

Social Situation Fear Hierarchy

As you've learned, social anxiety disorder is characterized by excessive fear of social situations in which an individual may be judged or negatively evaluated by others¹. Examples of these situations include public speaking, meeting new people, having a conversation, disagreeing with others, speaking to authority figures, or being observed, like while eating or drinking in public or using a public restroom. Identifying specific situations that make you anxious is an important first step in designing experiments and interventions to help reduce your anxiety.

This worksheet has two parts. First, using the **Social Anxiety Situation List** chart below, write down all of the social situations that make you feel anxious in the column labeled **Social Situations**. Be sure to select situations that reflect a range of slight, moderate, and severe anxiety. Next, rate the level of distress you typically experience in each situation from **0 (no anxiety) to 100 (maximum anxiety)** in the column labeled **Distress**. Finally, keeping in mind that individuals with social anxiety experience social interactions with such intense dread that they may attempt to avoid certain situations altogether, indicate whether you avoid the situations you've identified by writing **Yes or No** in the column labeled **Avoided** as a way to further assess the extent of your anxiety in these situations.

Social Anxiety Situation List

Social Situation	Distress (0 to 100)	Avoided (Yes or No)

¹ American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>

Now, transfer your Social Anxiety Situation List onto the **Social Situation Fear Hierarchy** table below in order from the situation that causes you the least to the most anxiety. Then, in the column labeled **Automatic Thought**, write down the anxious thoughts or fears you have in each situation. Finally, in the column labeled **Goal**, write down how you would like to feel, think, and/or behave in each situation in the future. You and your therapist can then use the information contained in this table as the basis for therapy goals, as well as the experiments and interventions used to accomplish those goals.

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	Social Situation	Distress (0 to 100)	Avoided (Yes or No)	Automatic Thought	Goal