

**Do Now**

## Lesson 6: What is social anxiety and how do we manage it?



Kim's friends are planning a party and have just text her to invite her. Kim thinks it does sound fun, and she is free on the date, but after thinking about it has decided not to go.

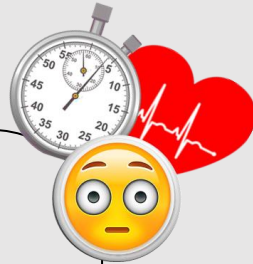
**Discuss:** If Kim is free on that date and thinks the party sounds fun, why might she have decided not to go?



Explain what you think we mean by the term 'social anxiety'.

*I think social anxiety means...*

# What is social anxiety and how do we manage it?



## Learning outcomes:

Identify what causes people to have social anxiety and the physical symptoms of the condition.

Explain how social anxiety is caused by chemicals in the body and reactions in the mind and the treatments available.



**Social anxiety** - an anxiety disorder in which a person has an excessive fear of social situations.

**Anxiety** - a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.

# What is social anxiety and how do we manage it?



## THORNDEN THREE – GUIDED READING!

Follow the text in your booklets. You will need this information in a moment to answer some questions



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### What is Social Anxiety?

Social anxiety disorder is much more than just being shy. It can be intense fear and [anxiety](#) over simple everyday activities, such as shopping or speaking on the phone.

Many people sometimes worry about certain social situations, but someone with social anxiety disorder will worry excessively about them before, during and afterwards. They fear doing or saying something they think will be embarrassing or humiliating, such as [blushing](#), sweating or appearing incompetent.

Social anxiety disorder often starts during childhood or adolescence and tends to be more common in women. It's a recognised disorder that can be effectively treated, so you should see your GP if you think you have it.

### Signs of social anxiety disorder

Teens and adults with social anxiety disorder may dread meeting strangers, talking in groups or starting conversations, speaking on the telephone, talking to authority figures and eating or drinking with company.

They might also have [low self-esteem](#) and feel insecure about their relationships, fear being criticised, avoid eye-to-eye contact or misuse drugs or alcohol to try to reduce their anxiety.

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### **Panic attacks**

The fear of a social situation can sometimes build up to a panic attack, where you feel an overwhelming sense of fear, apprehension and anxiety. This usually only lasts a few minutes. People can also experience physical symptoms, such as feeling sick, sweating, trembling and [heart palpitations](#). These symptoms often reach a peak before quickly passing. Although these type of symptoms can be alarming, they don't cause any physical harm.

### **What kind of help might someone with social anxiety be offered?**

- **Cognitive behavioural therapy**

If you think you may have social anxiety disorder, you should try to see your GP for help. If you've been diagnosed with social anxiety disorder, there are a number of different treatment options available. [Cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#) is one of the most effective treatments for social anxiety disorder. Generally, CBT works by helping you identify unhelpful and unrealistic beliefs and behavioural patterns. You and your therapist work together to change your behaviour and replace unhelpful beliefs with more realistic and balanced ones. CBT teaches new skills and helps you understand how to react more positively to situations that would usually cause you anxiety.

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- **Antidepressants**

Some people may benefit from trying a type of [antidepressant medication](#), usually a [selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor \(SSRI\)](#), either instead of or in combination with individual CBT.

SSRIs increase the level of serotonin in your brain. They can be taken on a long-term basis.

As with all antidepressants, SSRIs can take several weeks to start working. You'll usually be started on a low dose, which will gradually be increased as your body gets used to the medicine.

- **Psychotherapy**

If all of the above interventions aren't right for you, for whatever reason, you may be offered interpersonal [psychotherapy](#) or short-term psychotherapy specifically designed for social anxiety disorder. Psychotherapy generally involves talking to a trained therapist either one-to-one, in a group, or with your wife, husband or partner. It allows you to look deeper into your problems and worries, and deal with troublesome habits and a wide range of mental disorders.

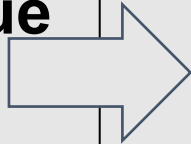
Interpersonal psychotherapy aims to link social anxiety to relationship problem areas and address these. You'll probably be offered 16-20 sessions over four to five months.

Short-term psychotherapy for social anxiety disorder aims to improve your social skills, and encourage you to face feared social situations outside therapy sessions. A course of treatment usually consists of 25-30 sessions that last 50 minutes, over a six- to eight-month period.


**So why is social anxiety on the increase? Is this due to social media?**

**Watch the clip and then complete the table with your partner. Be prepared to discuss with the class.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkwkmzQ4GRs>



Complete the table with your partner. Be prepared to discuss with the class.  
If you run out of space, continue your idea in your book.



Problem:	Why this causes social anxiety	What could be done to combat this?
More and more people are feeling lonely and isolated, Covid worsened these feelings.	Social situations become unusual occurrences, making us no longer used to socialising and feeling uncomfortable.	Exposure therapy – try attending small social gatherings with people you are comfortable with, a little at a time.
People seem more successful than us on social media.		
Photo-shopping and airbrushing is very common.		
We can communicate with friends quickly without going outside.		
Add one of your own:		





## What did we think? Let's share our ideas:

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<b>Photo-shopping and airbrushing is very common.</b>		
<b>We can communicate with friends quickly without going outside.</b>		
<b>Add one of your own:</b>		

# Need Support? You're Not Alone

If anything in today's lesson has affected you, or you want to talk to someone, there is help available.



## **Mental Health & Low Mood**

YoungMinds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>  
Kooth – <https://www.kooth.com>  
Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>

## **Talk to Someone**

Your Tutor or Head of Year – We're here to help.  
Wellbeing Team and School Nurse  
Report a Concern on Satchel  
Safeguarding Team with the Purple lanyards

## **Healthy Lifestyle**

NHS Every Mind Matters – <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>  
Change4Life – <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

## **Apps That Can Help**

Calm – For mindfulness and sleep.  
Headspace – Meditation and stress relief.  
Clear Fear – Manage anxiety (designed for young people).  
MeeTwo – Anonymously talk to other teens, moderated by experts.

## **Eating Concerns**

Beat Eating Disorders –  
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>  
NHS Live Well – Eating Disorders –  
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/eating-disorders/>