



Social Anxiety Disorder

Social Anxiety Disorder is a fear of failure in social interactions. People with Social Anxiety Disorder feel that they will be judged negatively when they have to do things around other people. Kids with Social Anxiety Disorder may feel unable to ask or answer questions in class or expect the worst in social interactions. This fear keeps kids with Social Anxiety Disorder from living their lives fully.

What causes it?

 Anxiety disorders may be caused by genetic factors (as they are more common among relatives) or environmental factors (linked to learned experiences or traumatic events).

What does it look like?

Social Anxiety Disorder occurs in about 7% of adolescents.

In a class of 35 students, 2 or 3 may have social anxiety that is interfering with their lives.

It's about twice as common in females as in males. Social Anxiety Disorder usually begins in middle or high school.

How can a professional help me?

Social Anxiety Disorder is treatable! Treatment involves therapy, medication, or both.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a treatment where a therapist helps you to detect and change negative thoughts about yourself. In CBT, you also practice doing the things that make you nervous so that little by little, the fear goes away.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) are the medications usually prescribed to help with Social Anxiety Disorder. These medications start working in 4-6 weeks, and you need to take them for about a year.



For more information visit:

How can I help myself?

Even before seeing a specialist, some of the CBT techniques can be done at home:

Knowledge is power! 

It can help to learn about anxiety and self-managing strategies.

Practice makes perfect! 

Little steps get you where you want to go. Try raising your hand in class once a week. Consider just going to a party for 15 minutes rather than feeling you have to stay for hours.

Reframe your brain! 

Try challenging negative thoughts about yourself. Is that thought accurate or is your brain focusing on the negative worries? Decrease hyperfocusing on social situations, and reject the idea that you must behave perfectly in every situation.

Flex your social muscles! 

You can notice and practice social skills to improve your confidence and choose friendships or relationships that make you feel your best.

How can a parent help me?



Help me reframe: They can help me notice cognitive traps, when I may be assuming the worst or when I feel like everybody is judging me.



Help me be brave: They can encourage me to take little steps, like ordering food when we go out instead of doing it for me, or practice making a phone call to set up an appointment.