

# DSM 5 Criteria for Social Anxiety Disorder

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM 5) serves as the primary classification system for mental health disorders used by professionals in the United States.

Below outlines the diagnostic criteria for Social Anxiety Disorder as outlined in the DSM 5.

A. Marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others. Examples include social interactions (e.g., having a conversation, meeting unfamiliar people), being observed (e.g., eating or drinking), and performing in front of others (e.g., giving a speech).

*Note: In children, the anxiety must occur in peer settings and not just during interactions with adults. The individual fears that he or she will act in a way or show anxiety symptoms that will be negatively evaluated (i.e., will be humiliating or embarrassing; will lead to rejection or offend others).*

B. The social situations almost always provoke fear or anxiety.

*Note: In children, the fear or anxiety may be expressed by crying, tantrums, freezing, clinging, shrinking, or failing to speak in social situations.*

C. The fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the social situation and to the sociocultural context.

D. The social situations are avoided or endured with intense fear or anxiety.

E. The fear, anxiety, or avoidance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

F. The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is persistent, typically lasting for 6 months or more.

G. The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., a drug of abuse, a medication) or another medical condition.

H. The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is not better explained by the symptoms of another mental disorder, such as panic disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, or autism spectrum disorder.

I. If another medical condition (e.g., Parkinson's disease, obesity, disfigurement from burns or injury) is present, the fear, anxiety, or avoidance is clearly unrelated or is excessive.

J. Specify if: Performance only: if the fear is restricted to speaking or performing in public.

## Notes

## References

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5(5).  
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2016). Table 16, DSM-IV to DSM-5 social phobia/social anxiety disorder comparison. [Nih.gov](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519712/table/ch3.t12/); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519712/table/ch3.t12/>