



## FACT FILE

# SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

## WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER?

Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is a specific anxiety and fear of social situations. It is specific to social situations that someone perceives to present some form of threat.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

### **Psychological Symptoms:**

- Avoidance of certain situations
- Distressed and withdrawn
- Observing rather than taking part

### **Physical Symptoms:**

- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Dizziness
- Sweating

## STRATEGIES

### **Understanding Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors**

Help the young person to understand what thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are. It is important to recognize that thoughts are not factual and the person actually has a level of control over them.

### **Identifying Unhelpful Thinking Styles**

Identify whether the young person is using unhelpful thinking styles. Are they disqualifying the positives? Is he or she trying to read minds or predict the future?

### **Reality Testing Experiments**

Help the young person to identify a fear in a situation and test that fear. This develops the young person's ability to see a situation for what it really is rather than what he or she is worried it will be.

### **Social Skills**

Provide sentence starters to help the young person initiate conversations, respond to someone, and ask follow-up questions.