

MindBeacon Therapist Guided Program Social Anxiety

WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY?

Being the centre of attention is uncomfortable for some, and nerve wracking for others. In fact, public speaking is one of the most common fears people have. While any form of social performance can make a lot of us socially anxious, these fears might not ever rise to the level that they could be classified as a disorder.

Some people, on the other hand, are painfully shy and self-conscious, and fear being judged, embarrassed or humiliated. As a result, they may avoid social and performance settings, or if they cannot do so, struggle to cope. People who experience very high levels of social anxiety, so that it causes a lot of distress and interferes with how they would like to live their life, may have what is called Social Anxiety Disorder.

People who experience social anxiety may hold back from social, romantic or career opportunities – whether in the day to day or in terms of broader life goals.

PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY IN CANADA & WORKPLACES

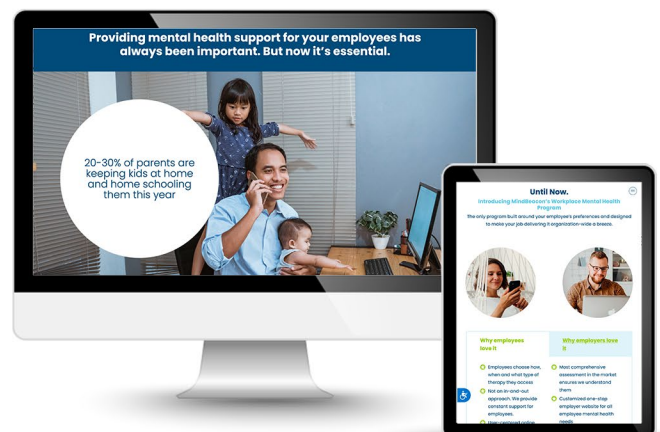
Shyness and fear of negative evaluation are very prevalent. We anticipate that these concerns have increased after the period of lockdowns and social isolation, and especially in preparation for reopenings.

According to Statistics Canada, the lifetime prevalence rate of Social Anxiety Disorder in Canada ranges from 8% to 13%.¹ This means for every 100 hundred people you employ at your firm, on average 8-13 may have suffered from Social Anxiety Disorder at some point in their lives.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The social anxiety program is based on principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), the most studied and best supported nonpharmacological treatment (treatment without the use of medication) for social anxiety. The program provides 12 weeks access to our platform and includes exercises, information and reading materials, as well as worksheets. The entire program is completed under the guidance of a therapist who helps to tailor the material to individual clients so that they are empowered with a toolkit of skills to carry into the future.



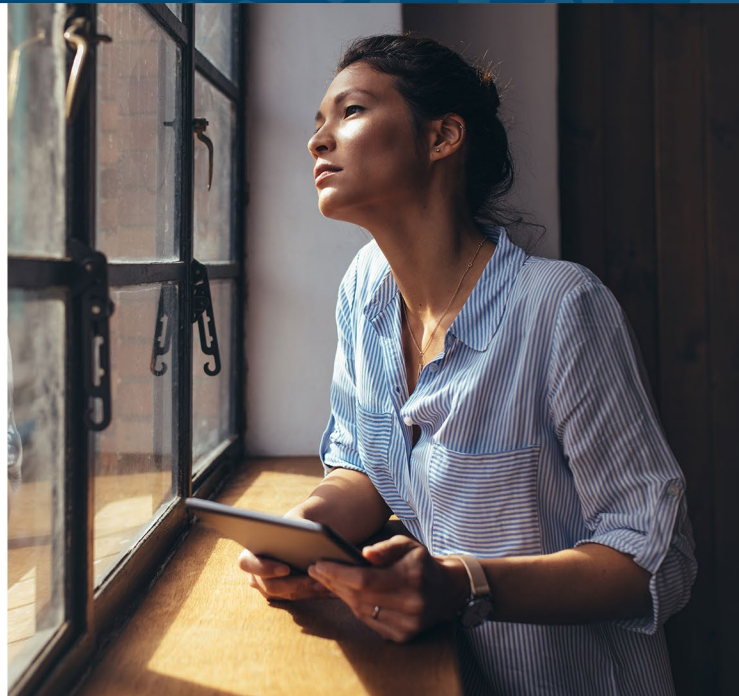
¹ Section b - anxiety disorders. (2015, November 27). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-619-m/2012004/sections/sectionb-eng.htm>

WHO SHOULD ENROLL?

This program can serve a range of individuals who identify social anxiety as an issue – from those who experience excessive shyness or self-consciousness, to those who endorse symptoms meeting criteria for Social Anxiety Disorder.

In the workplace, employees with social anxiety may struggle with or seek to avoid some of the below:

- ✔ Settings that include performance evaluations
- ✔ Public speaking, presentations, or any type of performance in front of an audience
- ✔ Participating in job interviews
- ✔ Making eye contact
- ✔ Being the centre of attention in social settings
- ✔ Eating or drinking in front of others
- ✔ Interacting with strangers
- ✔ Expressing opinions or displaying assertiveness
- ✔ Interacting with people of authority
- ✔ Making small talk



SOCIAL ANXIETY PROGRAM TOOLKIT & MODULES

Topics covered in the social anxiety program include:

- ✔ Understanding social anxiety
- ✔ Understanding the patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that keep social anxiety going
- ✔ Setting individual goals
- ✔ Redirecting attention
- ✔ Challenging social anxiety thoughts
- ✔ Approaching situations that trigger social anxiety

RESEARCH BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

MindBeacon is committed to evidence-based care. Our programs are developed by clinical psychologists with expertise in CBT, research evidence, and the issues we address in therapy. The social anxiety program has recently been updated to reflect best practices and to meet changing client needs.



SOCIAL ANXIETY FAQS – YOUR MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Is social anxiety a disorder?

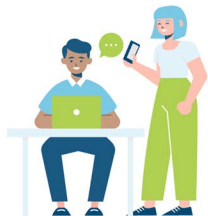
While social anxiety is a fear of judgement and humiliation related to social performance, these fears might not ever rise to the level that they could be classified as a disorder. If the levels of social anxiety cause a lot of distress or interfere with how a person would like to live their life, this may be classified as Social Anxiety Disorder. A diagnosis of Social Anxiety Disorder can only be given by licensed mental health professionals. Our program is designed to help individuals struggling with social anxiety, whether or not their symptoms meet criteria for a diagnosis of Social Anxiety Disorder.

Are social anxiety and anxiety the same?

Anxiety is a universal emotion that occurs when people encounter possible threat, danger, or uncertainty. Anxiety affects physical responses, thinking processes, and behaviour. Social anxiety refers to anxiety that is experienced in social situations, particularly related to fears of judgement, humiliation, or embarrassment.

Are social anxiety and shyness the same thing?

According to the American Psychological Association: "Shyness is the tendency to feel awkward, worried or tense during social encounters, especially with unfamiliar people."² So, although shyness and social anxiety are not the same thing, social anxiety can be considered as a case of excessive shyness or self-consciousness.



Can social anxiety be cured?

Social anxiety can be treated by trained mental health professionals. Untreated social anxiety can cause prolonged distress and missed opportunities. It can also be associated with depression, increased alcohol or substance use, or other difficulties. According to the Canadian Association of Mental Health (CAMH), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is the most effective form of treatment for Social Anxiety Disorder.³

How common is social anxiety in Canada?

According to Statistics Canada, the lifetime prevalence rate of Social Anxiety Disorder in Canada ranges between 8% and 13%.¹ This means for every 100 hundred people in Canada, on average 8-13 may have suffered from Social Anxiety Disorder at some point in their lives.

Is Social Anxiety considered a disability in Canada?

According to Disability Credit Canada⁴, "if symptoms become disabling, many can seek financial support for treatment through the Canadian disability tax credit".

What is the difference between social anxiety and introversion?

While some people are born as introverts, social anxiety is developed. According to the Canadian Association of Mental Health (CAMH), symptoms of Social Anxiety Disorder usually appear prior to the age of 18.³ Introverts will make the active choice to keep to themselves, given the opportunity. Social anxiety, on the other hand, is not a choice. In social anxiety, the fear of judgement prevents people from doing things in their lives that they would like to do.

² Shyness. (n.d.). Retrieved April 13, 2021, <https://www.apa.org/topics/shyness#:~:text=Shyness%20is%20the%20tendency%20to,encounters%2C%20especially%20with%20unfamiliar%20people.&text=Some%20people's%20shyness%20is%20so,in%20relationships%20and%20at%20work.>

³ Social anxiety disorder. (n.d.). <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/social-anxiety-disorder>

⁴ Dcci. (2021, February 08). Disability tax credit for anxiety disorders: Feel better today. <https://disabilitycreditcanada.com/disability-tax-credit-eligible-conditions/anxiety-disorders/>