

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)

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The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS) is a 24-item, self-rated scale used to assess how social anxiety plays a role in your life across a variety of situations. The LSAS was developed by psychiatrist and researcher Dr. Michael R. Liebowitz.

The scale might be used in research studies to determine the level of social anxiety experienced by participants, in clinical settings to assess a particular patient's symptoms, or by people who are concerned that what they are experiencing might be the [signs of an anxiety disorder](#).

Experts now recommend routine anxiety screening for all women and girls over the age of 13, so the LSAS is one type of screening tool that you may encounter during a routine doctor's visit.

How the LSAS Is Administered

The LSAS assesses both your social anxiety in situations as well as your avoidance of those situations. In this way, each item on the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale describes a situation about which you must answer two questions as follows.

Anxiety Questions (how anxious or fearful you feel)

- 0 = none
- 1 = mild
- 2 = moderate
- 3 = severe

Avoidance Questions (how often you avoid the situation)

- 0 = never
- 1 = occasionally
- 2 = often
- 3 = severe

If a question describes a situation that you do not ordinarily experience, you are asked to imagine how you would respond if faced with the situation. All questions

are answered based on how the situations have affected you in the *past week*.

Below are some sample situations from the questionnaire:

- Using a telephone in public
- Participating in a small group activity
- Eating in public

This is just a brief list, and the LSAS covers many other types of situations that are known to commonly trigger social anxiety performance anxiety and concerns.

Information Provided by the LSAS

The LSAS is scored by summing the item ratings. Below are the suggested interpretations for various score ranges.

- **55–65:** Moderate social phobia
- **65–80:** Marked social phobia
- **80–95:** Severe social phobia
- **Greater than 95:** Very severe social phobia

As with any self-report instrument, scores on the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale need to be interpreted by a qualified mental health professional and followed up with a full [diagnostic interview](#) for [social anxiety disorder \(SAD\)](#), when warranted.

Accuracy

Studies have shown the LSAS to be an effective and cost-efficient way to identify people with problems with social anxiety. However, a single instrument can't be used to make a diagnosis.

A clinical diagnosis of SAD can only be made based on an interview conducted by a

trained mental health professional such as a psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker.

How to Take the Scale Yourself

Did you know that the LSAS is [freely available](#) for you to complete online if you wish? If you complete the test and find the results concerning, be sure to check with your doctor about what they might mean. While an assessment such as the LSAS can be informative, it's only in the context of a larger evaluation that the cause of your symptoms can be determined and a course of action planned.

Related: [Understanding the Causes of Social Anxiety Disorder](#)

A Word From Verywell

If you are concerned that you may be living with symptoms of anxiety or avoidance, make an appointment with your primary care physician to discuss the next steps. If this feels hard to do, consider making an appointment for general mental health concerns, and then when you meet with your doctor, bring along a copy of the LSAS as well as a written statement of what you have been experiencing. Depending on your health insurance, you can also make an appointment with a mental health professional without consulting your primary care doctor.

Know that you are not alone in the way that you are feeling, and that your doctor can either conduct an assessment or refer you to a mental health professional who can provide a diagnosis and treatment options such as medication or talk therapy.

If you or a loved one are struggling with social anxiety, contact the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) National Helpline](#) at **1-800-662-4357** for information on support and treatment facilities in your area.

For more mental health resources, see our [National Helpline Database](#).

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1. Gregory KD, Chelmow D, Nelson HD, et al. [Screening for anxiety in adolescent and adult women: A recommendation from the Women's Preventive Services Initiative](#). *Ann Intern Med*. 2020. doi:10.7326/M20-0580

Additional Reading

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- Rytwinski NK, Fresco DM, Heimberg RG, et al. [Screening for social anxiety disorder with the self-report version of the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale](#). *Depression and Anxiety*. 2009;26(1):34-8. doi:10.1002/da.20503