

### **Background Research: Generalized & Social Anxiety Disorder**

I do not have anxiety or an overwhelming amount of stress like others do. The most stressful days are usually due to my lack of time management or trying to take on too much at once. These are things that I can work on slowly. Throughout the past couple of years, I have been exposed to life changing anxiety and stress that the people around me are experiencing.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) affects 6.8 million adults or 3.1 percent of the U.S. population. Those with this disorder often go about their day with persistent and excessive worry about many things including money, health, family, work, or other issues. This excessive worry causes the individual to feel overwhelming anxiety and stress throughout their day. Individuals are diagnosed with GAD when they find it difficult to control how much they worry for most of the week for six months or more. Individuals with GAD tend to have a difficult time getting through their day even though they are aware that their anxiety might be more intense than it should be for the situation.

Social Anxiety Disorder is not just being shy; it is a serious disorder that disrupts the lives of about 15 million American adults. Often, individuals recognize that their fear and anxiety is excessive and unreasonable, but they feel like they're powerless and there's nothing they can do about it. Depending on the level of anxiety, individuals can go about their day worrying about daily routines, occupational performances, or social life. 36 percent of individuals that experience social anxiety report symptoms for 10 or more years before seeking help.

I am thinking about creating an interactive experience that will walk someone through a day in a life of someone with anxiety. Arlin Cuncic has been writing articles on social anxiety disorder for About.com for the past 10 years. This time she decides to take a different approach and wrote about a day in the life of someone with social anxiety disorder. She wrote a fictional story based from all the stories that she has received from individuals who experience social anxiety. The example was in journal form, where the fictional character describes all the thoughts that go about in their mind throughout their daily activities. I think Arlin does a great job in creating a fictional, yet realistic story of someone's day who has social anxiety disorder.

My idea is to incorporate a story like this but include a visual and sound so the user walks through and sees what the individual goes through. I think it's one thing to read about someone's thoughts and another thing to hear their heart beat faster, shortness of breath, or maybe music to intensify the emotions.

## Bibliography

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