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Social Anxiety Fact Sheet

Social anxiety is different for each person, and may manifest itself in different ways. Below is the diagnostic criteria for social anxiety.

1. The person has fear or anxiety in specific social settings in which they feel judged noticed or observed. In adults, this can include dating, meeting someone, or speaking in class or at work in a meeting.
2. The person fears that they will display that anxiety and be judged or rejected.
3. The interaction provokes distress and interactions are avoided or endured painfully.
4. The anxiety is disproportionate to the situation and causes distress and impairment.
5. The anxiety isn't due to drug use, a medication side effect, or a medical disorder or another mental health disorder
6. If another medical condition is present, the anxiety is not due to that condition or is disproportionate.
7. The anxiety must be present for six months or longer.

Social anxiety is treated in a variety of ways.

The model I use approaches social anxiety from the perspective of how your beliefs effect your behaviors. People with social anxiety believe they are inadequate, don't have appropriate skills or that people will judge them, and these beliefs are usually false.



People with social anxiety also believe that something bad will happen when they have feelings of panic or discomfort caused by anxiety, when they will not. They believe that they cannot handle the uncomfortable feelings. This is not true.

In turn people who have anxiety engage in avoidance behaviors that make them feel comfortable in the short term but worsen their anxiety in the long term. Once you understand this cycle you can make different choices.

Therapy focuses on:

- ***Identifying what you are believing and how you are behaving that is leading you away from making the choices you want to make to be happier.***
- ***Changing your beliefs and then your behaviors so you can begin to make different choices that help you reach your goals.***
- ***Building new skills to replace the avoidant behaviors.***