

7 TIPS FOR LIVING WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY

Social anxiety is the second most common anxiety disorder experienced in Australia and is linked with poorer quality of life and wellbeing. If you're living with social anxiety, take a look at the following tips.

1 KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Social anxiety isn't just a case of extreme shyness. It's about experiencing intense fear or anxiety in relation to social situations, worrying about being evaluated negatively by others, avoidance of social situations, and it's about the negative impact it has on your career, education, and personal life..

2 TAKE ACTION...NOW!

How long have you lived with social anxiety? What impact has it had on your quality of life? On average, individuals with social anxiety wait for 15 to 20 years before seeking help. Rather than feel distressed for this long, take action now.

3 CHALLENGE YOUR AVOIDANCE

Feel better after avoiding a social situation? You may feel relieved, however over time your anxiety becomes more intense and affects you in a wider range of situations. Let's reverse this process by challenging the avoidance one step at a time.

4 RETHINK YOUR DRINK

Alcohol is often be used to cope with nerves before and during a social situation, but it's important to rethink your drink and take a good hard look at whether it's just another form of avoidance. How will you cope with social situations when drinking isn't an option?

5 CHECK YOUR THOUGHTS

Are your thoughts and thinking styles making your anxiety worse? Will one small mistake in your presentation really mean that you've made a fool of yourself? Will the worst case scenario necessarily come true? Check your thoughts when you start to feel anxious.

6 CONDUCT AN EXPERIMENT

Sometimes we maintain our beliefs because we don't have any evidence to the contrary. Rather than assuming that what we think is the case, let's get some real evidence by doing an experiment. So, if you think that people on the bus will stare at you, let's put that to the test to see. Chances are, you'll find evidence to the contrary.

7 SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

A lot can be done to help social anxiety. Psychological treatments such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) have been shown to be effective in the treatment of social anxiety. You can also speak with your medical practitioner to discuss pharmacological options. Given the options available for treatment, please take action before 15 to 20 years pass you by (see Point 2).

TO READ THIS ARTICLE IN FULL VISIT:
theskillcollective.com/blog/living-with-social-anxiety

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual (5th edition, DSM-5). American Psychological Association.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009). National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 4326.0. 2007. ABS: Canberra.
Craske et al. (2014). Randomized controlled trial of cognitive behavioural therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy for social phobia: outcomes and moderators. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 82,1034-1048.