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Social Anxiety/Excessive Shyness

You have a fear of public speaking that has limited your ability to move ahead in your career and education... The fear of public speaking is the number one fear in America. Are you painfully shy? Do you just wilt when you have to make a phone call, hand in a job application or attend a family gathering? Is your child petrified of going to any social event? Does she cling to you unlike all the other kids her age? You and your child may suffer from social anxiety, a very treatable condition. You can teach yourself to overcome those fears of being judged and humiliated.

Social Anxiety, which may be better recognized by many as excessive shyness, involves intense and paralyzing concern about appearing foolish or doing something to embarrass or humiliate oneself. Children with Social Anxiety are very self-conscious in social and performance situations, and generally try to avoid them. School, family gatherings, church and public places may elicit fears about being evaluated and ridiculed. Tyler, the 17-year-old in Chapter 2 who is aloof, is anxious about how he is perceived by his peers.

Signs and symptoms of Social Anxiety

- ❑ Intense fear of social and performance situations
- ❑ Avoidance of social situations
- ❑ Concern about humiliation or embarrassment
- ❑ Anticipation or exposure may provoke a panic attack

Indications of Social Anxiety in school:

In school, children with Social Anxiety may present as painfully shy, hesitant, passive and intensely uncomfortable when they are in the spotlight. They may interact and converse minimally with peers, and may appear isolated and on the fringes of the group. They may be the ones to sit alone in the cafeteria, and hang back in the shadows on the playground. Relatively routine events such as being called on to read or answer in class may elicit panic-like distress. School situations involving large numbers of peers such as public speaking, gym classes, extracurricular activities, the cafeteria, library or playground, are petrifying for children with Social Anxiety.

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