools is designed to aid clinicians' understanding of the similarities and differences in the way that the two primary psychiatric diagnostic systems classify mental health problems.

Their formatting for aid of comparison means that some detail has been purposefully excluded, and clinicians are encouraged to refer to the original source material for formal diagnostic purposes. In particular it has been assumed that symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment unless otherwise stated.

Information for the '*Recognizing ….*' series was drawn from:

• The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)*.

• The *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision (ICD-10)*. The ICD-10 is available in two versions: (1) The Clinical Descriptions and Diagnostic Guidelines (CDDG) or 'blue book' is intended for general clinical, educational and service use; (2) The Diagnostic Criteria for Research (DCR) or 'green book' was designed to facilitate research.

References

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Frances, A. J., & Widiger, T. (2012). Psychiatric diagnosis: lessons from the DSM-IV past and cautions for the DSM-5 future. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 8, 109-130.

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Recognizing Social Anxiety Disorder

Social anxiety disorder is characterized by fear concerning social situations. Individuals with social anxiety disorder are excessively concerned about scrutiny or negative evaluation from others. The DSM-5 and ICD-10 criteria diverge regarding the importance of secondary symptoms of anxiety.

	DSM-5	ICD-10
Symptoms	**5 of:**	**5 of:**
Marked fear or anxiety of social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others or will be the center of attention.	✔	✔
The individual fears that they will behave in a way, or will show anxiety, that will be negatively evaluated by others.	✔	✔
The social situations almost always provoke fear or anxiety.	✔	
The social situations are actively avoided or are endured with great difficulty.	✔	✔
The fear or anxiety is disproportionate to the actual dangers posed by the social situation, or is recognised by the individual as excessive or unreasonable.	✔	✔
Social situation provokes psychological / autonomic symptoms that are primarily caused by anxiety and are restricted to the social situation, or when thinking about the social situation.		✔

		3 of:*
Additional symptoms of anxiety		
1. Palpitations / accelerated heart rate		✔
2. Sweating		✔
3. Trembling / shaking		✔
4. Dry mouth (not as a consequence of medications or dehydration)		✔
5. Difficulty breathing		✔
6 Choking feeling		✔
7. Chest discomfort		✔
8. Nausea / abdominal discomfort		✔
9. Dizziness		✔
10. Derealization / depersonalization		✔
11. Fear of losing control / passing out		✔
12. Fear of dying		✔
13. Hot flushes / cold chills		✔
14. Numbness / tingling		✔
15. Blushing		✔
16. Fear of vomiting		✔
17. Urgency or fear of urination / defecation		✔

*At least two symptoms from 1 - 14, and at least one symptom from 15 - 17.

	DSM-5	ICD-10
Duration		
The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is persistent (typically at least 6 months).	✔	

Social Anxiety Disorder Checklist

	DSM-5	ICD-10
Symptoms	**5 of:**	**5 of:**
Marked fear or anxiety of social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others or will be the center of attention.	☐	☐
The individual fears that they will behave in a way, or will show anxiety, that will be negatively evaluated by others.	☐	☐
The social situations almost always provoke fear or anxiety.	☐	
The social situations are actively avoided or are endured with great difficulty.	☐	☐
The fear or anxiety is disproportionate to the actual dangers posed by the social situation, or is recognised by the individual as excessive or unreasonable.	☐	☐
Social situation provokes psychological / autonomic symptoms that are primarily caused by anxiety and are restricted to the social situation, or when thinking about the social situation.		☐

Additional symptoms of anxiety		**3 of:***
1. Palpitations / accelerated heart rate		☐
2. Sweating		☐
3. Trembling / shaking		☐
4. Dry mouth (not as a consequence of medications or dehydration)		☐
5. Difficulty breathing		☐
6 Choking feeling		☐
7. Chest discomfort		☐
8. Nausea / abdominal discomfort		☐
9. Dizziness		☐
10. Derealization / depersonalization		☐
11. Fear of losing control / passing out		☐
12. Fear of dying		☐
13. Hot flushes / cold chills		☐
14. Numbness / tingling		☐
15. Blushing		☐
16. Fear of vomiting		☐
17. Urgency or fear of urination / defecation		☐

*At least two symptoms from 1 - 14, and at least one symptom from 15 - 17.

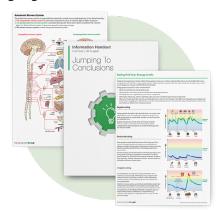|		
Duration		
The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is persistent (typically at least 6 months).	☐	

About us

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Our digital library encompasses information handouts, worksheets, workbooks, exercises, guides, and audio skills-development resources.

Our tools are flexible enough to be used both in-session and between-session, and during all stages of assessment, formulation, and intervention. Written by highly qualified clinicians and academics, materials are available in digital and printable formats across a wide range of languages.

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