



Anxiety Disorders Information

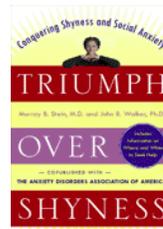
- Brief Overview of Anxiety Disorders
- GAD
- OCD
- PTSD
- Panic Disorder & Agoraphobia
- Specific Phobia
- Social Phobia
- Children & Adolescents
- Helping a Family Member
- Anxiety & the Elderly
- Guide to Treatment
- Medication
- In My Own Words
- Online Newsletter
- Anxiety in the Workplace
- Stats & Facts
- FAQs

Social Phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder)

Social Phobia is characterized by an intense fear of situations, usually social or performance situations, where embarrassment may occur. Individuals with the disorder are acutely aware of the physical signs of their anxiety and fear that others will notice, judge them, and think poorly of them. This fear often results in extreme anxiety in anticipation of an activity, a Panic Attack when faced with an activity, or in the avoidance of an activity altogether. Adults usually recognize that their fears are unfounded or excessive, but suffer them nonetheless.

Symptoms of Social Phobia manifest themselves physically and can include:

- palpitations
- tremors
- sweating
- diarrhea
- confusion
- blushing



Read an ADAA interview with John Walker, PhD, co-author, with Murray Stein, M.D., of the new book, Triumph Over Shyness: Conquering Shyness and Social Anxiety (McGraw- Hill 2001).

Available now through the ADAA Bookstore. Click to Order

Blushing when in social situations is particularly common and often causes the sufferer further embarrassment.

People with Social Phobia tend to be sensitive to criticism and rejection, have difficulty asserting themselves, and suffer from low self-esteem. The most common fears associated with the disorder are a fear of speaking in public or to strangers, a fear of meeting new people, and performance fears (activities that may potentially be embarrassing), such as writing, eating or drinking in public. Sufferers usually fear more than one type of social setting.

Onset of the disorder is usually in mid to late adolescence, but children have also been diagnosed with Social

Phobia. Children with the disorder (See "[Children & Adolescents](#)") are prone to excessive shyness, clinging behavior, tantrums and even mutism. There is usually a marked decline in school performance and the child will often try to avoid going to school or taking part in age appropriate social activities. Their fears are centered on peer settings rather than social activities involving adults, with whom they may feel more comfortable. For a child to be diagnosed with Social Phobia, symptoms must persist for at least six months.

[Take a Social Phobia Self-Test](#)  
[Find a Treatment Provider](#)

Anxiety Disorders Association of America  
8730 Georgia Avenue, Suite 600  
Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA  
Main # (240) 485-1001  
Fax # (240) 485-1035

© 2003 Anxiety Disorders Association of America.  
All Rights Reserved.