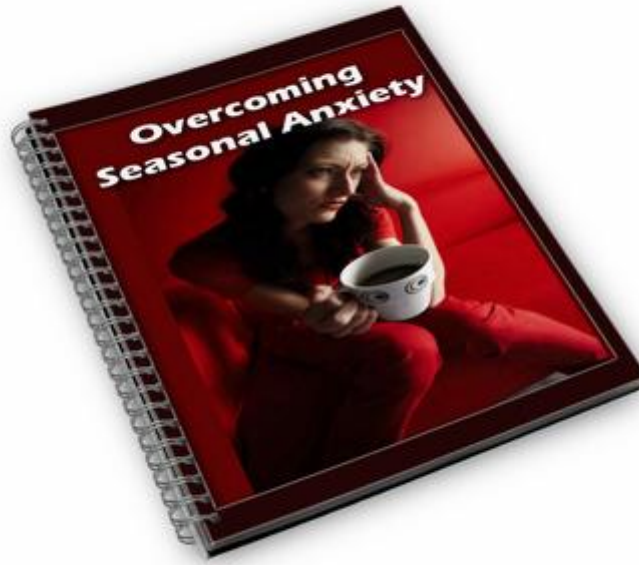


Overcoming_seasonal_anxiety_mrr



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Social Anxiety Disorder And How To Handle It During The Holidays Social anxiety disorder, or social phobia, is characterized by excessive anxiety and self-consciousness in common social situations. Sufferers of this disorder worry intensely that they are being watched and/or judged by others and are fearful that they will be humiliated or embarrassed by their own behaviour. Social anxiety is particularly prevalent during times such as the holiday season when more social gatherings and events take place, some of which are unavoidable. Social phobia can be crippling, interfering with both work and home life. Many people who suffer from this anxiety disorder realise that their fears are excessive or groundless but are powerless to control them. Anticipation of an event can be worse than the event itself and sufferers can worry for days or even weeks beforehand. While social anxiety disorder can be confined to just one type of situation such as a fear of speaking in public it can also be so debilitating that it strikes whenever a sufferer is around other people. A large number of people with this disorder find it difficult to both make and keep friends and therefore also experience the confidence sapping effects of social isolation. Physical symptoms such as blushing, nausea, trembling and sweating can also accompany social phobia,

adding to a sufferer distress. These physical symptoms can prove acutely embarrassing and only add to the feeling that the sufferer is being both observed and judged. Social phobia usually arises in childhood or early adolescence with men and women equally likely to develop the disorder. There is scientific evidence to show that the condition may be hereditary and it often accompanies other anxiety disorders or depression. People afflicted by this form of anxiety should be particularly vigilant during stressful times such as the holidays and should follow the recommendations of their therapist or health care provider if they have already sought help. If you are suffering from social seasonal anxiety and do not have a therapist or health care provider then you might like to explore options such as meditation, yoga, visualisation, cognitive behavioral therapy and exercise to alleviate symptoms. Limit caffeine, excess sugar and alcohol during the holiday season and do not feel embarrassed to turn down invitations. If a social occasion or event is unavoidable, try to set a time limit for your attendance so that you feel more in control and allow yourself to make a graceful exit if necessary. Social anxiety disorder is a very real illness. It often helps to explain your condition to family and friends and to seek their support whenever possible. Simply knowing that someone else is aware of your potential discomfort can alleviate or even stop symptoms from occurring. If you do seek the help of a health professional then ensure that you have their out of hours contact details during the holidays. If your therapist or doctor is going to be away over the holiday period then get the contact information for whoever will be covering for them and keep it somewhere safe. This way, you will feel that help and support is never more than a phone call away.

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