

Coping With Social Anxiety In School

Social Anxiety is a serious but common condition that affects students — but there is plenty you can do about it. Here is what you need to know.

“Social anxiety occurs when a student is unusually anxious or fearful in social situations. While nearly everyone experiences anxiety at least occasionally, having social anxiety tends to affect academic performance, social activities and relationships.”

Signs of Social Anxiety

Social anxiety can disrupt the person’s quality of life. A student with social anxiety may:

- Be afraid of being judged
- Dread talking to strangers
- Be afraid of being embarrassed or humiliated
- Avoid doing activities he or she would normally enjoy
- Avoid attracting attention
- Worry about upcoming activities or events
- Experience intense anxiety about participating in social activities

[mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/social-anxiety-disorder/symptoms-causes](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/social-anxiety-disorder/symptoms-causes)



Impact

A surprising number of students have social anxiety:



Nearly **40%** of undergraduate students are affected



About **25%** of undergraduates suffer depression and anxiety



Over **7%** of children 3-17 years old have diagnosed anxiety

[insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2020/08/19/students-reporting-depression-and-anxiety-higher-rates](https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2020/08/19/students-reporting-depression-and-anxiety-higher-rates)
[cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data](https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data)



Students with social anxiety:

- Are more likely to be bullied
- Tend to have fewer friends
- May underachieve academically
- Are more likely to leave school early
- Often replace face-to-face contact with social media and digital communication

journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone

Coping

If you have social anxiety, here are some ways you can learn to help overcome it. You can:

- Acknowledge the problem
- Identify your stress triggers
- Relieve stress with breathing exercises and/or music
- Think positively about yourself
- Build friendships one at a time
- Be a good listener by asking people lots of questions
- Find a support group — You are not alone!
- Practice! Put yourself in social situations gradually
- Be mindful and live in the moment
- Use online education programs if necessary
- Join clubs/groups
- Celebrate your successes
- Don't get discouraged by setbacks

[goodtherapy.org/blog/social-anxiety-college-students](https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/social-anxiety-college-students)
[health.harvard.edu/blog/anxiety-in-college-what-we-know-and-how-to-cope](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/anxiety-in-college-what-we-know-and-how-to-cope)
[verywellmind.com/how-do-i-get-help-for-social-anxiety-at-college](https://www.verywellmind.com/how-do-i-get-help-for-social-anxiety-at-college)