**Key Influences:**

* Genetics
* Environment
* Trauma
* Prolonged Illness

Symptoms:

* Fearfulness of judgement
* Worrying days or weeks before an event where other people will be
* Nausea around groups of peers
* Blushing, sweating, or trembling around other people
* Severe avoidance

Behavioral Inhibition – the consistent tendency to demonstrate fear and withdrawal in novel situations

Desensitization – refers to experiencing an event until it fails to evoke any anxiety at all; commonly used with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Graduated Exposure – a series of steps building on each other to expose an individual to a fear that allows you to control your fear at each step until it no longer evokes a response

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – refers to thinking or learning; through repetition, an individual can take what he or she was taught and practice until it becomes automatic

## Terms to Remember:

**April 2018**

By: Christina Semanchik

Social phobia, sometimes known as social anxiety, is a disorder marked by a fear of social or performance situations in which they expect to feel embarrassed, judged, rejected, or fearful of offending others.  The feelings can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships.

# What is a social phobia?

*A Teacher’s Guide*

### Social Phobia

If you have questions or concerns about social phobia or other mental health disorders, be sure to visit sbbh.com!

Students today are engrossed in technology. Whether it is social media, online gaming, or just searching the web, students are comfortable with online platforms.

* Flip Grid – a video portal. This allows teachers to pose short discussion-like questions to students via video board. Each student records a “grid” in response to a teacher’s question. Students can then watch their peers’ responses and comment further. This can be a useful tool for students with social phobia. While it is may be daunting to raise a hand in class and express thoughts, Flip Grid gives students the opportunity to share and learn together from the comfort of their own setting.
* Socrative – student response tracker. This can be used to survey students in class. An administrator can pose questions to the class. Each student responds and results are displayed as a class. With a computer, laptop, cell phone, or other tech device, students are free to share opinions anonymously.

## Tools for Accommodating Social Phobia in the Classroom

A Case Study

Iyuana Donnell is a 16 year- old female in Mrs. Smith’s class. Mrs. Smith notices Iyuana has frequent absences and when she is in class, she does not participate. Sometimes, she even leaves class for long periods of time. Mrs. Smith wants to connect with Iyuana but is not sure how to properly approach this situation.

Mrs. Smith decided to ask staff about their experience with Iyuana as a student. Mrs. Smith learned that Iyuana is new to the area. Iyuana’s family recently moved to this school district and she is a predominant Spanish speaker. Iyuana is not confident in her English speaking abilities. This has led to an increase in social anxiety in school and especially around peers.

How can Iyuana be supported?

After learning about her social phobia, Mrs. Smith arranged for Iyuana to receive one-on-one tutoring sessions. She also began slowly engaging with Iyuana to gain her trust and build rapport. When Iyuana was in class, Mrs. Smith arranged for the class to break up into small groups. One on one conversation with peers seemed less daunting to Iyuana than full on class interaction.

These supports have helped Iyuana build confidence in the classroom. She now has stronger relationships with peers, less school absences, and higher levels of academic engagement.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What do I do if I think a student has social phobia?

If you suspect a student has social phobia, it is important that you talk with other school staff. Other faculty may be able to give insight into a student’s past history. School psychologists, guidance counselors, or even emotional support staff can shed light on a student’s personal challenges. Further, if you are still unsure of a student’s mental health diagnosis, use this as an opportunity to build rapport. As educators, we cannot diagnose a student but we can give them the proper support needed in the classroom.

What are the best interventions for this?

Common interventions associated with social anxiety disorder are cognitive behavioral therapy, CBT, and graduated exposure. Both CBT and graduated exposure use an approach that exposes an individual to their fear until it no longer evokes a response. As educators, we do not conduct these interventions. Social anxiety disorder can only be assessed and treated through a mental health clinician.

Can you outgrow it?

Social phobia can be managed and improved over time. With the help of an intervention administered by a mental health clinician and classroom supports, a student can learn to overcome the inner fears of social interactions. A student can emerge with newfound confidence and social presence.



**Annotated Bibliography**

Social Phobia Resources

Christina Semanchik

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| APA Citation | . <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Anxiety-Disorders> |
| Topic/Purpose | This is a great resource for teachers to understand the basics of social anxiety disorder. It covers all aspects of the disorder and sheds light into the realities of what students with SAD may be going through.  |

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| APA Citation | <https://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/social-anxiety-disorder> |
| Topic/Purpose | This article is helpful in understanding how a teacher can support a student with social phobia. It discusses what it may look like in the classroom, how it is treated, and ideas for supporting individuals with social phobia.  |

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| APA Citation | Masia-Warner, C., Klein, R. G., Dent, H. C., Fisher, P.H., Alvir, J., Albano, A. M., & Guardino, M. (2005).  School-based intervention for adolescents with social anxiety disorder: Results of a controlled study. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 707-22. |
| Topic/Purpose | This article focuses on social anxiety disorder’s peak during adolescence. This peak ultimately affects students as they transition into the secondary level. When teaching the secondary age group, it is important to understand the underlying effects of social anxiety disorder during adolescence. |

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| APA Citation | Tillfors, M., Persson, S., Willen, M., & Burk, W. (2012). Prospective links between social anxiety and adolescent peer relations. *Journal of Adolescence*, 1255-1263.  |
| Topic/Purpose | This shares insight into peer relationships for individuals with social anxiety. As a teacher, it can be helpful to understand how social phobias can affect relationships with peers. Often, other students may view a student with social phobia as distant. This may lead them to leave them out of social groups. It may be relatable to their classroom experiences and peer dynamics within the classroom. |

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| APA Citation | Burnstein, M., Ameli-Grillon, L., and Merikangas, K.R. (2011). Shyness versus social phobia in US youth. *Pediatrics. 128*(5), 917-925. |
| Topic/Purpose | Due to social phobia’s prevalence in the United States, teachers may come across social anxiety more and more. This resource highlights how common this mental health disorder is.  |

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| APA Citation | Silverman, W., Pina, A., & Viswesvaran, C. (2008. Evidence-based psychosocial treatments for phobic and anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 105-130.  |
| Topic/Purpose | A teacher may wonder what resources or treatments are available for students with social phobia. This resource describes treatment options and how children and teens can receive this treatment. As previously mentioned, this covers CBT and gradual exposure as effective interventions.  |