

CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL PHOBIA

Tony is a 30-year-old office worker. After leaving school he worked in a computer store for a short time but left because he could not tolerate customer contact. He then took a government job, where he has been ever since. Until recently he was satisfied because he worked alone and needed to interact only with his immediate supervisor. However, the department has changed and he now needs to move into a new role at work that demands greater social contact. He presented for treatment because the prospect of speaking to strangers is intolerable.

Tony lives at home with his parents and has done so since school. He has no close friends or confidants and reports being very shy and "a loner for as long as he remembers". He fears he will say something foolish or not know what to say when he has to talk to other people. If he needs to communicate with another person he claims that he blushes, shakes, stammers, and sweats so much that other people can see "he is a complete idiot". He will avoid social contact or, if it happens, speak as little as possible and excuse himself as soon as he feels he can do so without drawing criticism. The only time he believes he can behave "normally" in public is if he has consumed alcohol beforehand, which typically involves drinking 6–8 standard measures of vodka.