

Holiday Parties Make You Squirm? Here's How To Conquer Social Anxiety

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Whereas people with [generalized anxiety](#) experience fear-driven worries about life circumstances, those with social anxiety see themselves through a distorted lens of self-doubt, shame and a fear that others are scrutinizing and judging them harshly, [researchers](#) say.

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Research by clinical psychologist [David Moscovitch](#), a professor at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, Canada, suggests that social anxiety disorder's fears loosely fit into [four broad categories](#): worries about perceived flaws in physical appearance, perceived flaws in social skills and behavior, perceived personality flaws, and a perceived inability to conceal all that anxiety. In people with social anxiety disorder, these fears persist for six months or more.

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This [persistent, fictional belief](#) that one is a fraud and is about to be mocked and abandoned leads to "flight behaviors," says [Stefan Hofmann](#), a clinical psychologist and anxiety researcher at Boston University.