

# **Student Social Anxiety: an Exploratory Web Survey**

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# **Student Social Anxiety: An Exploratory Web Survey**

## **Executive Summary**

An on-line survey was designed to gather information about the impact of social anxiety on student learning and well-being. A psychological screening tool was used to maximise validity and anonymity was employed to enhance response integrity.

### **Demographics**

The survey netted 478 responses via the University of Plymouth student intranet. The majority of respondents were studying at undergraduate or diploma level with 80% from the University of Plymouth and 20% from the University Partnership Colleges. There was an even distribution of students across years one to three with 80% of respondents aged 16-29 and 20% aged 30-60.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

The survey used a combination of likert-type scale items to sample the frequency of events associated with social anxiety and free-text responses to capture qualitative information relating to the personal impact of social anxiety on learning and well-being.

A diagrammatic overview of the key themes is shown on pages 5-7.

### **Frequency Data**

#### **Distress experienced during learning activities**

- The majority of students (83%) reported frequent anxiety, embarrassment and inhibition whilst participating in presentations. Lower, but noteworthy, levels of frequent distress were also found for seminars (45%), lectures (26%), problem-based learning (25%), OSCEs (13%) and use of shared IT facilities (13%).

#### **Emotional distress**

- Students reported frequent emotional well-being problems in the six months preceding the survey. In descending order these were: Stress (55%), depression (24%), panic (24%), anger (16%) and thoughts of self-harm or suicide (7%).

## **Relationship Issues**

- Students reported frequent problems with social relationships; the most common being loneliness (31%) followed by feeling inhibited with other people (29%) and discomfort in social settings (28%).

## **Help-seeking behaviour**

- The majority of students (70%) typically sought support from friends and family. Less than 10% of students sought help from support services, such as student counselling with 17% seeking help from their personal tutor.

## **Qualitative Data**

### **Participating in common learning activities was associated with:**

- High levels of anticipatory anxiety, fear of ridicule and somatic symptoms.
- Acute self-consciousness, embarrassment and shyness
- Marked cognitive and behavioural impairment
- Avoidance of learning activities involving public speaking
- Intensive rehearsal and preparation for presentations and seminars

### **Students suggested that improvements could be made in the following areas:**

#### **Raising Awareness**

- Improved staff and student understanding of the nature of social anxiety and its impact on learning

#### **Curriculum Design**

- Greater assignment choice with alternatives to presentations
- More help and support for participating in presentations and seminars
- Smaller group sizes
- Improved tutorial support
- Consideration of the impact of social anxiety on learning

#### **Opportunities for social development**

- More interpersonal skills development programmes
- Social activities built into programmes
- Better use of induction to develop social networks
- Improved student facilities and events (not alcohol related)

- Support groups or societies for students with shared problems
- Mentorship and student advocacy

### **Student support**

- Greater visibility and access to support services, including use of the student intranet as an information gateway
- Improved access and reduced awaiting times for support services
- Alternative modes of provision, including
  - Drop in workshops and short courses for self-esteem, confidence and public speaking
  - Telephone or email enquiry support
  - On-line discussion forum for students with social anxiety or shyness
  - More specialised 1-1 clinical support

### **Conclusions**

The survey shows that anxiety has a marked impact on student well-being with reporting of frequent emotional distress and difficulties forming social networks. The findings also demonstrate a need for greater staff and student awareness of social anxiety and the need to consider its impact when designing support services and new curricula.

In respect of its impact on learning, social anxiety is associated with stress and avoidance behaviours that impact on performance. Students were particularly concerned about having to speak out during classes and in the worst cases they reported avoiding seminars, presentations, modules or people. On the positive side, anxiety sometimes resulted in intensive preparation for learning events, involving public speaking, such as presentations and seminars. It is not possible, therefore, to draw conclusions about the overall impact of social anxiety on learning. However, anecdotally, some students felt they had lost marks through being anxious.

Finally, students identified a range of improvements that could be offered to support emotional well-being and curriculum activities. Many of these broadly fall into a 'self-help' category, such as use of the intranet to enhance communication and social networking. These could be implemented with relatively little financial cost to the University and its partnership colleges. Other suggestions included drop-in workshops for stress, public speaking and confidence building that would likely be of benefit to the student population as a whole.

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## How Participating in Learning Events Affected Students



### Before

- Anticipatory anxiety
- Fear of ridicule
- Somatic symptoms



### Avoidance

- Feeling shy, embarrassed and anxious
- Being the centre of attention where mistakes are amplified
- Cognitive and behavioural Impairment
- Post-event rumination



### After

- Post-event rumination

## How Students Coped with Learning Events



### Avoidance

- Being inconspicuous
- Avoiding learning situations
- Avoidance affecting student learning

### Safety Behaviours

- Rehearsal and preparation to avoid looking foolish
- Getting others to do the talking situations
- Dealing with issues head on

### Diverse Coping Strategies

- Being inconspicuous
- Avoiding learning situations
- Avoidance affecting student learning

## Improving Support for Social Anxiety

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graph TD; A[Improving Support for Social Anxiety] --> B[Support for Embedding into University Life]; A --> C[Support for Social Anxiety];
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### Support for Embedding into University Life

- Fostering opportunities to socialise
- Organising social interaction

### Support for Social Anxiety

- Raising awareness of social anxiety amongst staff
- Improving communication with students
- Barriers to support
- Improving therapeutic support for social anxiety
- Improving pedagogic support for social anxiety



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# **Student social anxiety web survey**

## **Introduction**

Social anxiety is a chronic, debilitating condition that ranks as the third most common mental health problem after major depression and alcohol dependence (Furmark 2000). People with social anxiety fear and frequently avoid social situations where they may be ridiculed (Muzina and El-Sayegh 2001; Crozier and Alden 2005).

Research has shown that people with social anxiety do significantly less well than their peers in terms of education, employment and social relationships (Stein, et al 1999; Turner et al 1986). Furthermore, a study carried out by Ameringen et al (2002) found that in a sample of 200 people with anxiety disorders, just over one half of those with a diagnosis of social anxiety reported dropping out of school early due to related problems.

As far as the author is aware there has been no research exploring the impact of social anxiety on the learning and well-being of university students. However, Bernstein et al (2007) found that social anxiety in school children was associated with avoidance of social situations, learning difficulties and problems making friends and a recent study by Russell and Shaw (2005) found marked to severe levels of social anxiety in a sample of 865 University of Plymouth students aged between 17 and 65.

To shed more light on this issue an on-line survey was designed to gather quantitative and qualitative information about the effects of social anxiety on emotional well-being and learning in students studying at the University of Plymouth and its partnership colleges.

## **Method**

### **The Survey**

An on-line survey was constructed using Pegasus software with the specific aims of gathering information about:

- The impact of social anxiety on students taking part in common learning events
- How students coped with such events
- What the university could do to improve support for students with social anxiety

The survey was comprised of a mixture of likert-type scale questions plus free text responses to gain more detailed information.

The survey was posted on the University of Plymouth intranet and Students Union Web-site for a period of four weeks. The front page outlined the aims of the project and invited students to first consider whether they worried about speaking out in seminars and presentations and were often shy and embarrassed. Interested

students were then directed to answer three questions derived from the Mini-SPIN social anxiety screening tool. The Mini-Spin is a shortened form of the Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) and Connor *et al.*, (2001) report that it has 90% accuracy in detecting the presence or absence of social anxiety. Students were permitted to access the main intranet survey only if they answered 'yes' to all three questions (for an HTML copy of the survey tool see appendix 1).

## **Ethics**

Permission was granted by the University of Plymouth Ethics Committee. Respondents were advised that in providing information they were consenting to take part in this survey. However, they were assured that the information supplied would be made anonymous and their email address would be invisible to the survey's author. In case of personal issues arising two named contacts within the university were provided, plus an external link to the *National Phobics Society*.

## Results

### Demographics

The survey drew a rapid response from 478 students with approximately three quarters of the completed surveys sent to a dedicated email account within the first 10 days.

### Place of Study

Students were asked to indicate what type of programme they were studying on. The data in table 1 shows that the majority of students were undergraduates studying for a BSc or BA. However, there were a sizeable proportion of students studying for a diploma or foundation degree. Only a small number of post-graduate students completed the survey. The category 'Other' programmes were mostly undergraduate. For example, LLB Law, BEng or Bed.

<b>Programme of Study</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage of sample answering</b>	<b>Percentage of total sample</b>
Certificate	5	1.1%	1.0%
NVQ	0	0.0%	0.0%
Diploma	36	7.6%	7.5%
Foundation Studies or Degree	38	8.0%	7.9%
BSc or BA	364	76.6%	76.2%
Post-graduate studies	6	1.3%	1.3%
Other	26	5.5%	5.4%

**Table 1. Programme of Study**

## Age of Respondents

Table 2 shows that most of the students responding were aged between 16 and 29 (80%). With approximately 19% aged between 30 and 50. Only 7 seven students were aged 51-60. No student over the age of 60 responded to the survey. The data is shown in graphic form in figure 1.

Age	Count	Percentage of sample answering	Percentage of total sample
16-20	188	40.1%	39.3%
21-29	186	39.7%	38.9%
31-30	57	12.2%	11.9%
41-50	31	6.6%	6.5%
51-60	7	1.5%	1.5%
61 or over	0	0.0%	0.0%

Table 2. Age of Respondents

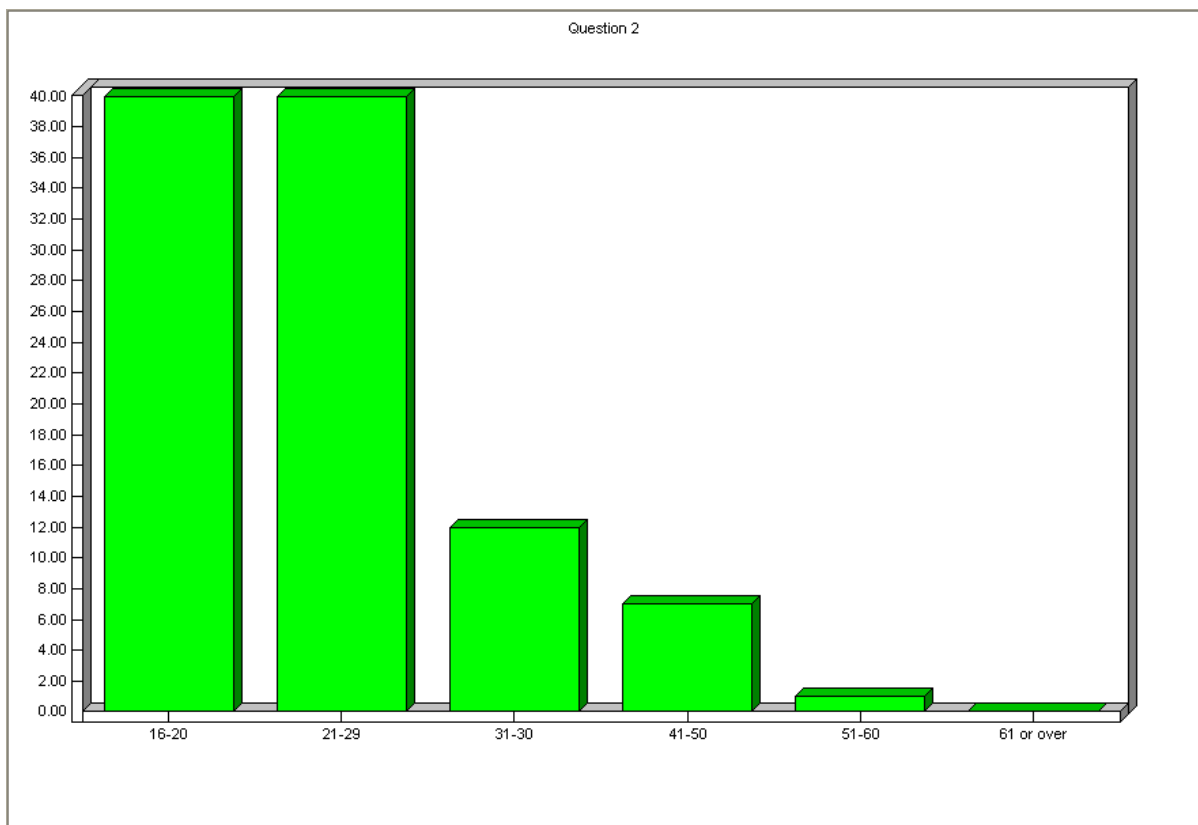


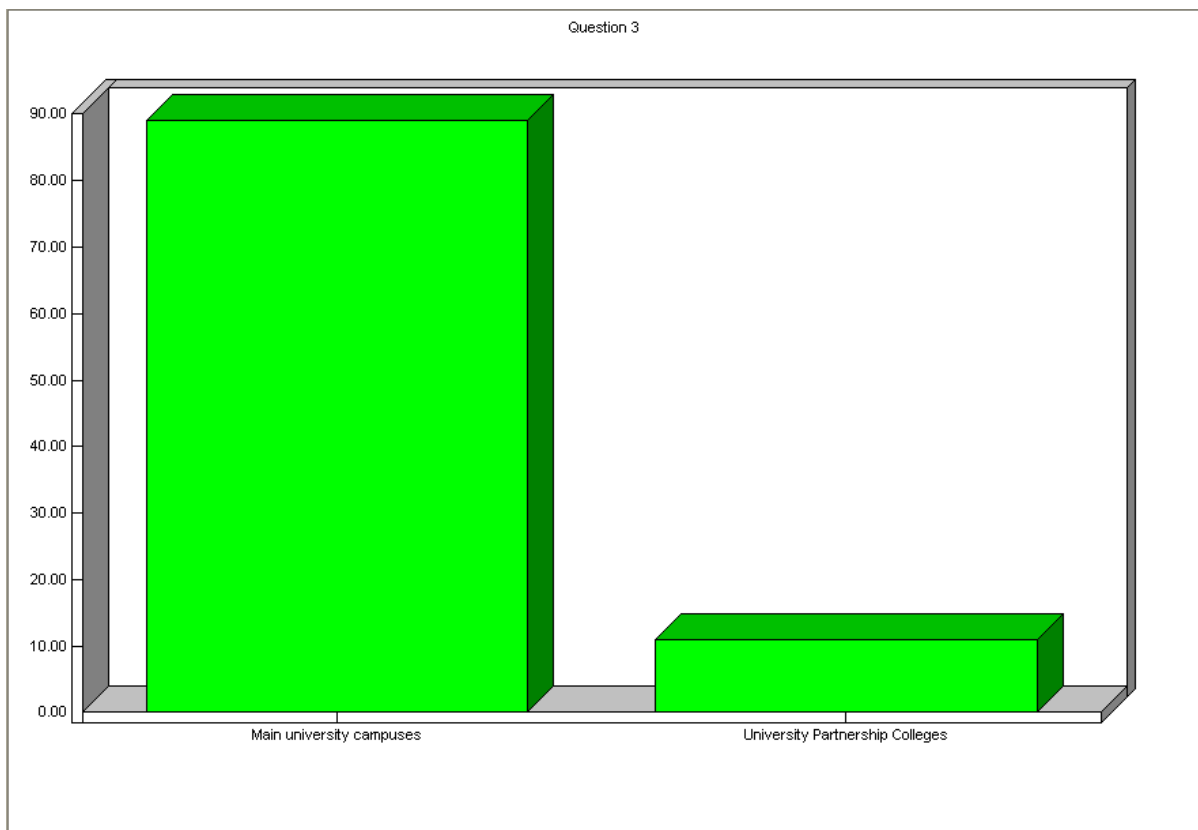
Figure 1. Age of Respondents

## Place of Study

The majority of students were based on the main university campus (see table 3 and figure 2). With just over 10% studying at Partnership (FE) Colleges scattered throughout Devon and Cornwall.

Place of Study	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Main university campus	412	88.8	86.2
Partnership Colleges	52	11.2	10.9

**Table 3. Place of Study**



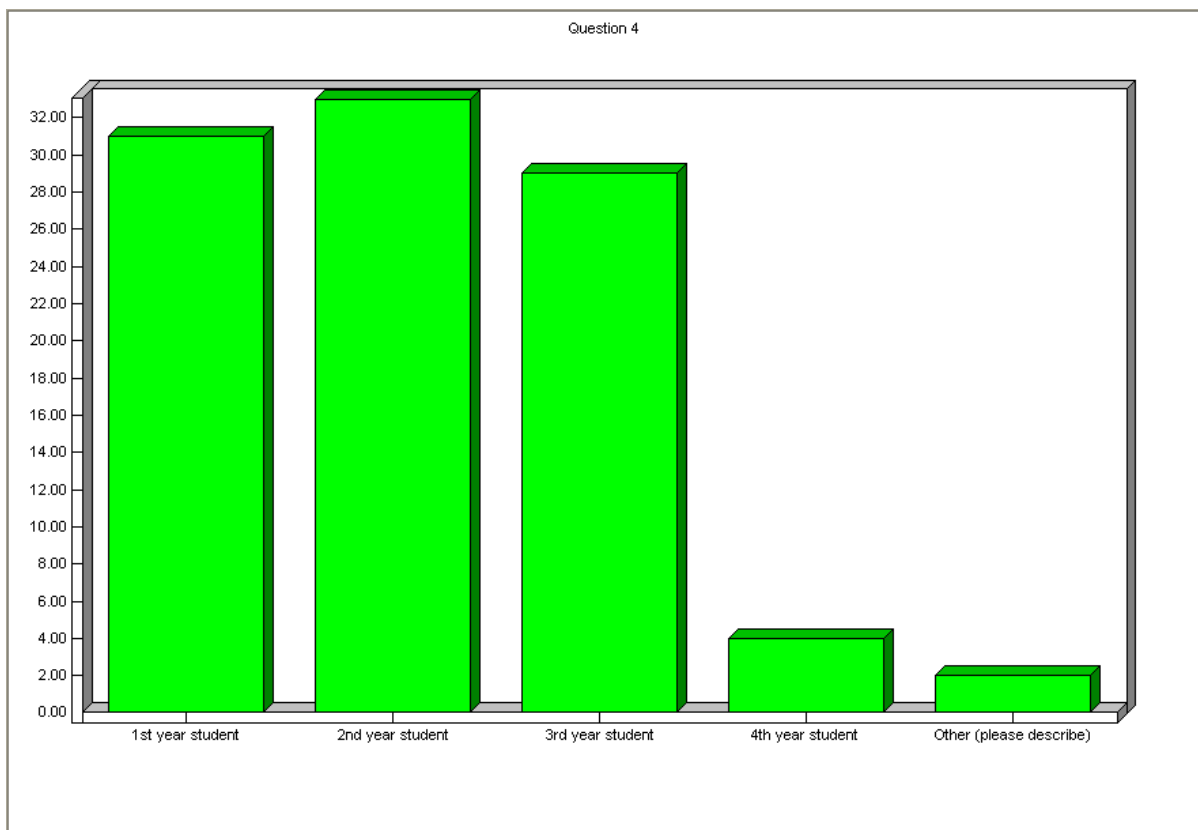
**Figure 2. Place of Study**

## Year of Study

Most of the respondents were in years one two and three of their studies (table 4 and figure 3) with roughly even numbers of students in each group. There were a small number of students studying in their fourth year and some students doing 'other' included 5<sup>th</sup> year honours, part-time and on placement.

Year of Study	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
1st year student	146	31.3%	30.5%
2nd year student	154	33.0%	32.2%
3rd year student	136	29.1%	28.5%
4th year student	20	4.3%	4.2%
Other	11	2.4%	2.3%

**Table 4. Year of Study**



**Figure 3. Year of Study**

## Social anxiety and learning experiences

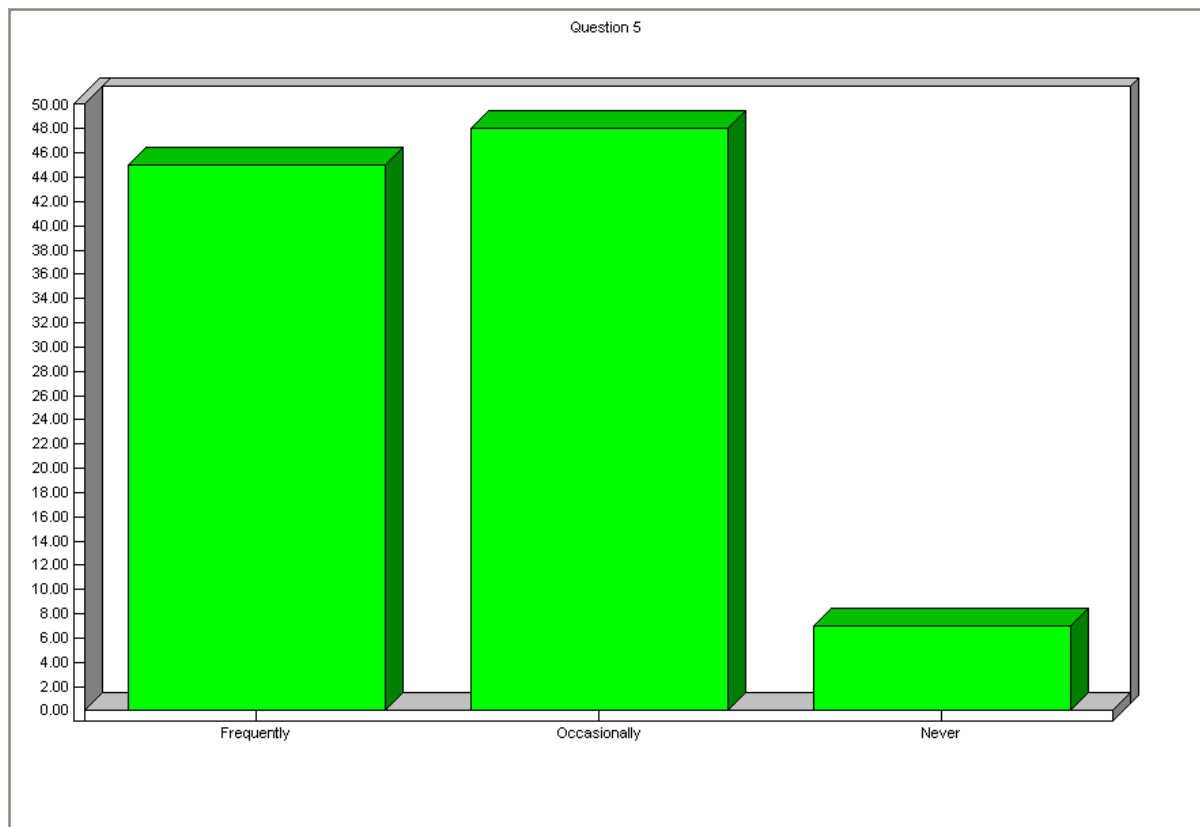
The next survey item was designed to glean information about the experiences of students engaged in common learning activities (i.e. seminars, presentations and problem-based learning) by asking them to focus on feelings of embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition. These three descriptors were selected because they are core elements of performance and social interaction anxiety (Liebowitz 1987). The results relating to each of these modes of learning are presented separately as follows.

### Seminars

Table 5 and figure 4 show that a little under a half of students reported frequently experiencing embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition in seminars. A similar number reported this as an occasional occurrence. Only a small number reported this as never occurring.

Seminars	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	208	44.6%	43.5%
Occasionally	224	48.1%	46.9%
Never	34	7.3%	7.1%

**Table 5. Social anxiety during seminars**



**Figure 4. Social anxiety during seminars**

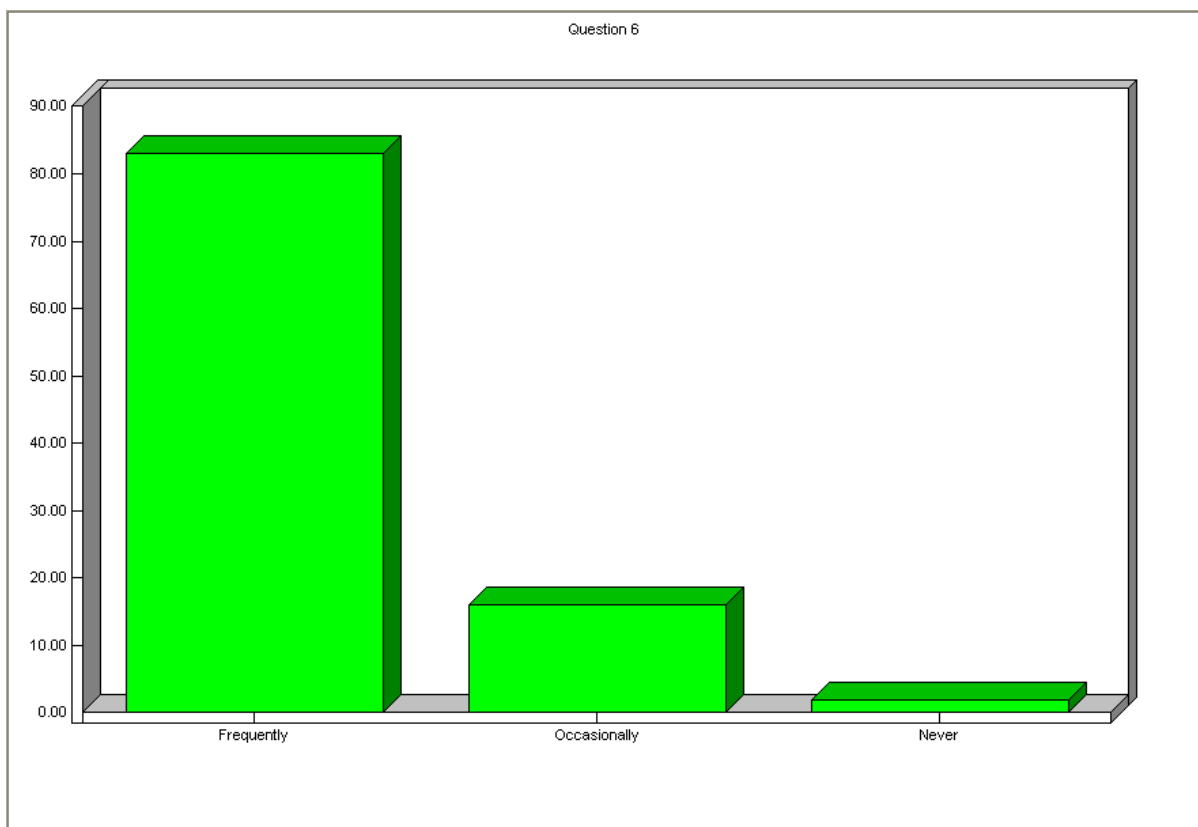


## Presentations

A massive 83% of students reported experiencing frequent embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition, during presentations. Only a very small proportion of students reported that they never experienced these feelings (see table 6 and figure 5).

Presentations	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	385	82.8%	80.5%
Occasionally	73	15.7%	15.3%
Never	7	1.5%	1.5%

**Table 6. Social anxiety during presentations**



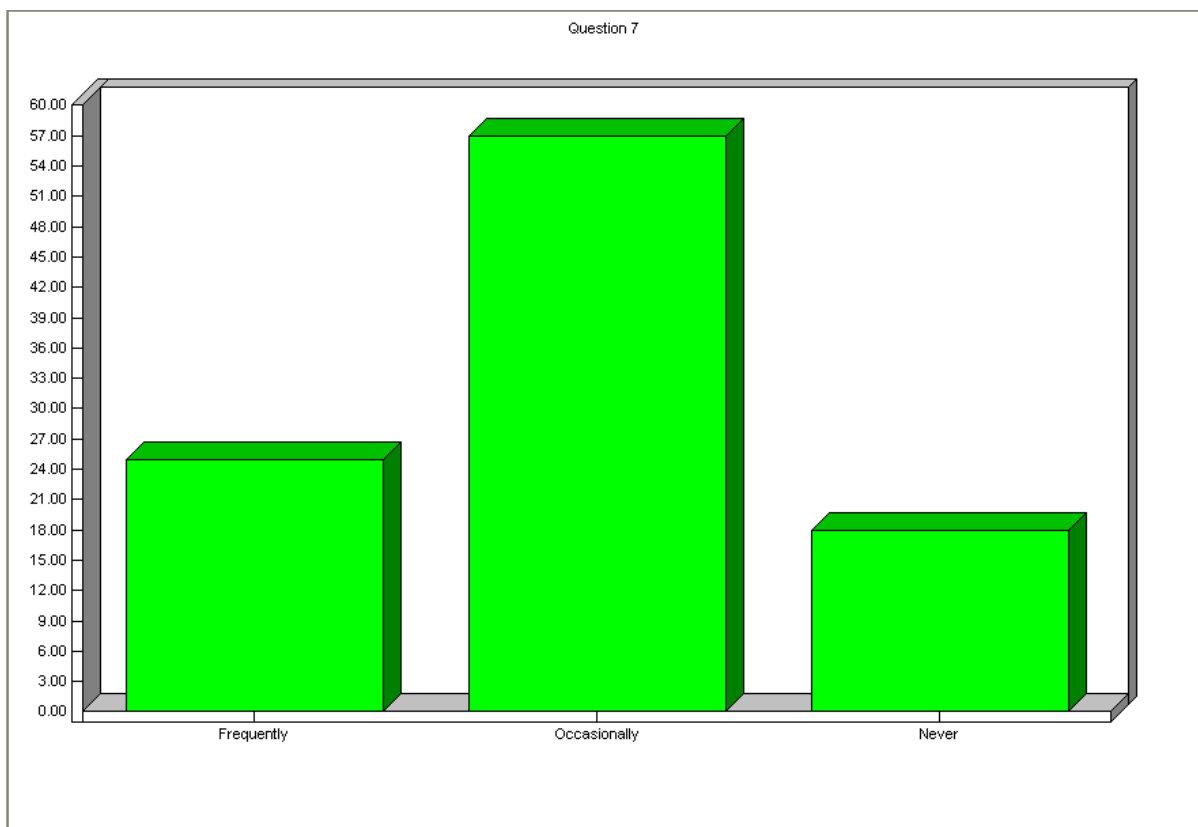
**Figure 5. Social anxiety during presentations**

## Problem Based Learning

Just over one half of students reported occasional embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition, during presentations. Around one quarter reported experiencing these feelings frequently and just under 18% responded to the survey item 'never' (see table 7 and figure 6).

Problem-based learning	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	115	24.9%	24.1%
Occasionally	265	57.4%	55.4%
Never	82	17.7%	17.2%

**Table 7. Social anxiety during problem-based learning**



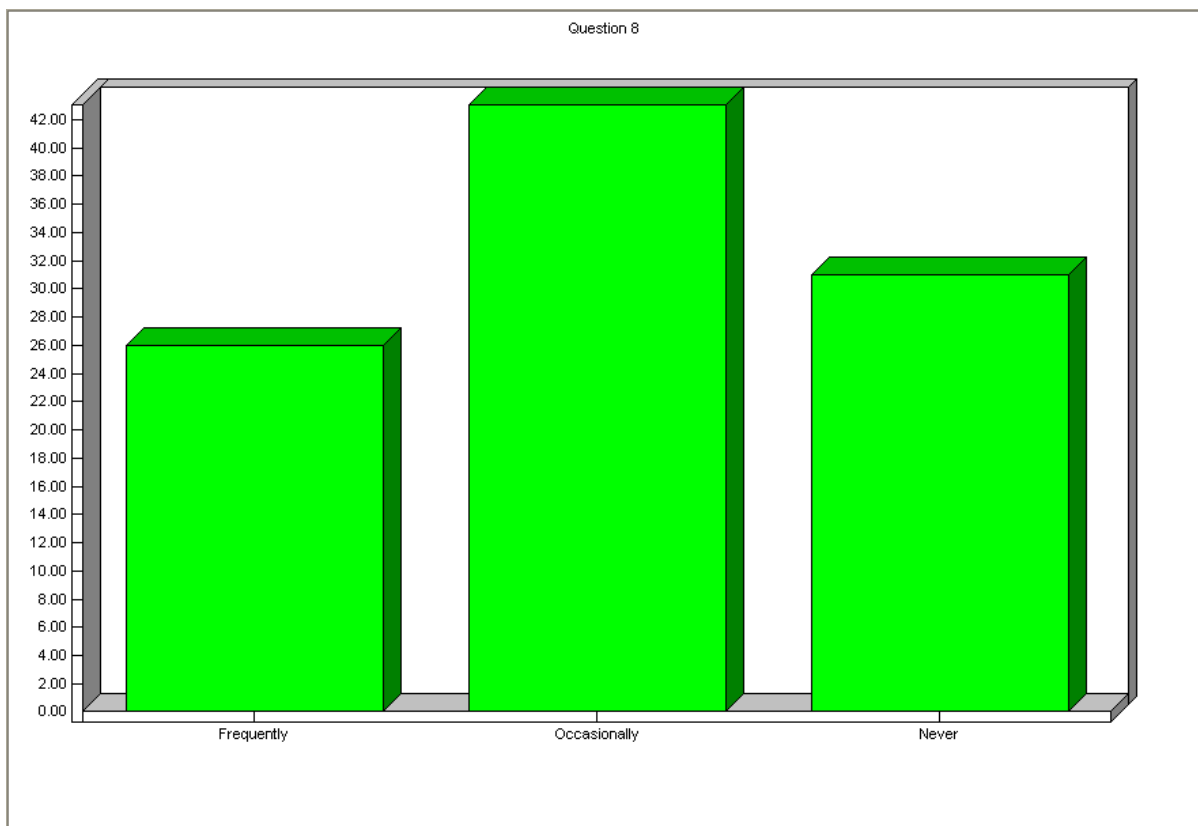
**Figure 6. Social anxiety during problem-based learning**

## Lectures

A little under a half of students reported occasional embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition, during lectures. Around one quarter reported experiencing these feelings frequently and just under one third responded to the survey item 'never' (see table 8 and figure 7).

<b>Problem-based learning</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of sample answering</b>	<b>% of total sample</b>
Frequently	120	25.8%	25.1%
Occasionally	202	43.3%	42.3%
Never	144	30.9%	30.1%

**Table 8. Social anxiety during lectures**



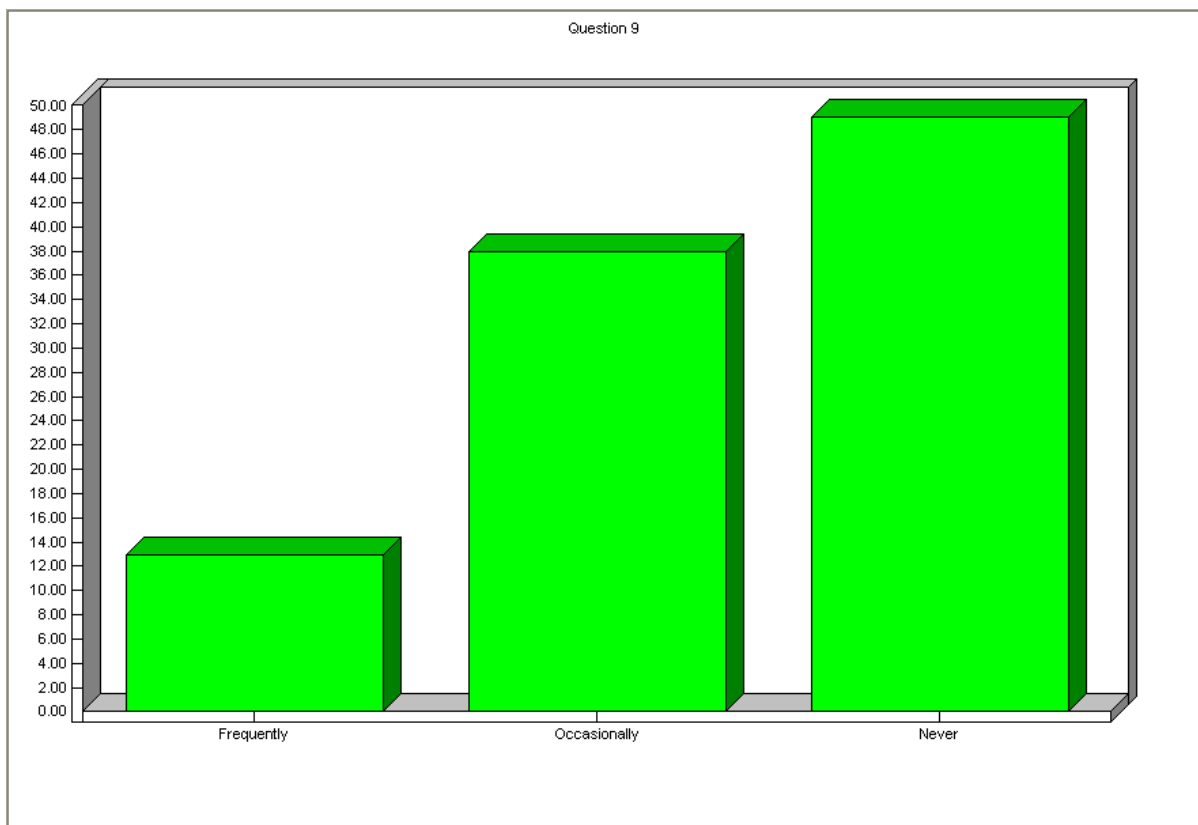
**Figure 7. Social anxiety during lectures**

## OSCES (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations)

OSCES are a method of assessment used to test clinical skills in a highly structured environment, usually within set time constraints. As such, they are often perceived as being very stressful by students who are usually on health-related programmes. A little over 10% of students reported experiencing embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition frequently during OSCEs with a little over a third responding to 'occasionally' and over half responding to the category 'never' (see table 9 and figure 8).

OSCES	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	48	13.2%	10.0%
Occasionally	137	37.5%	28.7%
Never	180	49.3%	37.7%

**Table 9. Social anxiety during OSCEs**



**Figure 8. Social anxiety during OSCEs**

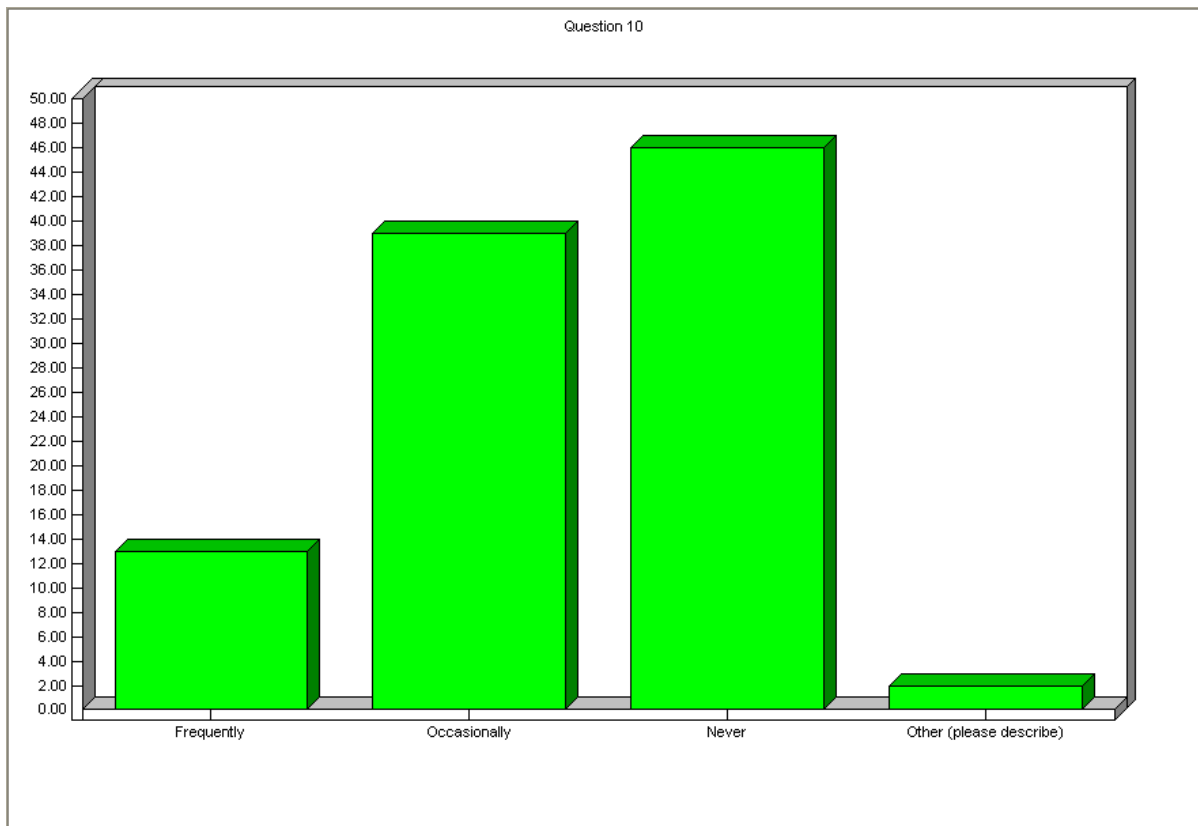
## Using shared IT facilities

The majority of students (47%) reported never experiencing embarrassment, anxiety or inhibition using shared IT facilities. Whilst 39% reported occasional problems and a little over 12% reported them frequently (see table 10 and figure 9).

Other areas reported as problematic by about 2% of students included use of facilities in the Students Union and difficulty using the electronic swipe card to access the main library.

Shared IT Facilities	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	57	12.6%	11.9%
Occasionally	176	38.8%	36.8%
Never	211	46.5%	44.1%
Other	10	2.2%	2.1%

**Table 10. Social anxiety using shared IT facilities**



**Figure 9. Social anxiety using shared IT facilities**

## Utilising Support

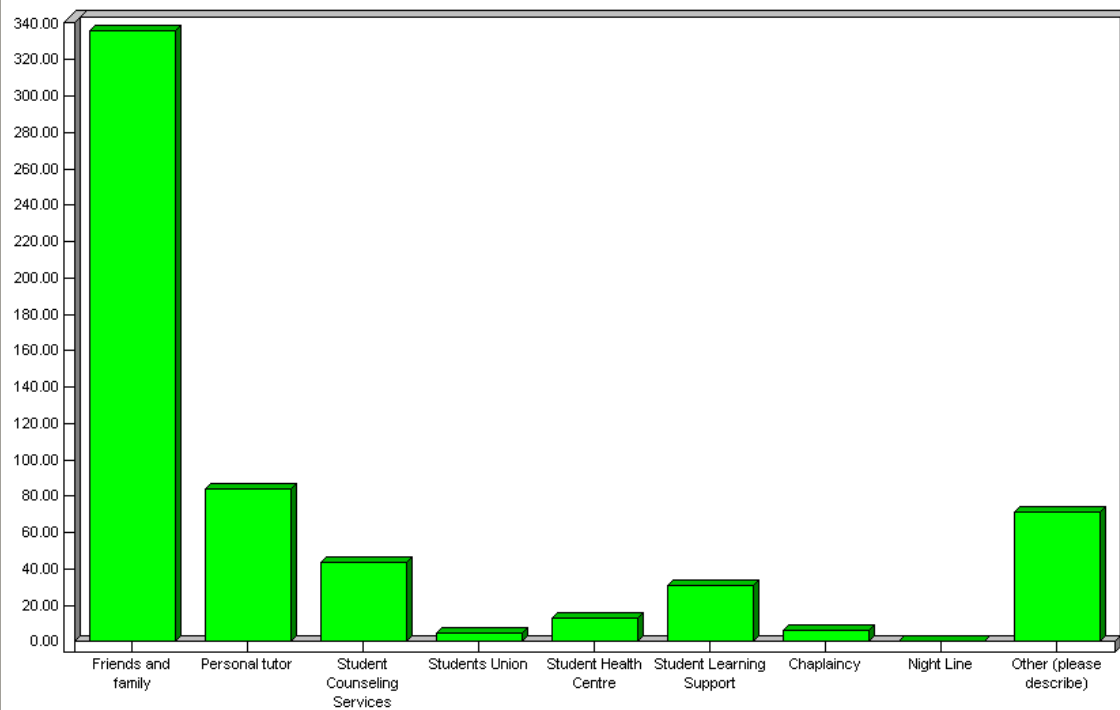
The next survey question addressed the issue of support, by asking students to identify the main sources of help that they had used in the past. These sources are shown below in table 11 and figure 10 overleaf.

Nearly 70% of students relied on friends and family for support and the next most, utilised resource was personal tutors at nearly 18%. A little over 9% of students used student counselling services and 6% used student learning support. A very small proportion of students sought help from the chaplaincy. Other sources of support accounted for about 15% of responses and included Disability Assist (university service), psychotherapy, medication, GP, self-help and on-line materials, alcohol, faith/church, speech therapist and various others.

Source of support	Count	% of total sample answering	% of total sample
Friends and family	336	69.3%	70.3%
Personal tutor	84	17.3%	17.6%
Student Counseling Services	44	9.1%	9.2%
Students Union	5	1.3%	1.0%
Student Health Centre	13	2.7%	2.7%
Student Learning Support	31	6.5%	6.5%
Chaplaincy	6	1.2%	1.3%
Other	71	14.6%	14.9%

**Table 11. Main sources of support**

Question 13



**Figure 10. Main sources of support**

## Emotional Well-being

Given that social anxiety is associated with significant co-morbidity for mental health problems (e.g. depression, stress, etc); students were asked whether they had been emotionally distressed during the previous six months.

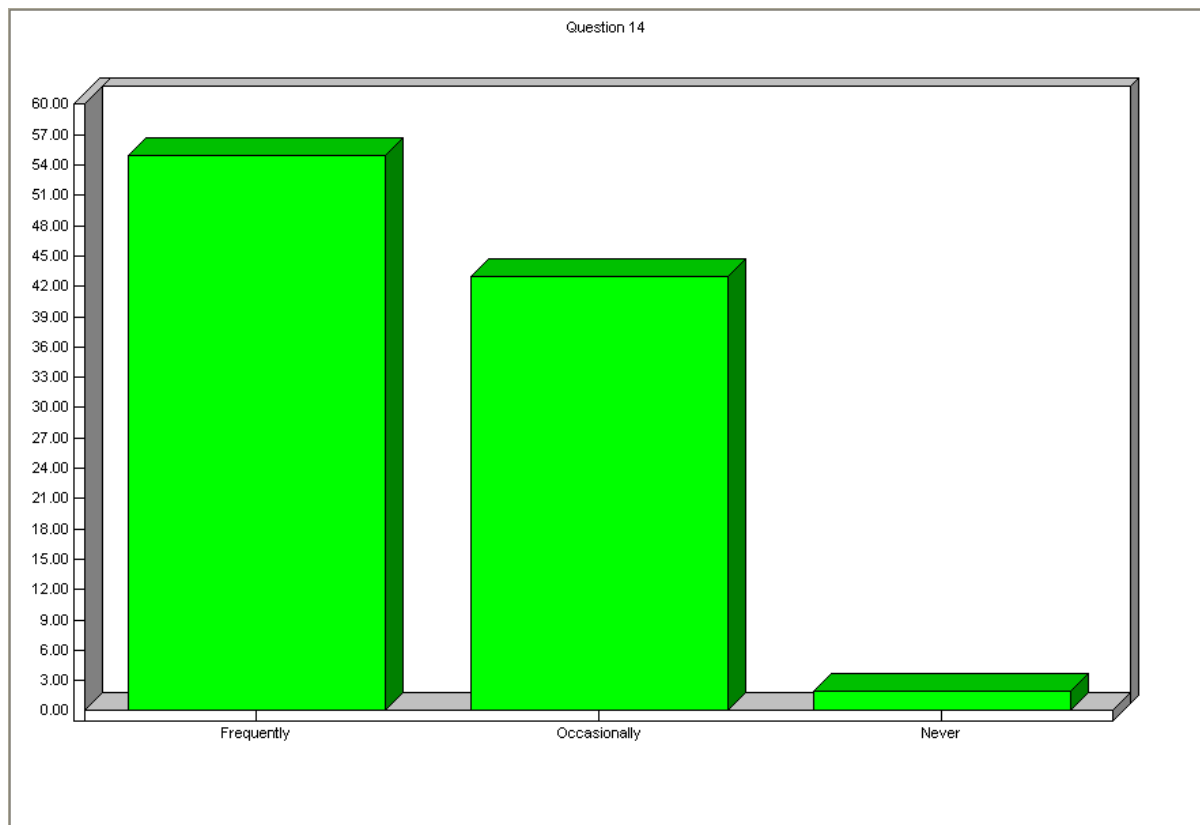
The responses to each category of emotional distress are illustrated separately:

### Anxiety and Stress

Fifty five percent of students reported frequent stress and anxiety in the preceding six month period and a little under a half reported occasional stress and anxiety. Only two percent of students reported no stress or anxiety (see table 12 and figure 11).

Stress & Anxiety	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	256	55.3%	53.6%
Occasionally	198	42.8%	41.4%
Never	9	1.9%	1.9%

**Table 12. Stress and anxiety during previous six months**



**Figure 11. Stress and anxiety during previous six months**

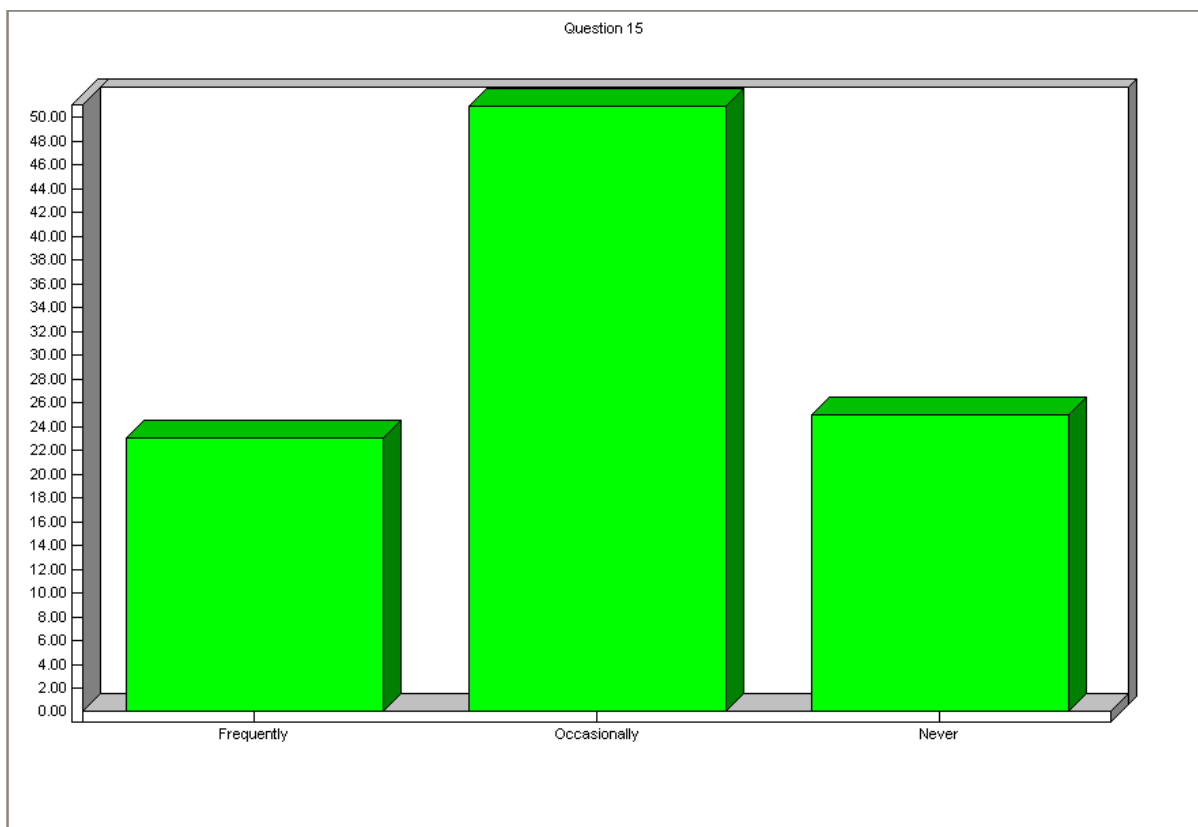


## Depression

Just over one half of students reported experiencing depression occasionally in the previous six months with just under a quarter responding to 'frequently'. Just over one quarter reported that had never experienced depression during that period (see table 13 and figure 12).

Depression	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	108	23.5%	22.6%
Occasionally	236	51.3%	49.4%
Never	116	25.2%	24.3%

**Table 13. Depression during previous six months**



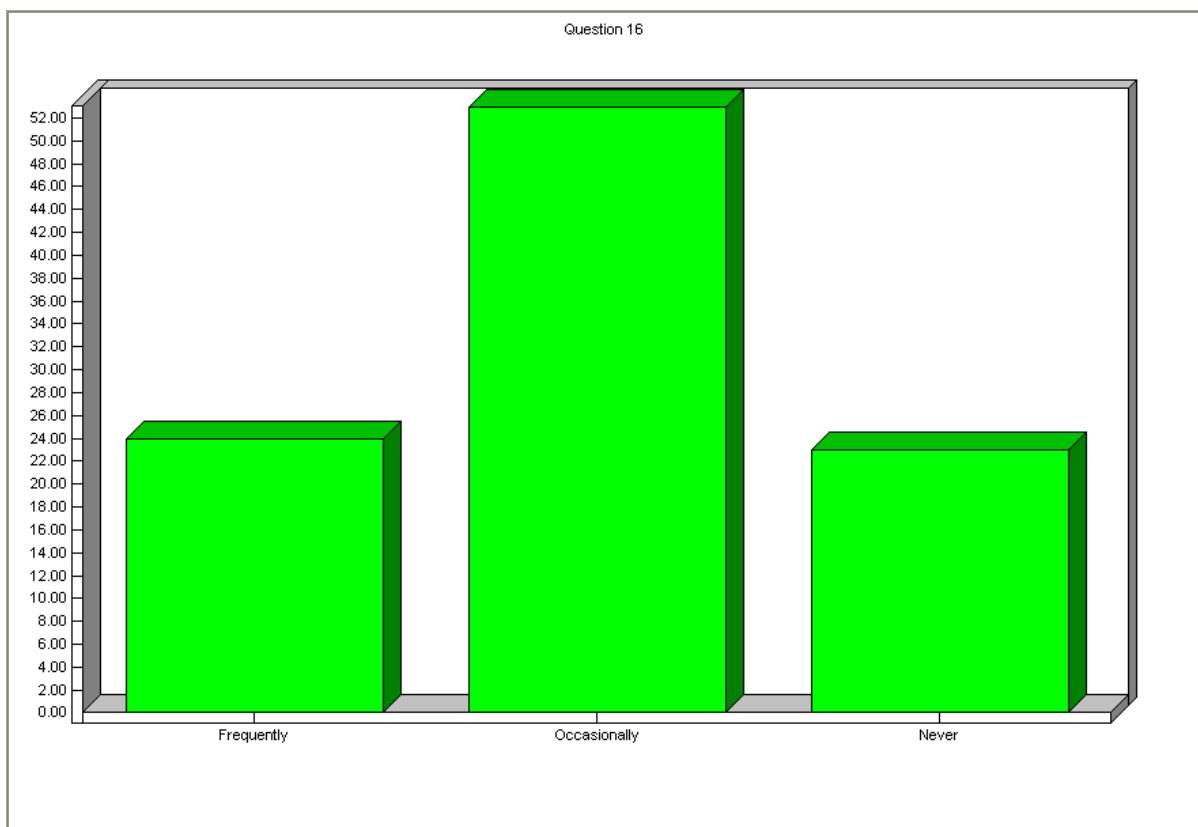
**Figure 12. Depression during previous six months**

## Panic

The majority of students (53%) reported occasionally feeling panicky with just under a quarter experiencing panic frequently. Twenty three percent of students never experienced panic during this period (see tables 14 and figure 13).

Panic	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	112	24.3%	23.4%
Occasionally	243	52.8%	50.8%
Never	105	22.8%	22.0%

**Table 14. Panic during previous six months**



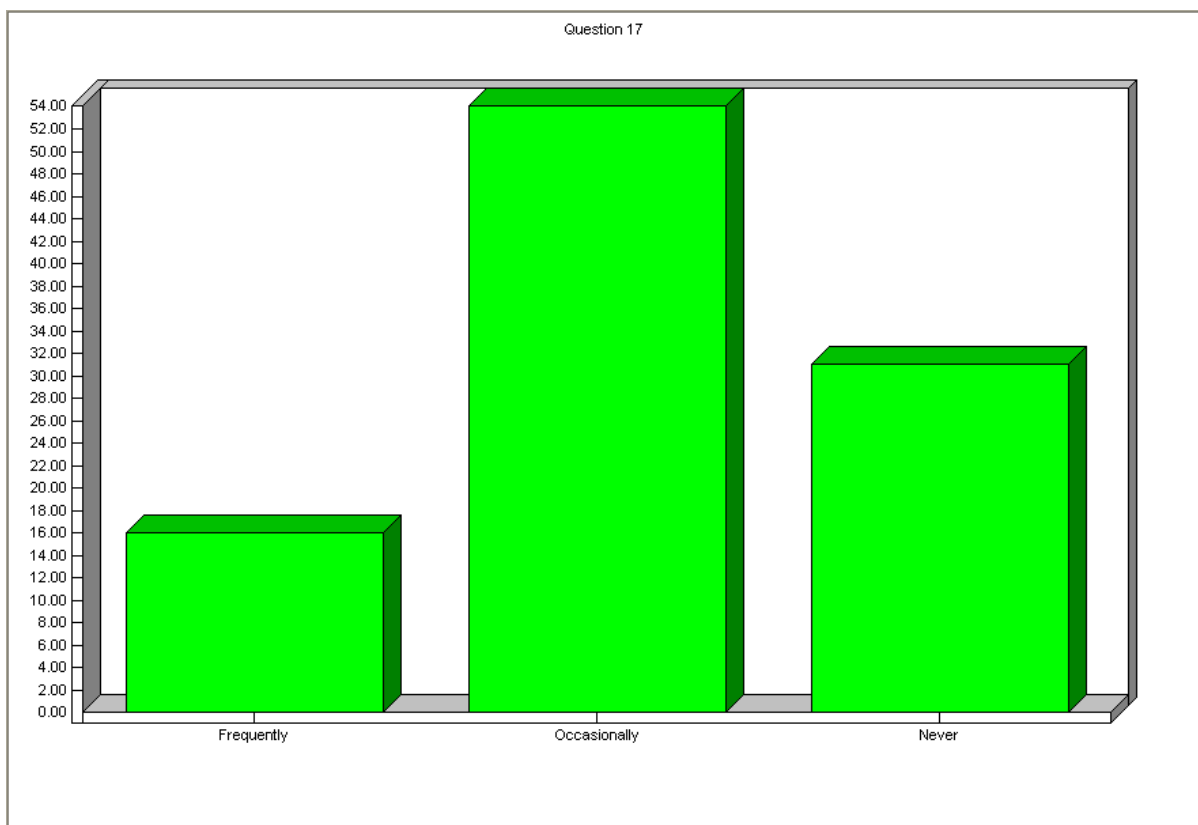
**Figure 13. Panic during previous six months**

## Anger

Anger is an emotion that is not often associated with social anxiety, but Erwin et al (2003) found that anger was more common in people with social anxiety than non-anxious controls. In the survey, the majority of students (54%) reported experiencing occasional anger, whilst 16% reported frequent anger during the previous six months. A little under one third one students reported no anger (see table 15 and figure 14).

Anger	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	72	15.7%	15.1%
Occasionally	246	53.6%	51.5%
Never	141	30.7%	29.5%

**Table 15. Anger during previous six months**



**Figure 14. Anger during the past six months**

### Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

The majority of students (75%) had never had thoughts about self-harm or suicide during the preceding six months. However, 7% of students had frequent thoughts and 18% occasional thoughts (see tables 16 and figure 15).

Self-harm or thoughts of suicide	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	31	6.8%	6.5%
Occasionally	86	18.7%	18.0%
Never	342	74.5%	71.5%

Table 16. Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

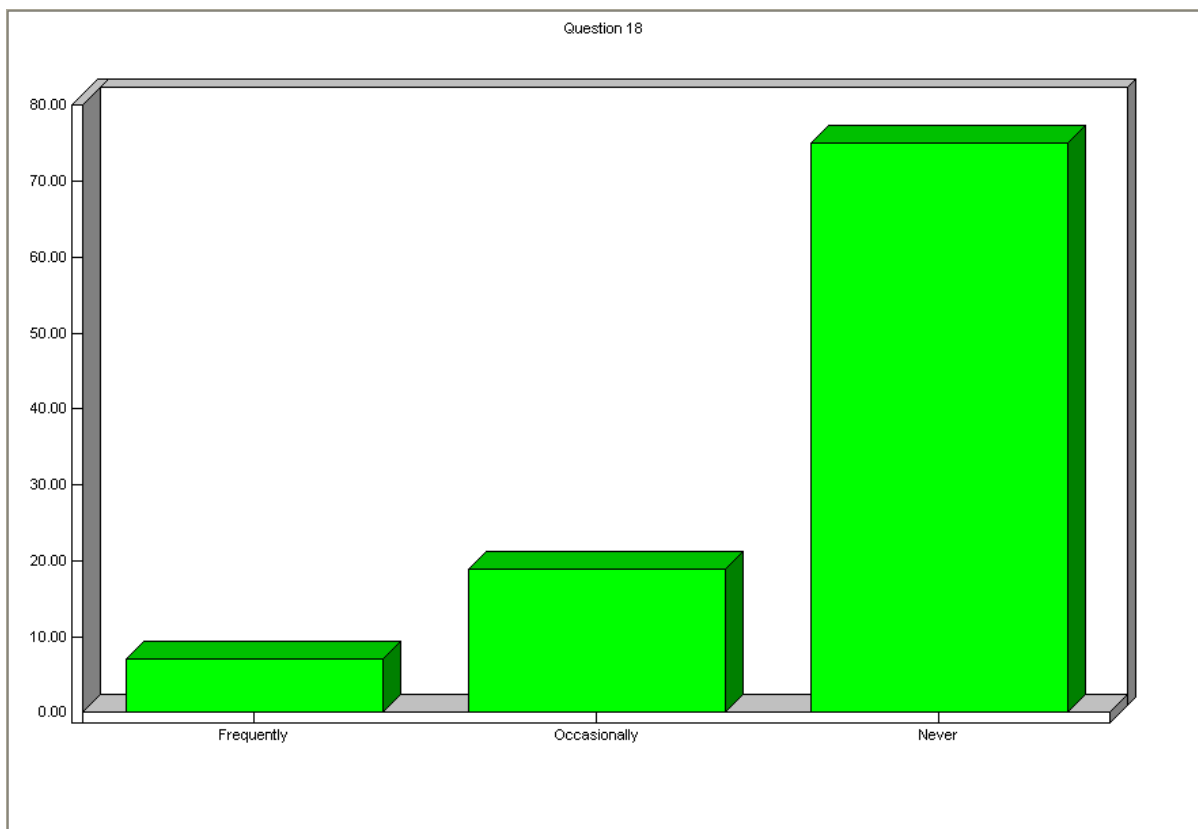


Figure 15. Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

## Relationships

Research shows that people with social anxiety often have difficulties establishing relationships (Stein et al 1999). The survey, therefore, explored whether the students also experienced problems in this domain by asking how frequently they experienced discomfort in social settings, loneliness, etc.

### Difficulty forming relationships

Eighteen percent of students reported that they frequently had difficulty forming relationships, whilst a half reported occasional difficulty. Thirty percent of students reported never having problems (see table 17 and figure 16).

Difficulty forming relationships	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	84	18.1%	17.6%
Occasionally	238	51.3%	49.8%
Never	142	30.6%	29.7%

Table 17. Difficulty forming relationships

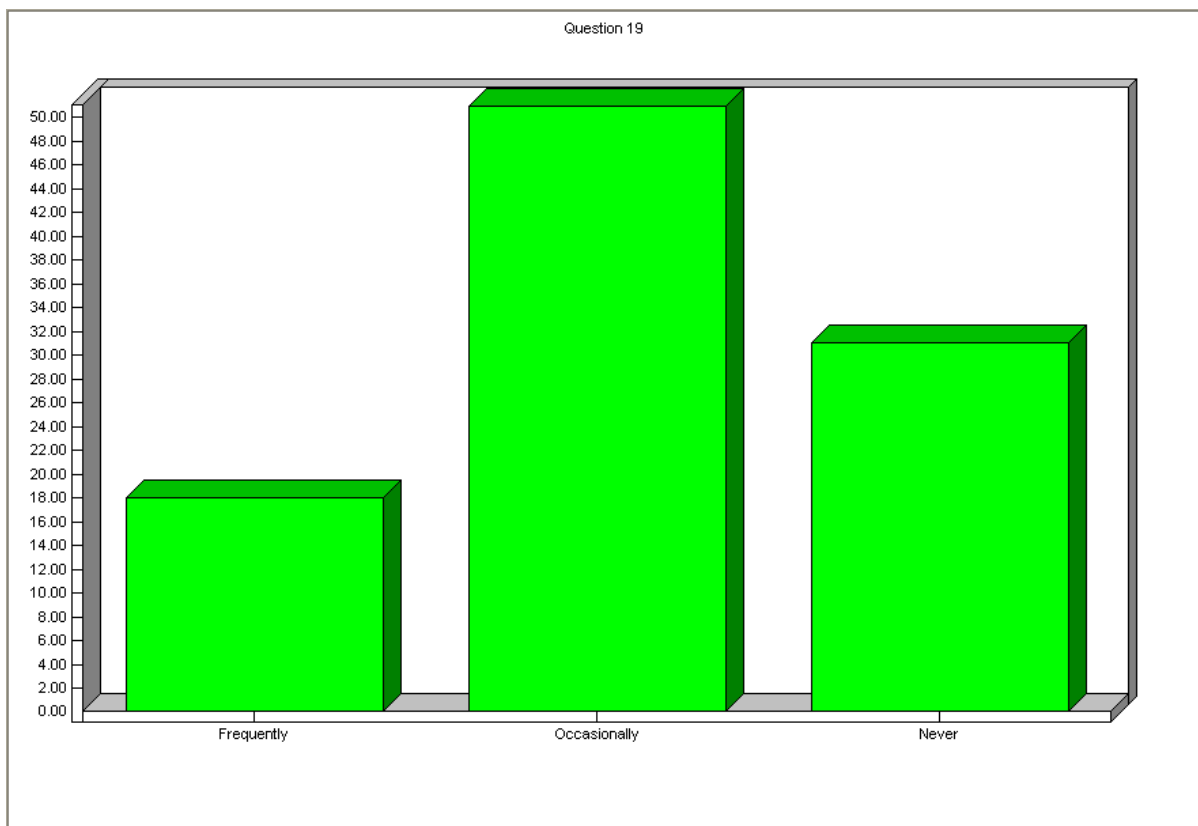


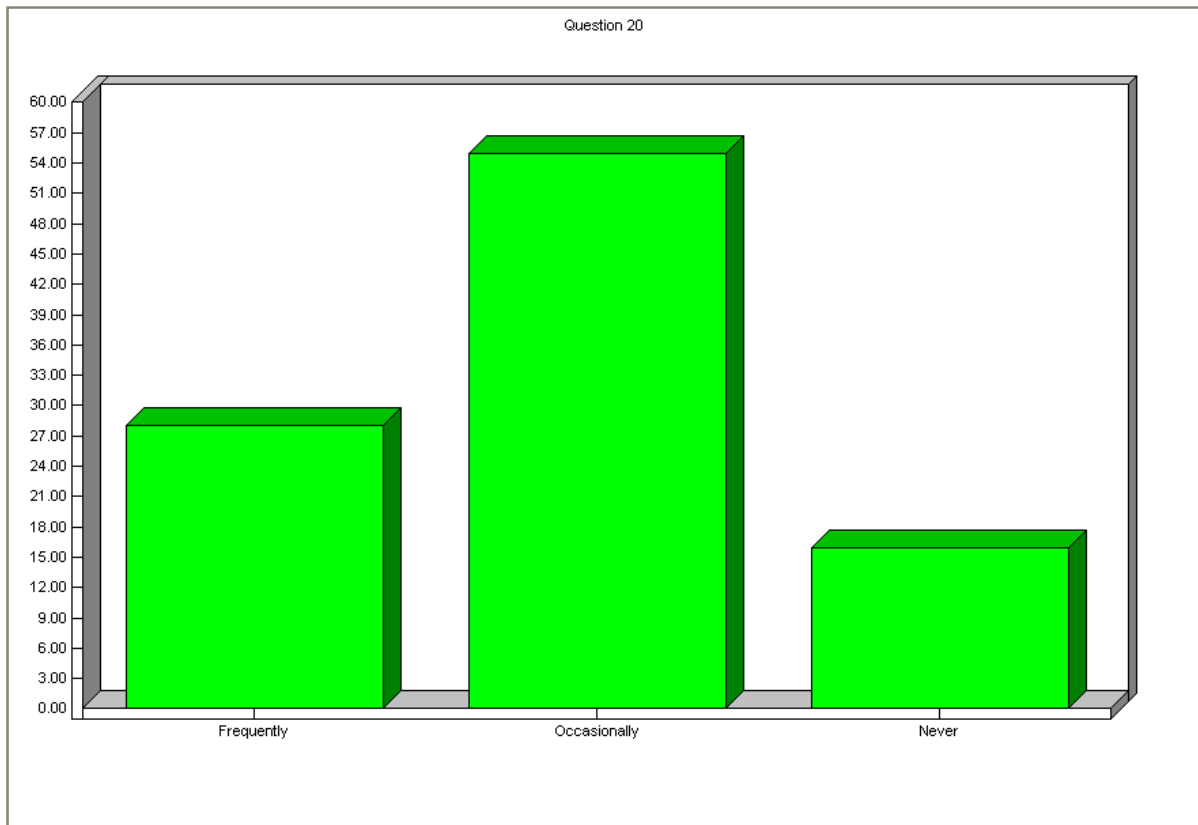
Figure 16. Difficulty forming relationships

## Discomfort in social settings

Twenty eight percent of students reported frequent discomfort in social settings with a little over a half reporting occasional discomfort. Sixteen percent of students reported never experiencing discomfort (see table 18 and figure 17).

Discomfort in social settings	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	131	28.2%	27.4%
Occasionally	257	55.4%	53.8%
Never	76	16.4%	15.9%

**Table 18. Discomfort in social settings**



**Figure 17. Discomfort in social settings**

### Difficulty relaxing with other people

Twenty five percent of students reported frequent discomfort in social settings with nearly 60% reporting occasional discomfort. Fifteen percent of students reported never experiencing discomfort (see table 19 and figure 18).

Difficulty relaxing with other people	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	117	25.3%	24.5%
Occasionally	275	59.5%	57.5%
Never	70	15.2%	14.6%

Table 19. Difficulty relaxing with other people

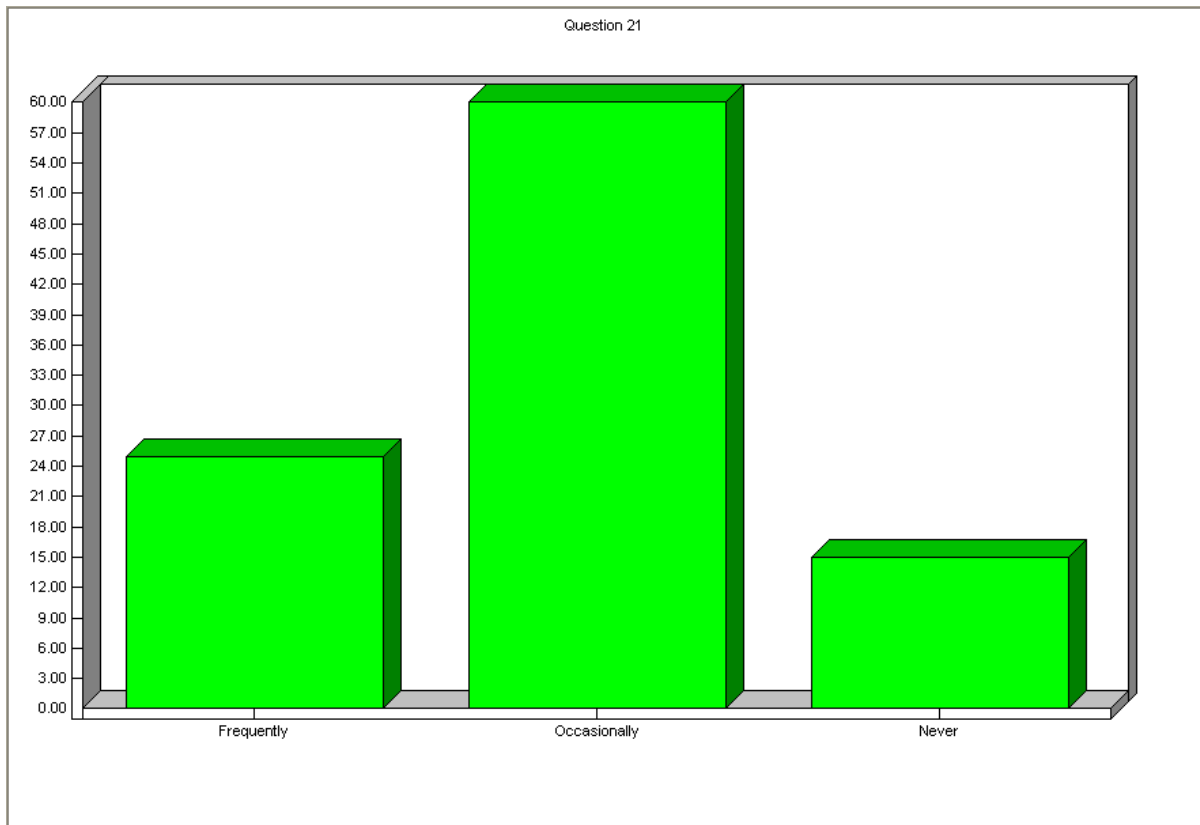


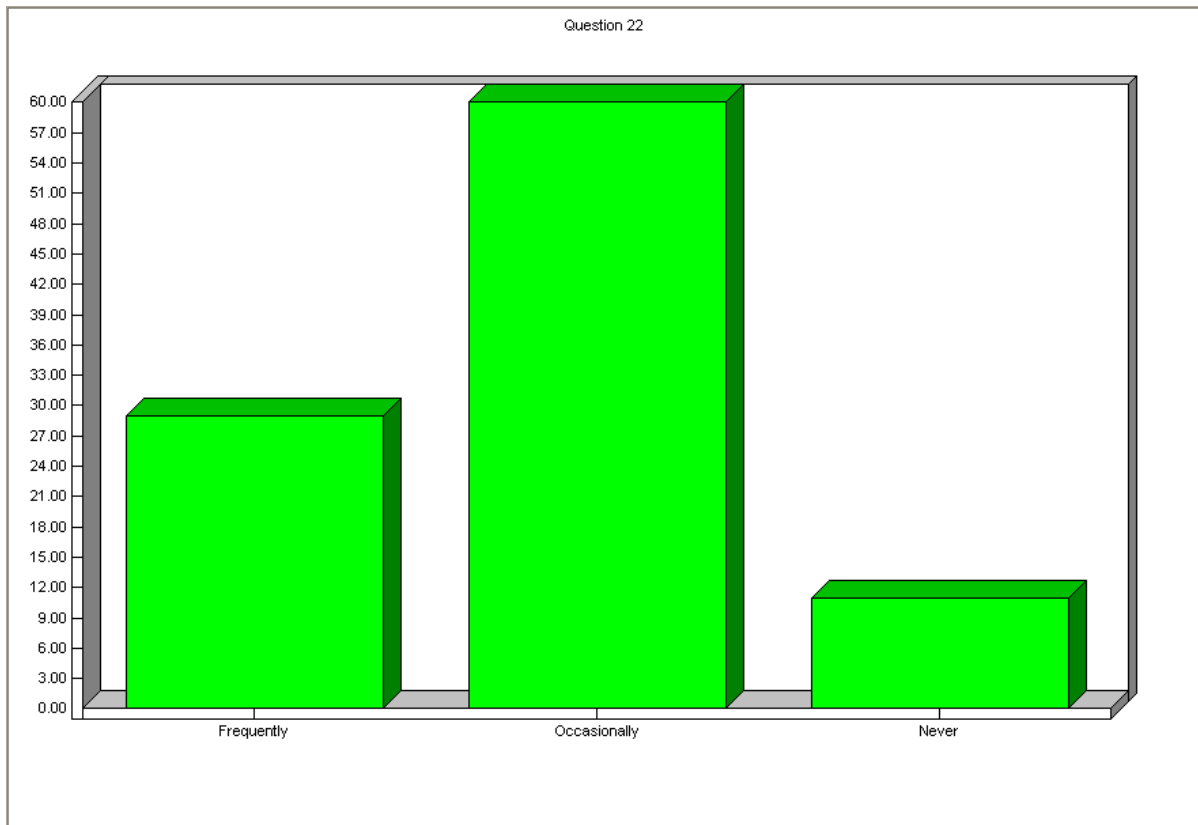
Figure 18. Difficulty relaxing with other people

## Feeling inhibited with other people

Twenty nine percent of students reported feeling inhibited with other people and sixty percent reported occasional inhibition. Only 12% of students reported never experiencing inhibition (see table 20 and figure 19).

Difficulty inhibited with other people	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	132	28.6%	27.6%
Occasionally	277	60.0%	57.9%
Never	53	11.5%	11.1%

**Table 20. Feeling inhibited with other people**



**Figure 19. Feeling inhibited with other people**

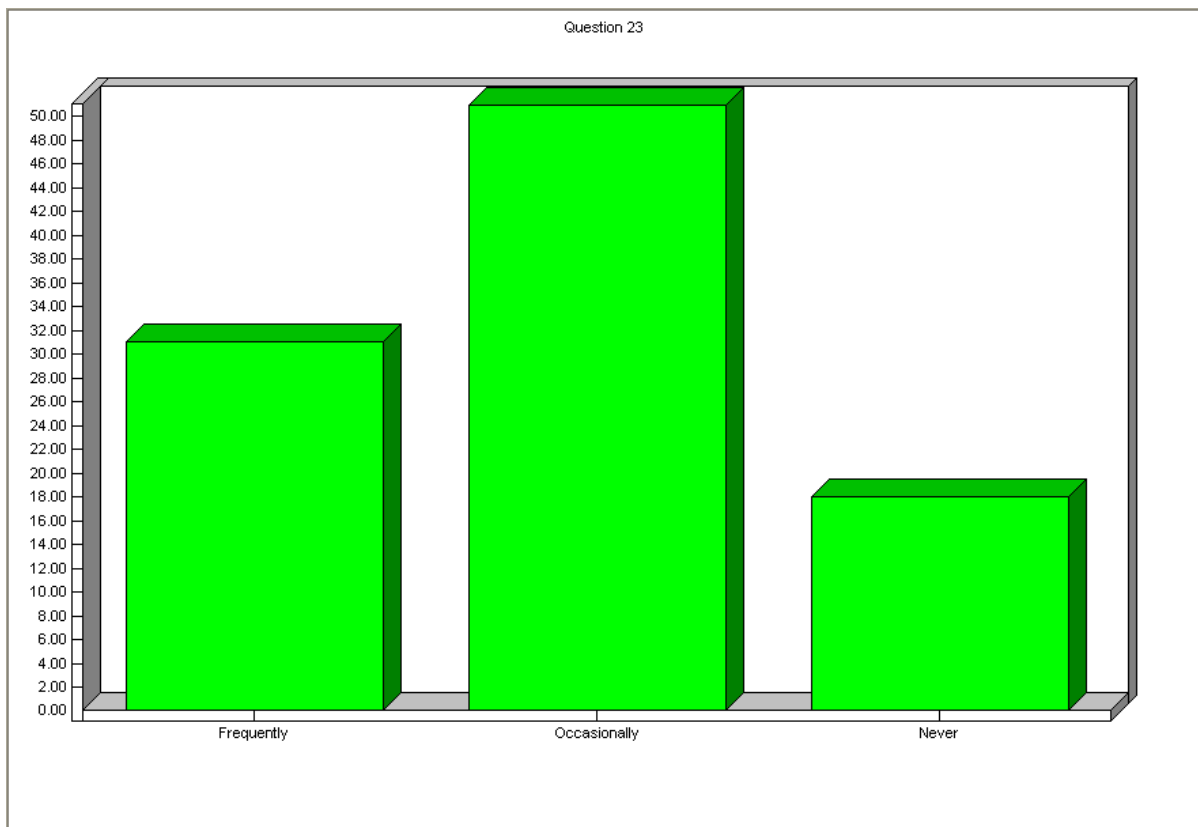


## Feeling Lonely

Thirty one percent of students reported feeling lonely and about one half of the sample reported occasional loneliness. 18% of students reported never experiencing inhibition (see table 21 and figure 20).

Difficulty inhibited with other people	Count	% of sample answering	% of total sample
Frequently	143	30.9%	29.9%
Occasionally	237	51.2%	49.6%
Never	83	17.9%	17.4%

**Table 21. Feeling lonely**



**Figure 20. Feeling lonely**

## **Qualitative Data**

In addition to the likert-type scale questions that were used to generate quantifiable survey data, the students were afforded the opportunity to provide unlimited, free-text responses to three discrete questions concerning:

- How participating in learning activities affected students
- How they coped with these events
- What changes the university could make to improve their experiences.

These three questions resulted in a plethora of brief comments totalling approximately 12000 words (the raw data is shown in appendix two).

Content analysis was used to code this information. According to Bryman (2001) qualitative content analysis facilitates contextual meaning via the development of emergent themes or categories. In order to achieve this, the students' written statements were analysed by three independent researchers from different academic backgrounds (psychology, learning disabilities and sociology) and agreement was reached on identification of recurrent themes.

The following analyses deal with the three aforementioned questions in turn.

### **How participating in learning activities affected students**

Students were asked whether they felt anxious, embarrassed, shy or had problems speaking out when taking part in lectures, seminars, presentations, problem-based learning and OSCEs. These descriptors were used because shyness, embarrassment and inhibition around public speaking have been consistently identified as problematic for people with social anxiety (Liebowitz 1987).

The student responses to this question were largely concerned with issues relating to speaking out in seminars, lectures and presentations with a smaller proportion of students raising issues relating to shyness around interactions with strangers. These types of event were clearly seen as threatening and three inter-related themes emerged relating to the time, before, during and after learning events.

## **Before**

Two subsidiary themes; anticipatory anxiety, fear of ridicule and somatic symptoms, typified student reports concerning the period preceding learning events involving public speaking.

### **Anticipatory anxiety and fear of ridicule**

The period in the run up to learning events involving public speaking was characterised by anticipatory anxiety and fear of ridicule. For example:

I get really worried when I have to do a presentation and I worry about it for ages beforehand”.

“I often feel embarrassed and worry greatly before contributing as I am mainly afraid of getting things wrong and looking stupid”.

“I tend to feel very anxious more than shy. I tend to think and worry beforehand. sometimes for days”.

### **Somatic Symptoms**

In many cases students reported prior symptoms of physical anxiety, such as sweating, heart racing, feeling short of breath or feeling faint. These are responses typically associated with sympathetic autonomic nervous system arousal or what is commonly referred to as the ‘flight-fright response’.

In a small number of cases the anticipatory anxiety appeared to be severe or even disabling:

“Very nervous before presentations, feeling sick and losing sleep... I dread them”.

“When waiting to take part in a debate or having to present some findings to the class I feel fidgety and dizzy. In the past I have walked out of the room due to very high levels of anxiety”.

“I begin panicking long before I am due to do them, on a few occasions my anxiety about a presentations has been so extreme that I have not been able to make myself leave the house, therefore missing the presentation and losing marks”.

## **During**

Five subsidiary themes characterised students reports regarding their experiences of taking part in learning activities. These were feeling shy anxious and embarrassed, being the centre of others attention where mistakes may be amplified, cognitive impairment, behavioural impairment and somatic symptoms.

### **Feeling shy, anxious and embarrassed**

Many students described themselves and shy, anxious and easily embarrassed when placed in the public gaze. Again the most frequent comments related to learning situations that involved speaking out in public.

“I’m just a shy person. I don’t like giving presentations as my voice starts to crack. If I’m made the centre of attention I go red and can’t think of anything to say”.

“Feel embarrassed and nervous about how people are going to react to what I say”.

Some students also cited shyness as a problem when interacting with unfamiliar people.

“Feel shy, especially in front of people I don’t know or hardly know”.

“I do not like to speak out in front of strangers in case what I say is laughed at or wrong”

Some of the students commented clearly suggested that their shyness and embarrassment was underpinned by low self-esteem.

“I generally feel very shy and embarrassed speaking out in front of people, because I feel I am not good enough to speak out in front of certain peers in case of humiliation”.

“I feel anxious and often find it difficult to be myself and communicate with others. I think that the anxiety comes from being afraid that I won’t be good enough and that people will judge me badly”.

“Anxiety, I tend to stutter then my self-worth flies out of the window”.

### **Being the centre of others attention where mistakes may be amplified**

Many students’ descriptions clearly indicated anxiety about being placed in the public spotlight.

“The main problem is speaking out in a large group of people even if I have a question to ask or know the answer to the question the lecturer has asked. I anticipate that speaking up in lectures will cause attention to be focussed upon me which I don’t enjoy one bit!”

“It’s mainly presentations or speaking out loudly in class. I’m quite an outgoing and really friendly person, I just can’t stand having everyone looking at me”.

“I feel really anxious like everyone is looking at me and thinking I’m stupid for asking a question. I get totally embarrassed because everyone is looking at you especially if you get the answer wrong or ask a stupid question. Therefore, I will answer or ask a question in a lecture or seminar unless forced to”.

“Wear unexcitable clothes and basically dress down my appearance to fade into the background”.

### **Cognitive Impairment**

Many of the students’ descriptions pointed to excessive self-consciousness and anxiety that detracted from their ability to think clearly and to be articulate.

“I feel anxious and very self-conscious when ‘put on the spot’ my mind goes blank, even if I know the answer!”

“I feel unable to relax, which prevents me from gaining understanding of the information being received”.

“When I feel anxious I tend to find I have difficulty in communicating my point succinctly. My thoughts tend to be muddled and I feel as though I come over as a bit half-baked”.

“Feel very anxious. It’s like I’m being judged and watched! Nerves affect body language and speech”.

### **Behavioural Impairment**

Many of the students’ descriptions showed that excessive anxiety and self-consciousness also led to behavioural difficulties, which primarily related to problems with blushing and speech.

“I always go bright red!! I absolutely hate it; I clam up and develop a really bad stammer”.

“I have problems speaking out in front of people and develop a stutter and my voice clearly shows nervousness, especially in presentations”.

“Embarrassment causing extreme blushing when asking a question in front of classmates”.

“Presentations especially make me stutter and never get my point across clearly. I think I lose marks because I cannot clearly put across my opinion in these situations”.

For some students these problems were associated with a pre-existing physical or psychological condition.

“I am terrified I will be asked questions, not because I don’t know the answer, but because I become speechless and can’t find the right words when I am the centre of attention in any situation. I have dyslexia and stumble over the words frequently getting them in the wrong order or using entirely the wrong word”.

“Suffering from psychotic episodes-the lime light stresses me to the extent that I need extra medication to keep my psychosis under control”.

“Because I have a skin condition on my face and my scalp, I feel reluctant and paranoid about it- I feel so anxious about standing in front of people, because I’m worried they will be judging me”.

Students reported somatic responses during participation in learning events akin to the earlier cited flight-fright symptoms associated with anticipatory anxiety. However, they also reported blushing and going red in addition to symptoms which impaired their performance, such as a swollen or dry throat leading to speech difficulties or feeling, sick, faint and giddy like feelings of panic.

“Embarrassed, causing extreme blushing when asked a question in front of classmates”.

“Anxious, embarrassed and shy, panic feelings, throat tightens, sweating”.

“My biggest problem is that I just seem to go completely red face and neck..it always seems to happen when I need to talk about myself or my own work”.

“I can’t breathe, I just wish the ground would open up and swallow me. I want to run away. I feel like crying and have an intense sense of panic”.

### **After: Post-event rumination**

A single theme emerged from the period following a difficult learning this was post-event rumination occurring where apparent failures and shortcomings were mulled over in a negative manner.

“I do get very embarrassed when speaking out...afterwards I nearly always think why did I say that and why didn’t I say that, etc”.

“anxiety - nervousness about speaking, replay seminars later in my head and worry what people will have thought of me - have I said the wrong thing”.

## **How students coped or managed**

Students were asked to comment on how they coped with learning events that they associated with feeling embarrassed, shy or anxious. Four inter-related themes emerged from this: Avoidance, rehearsal and preparation, dealing with issues head on and diverse coping strategies.

### **Avoidance**

#### **Being inconspicuous**

Students reported using an array of tactics to avoid having to speak out during presentations, seminars and lectures. The most common of these was to try sit somewhere inconspicuous and to avoid eye contact.

“As soon as I walk into a room, I check it out and devise a place to sit where I have the last attention on me and avoid eye contact so that a lecturer won’t pick on me to answer a question”.

“I always sit at the back of the class and avoid conversation. Some people probably think I’m rude, but I’m just shy”.

“When questions are being asked I tend to look down at the ground and avoid eye contact or pretend I’m writing something”.

#### **Avoiding learning situations**

It was also evident that some students directly avoided learning situations, involving presentations, seminars and lectures.

“I try to avoid any situation where I might have to speak in front of people”.

“Throw a sicky if it’s a presentation or hope someone else does the talking”

“I do avoid classes where I have to make a presentation and where I do not know anyone as I feel very self-conscious when I sit on my own”.

“I avoid presentations. I only answer in lectures if I’m sure of the answer”.

“I often miss seminars where I will be expected to talk, which then makes me even more nervous about going to the next one”.

#### **Avoidance affecting student learning**

Some of student’s comments clearly indicated that their personal learning or that of the group could be compromised by avoidance.

“Tend to put off completing my contribution and end up doing it late, thereby letting the group down and making the problem worse”.

“I feel very pressurised and responsible for other peoples’ marks”

“I do not attend classes where I will be asked to do a presentation. I avoid them at all costs even if it means losing ten per cent of a grade”.

“I have become insecure about the course I’m taking, so I tend to avoid interaction with other students and avoid seminars and lectures”.

“I do not go to lectures if I know I have to give presentations. I have swapped modules several times to avoid doing presentations”.

“Avoiding all classes- learning only through lecture notes on internet and books”.

“I tend to sit at the back of lecture theatres and if asked any questions keep them as short as possible (even if it misses out important things)”.

“I cope with this in seminars by reading off the sheet, but wonder if I am losing out on marks because of my presentation style”.

“I will look down in hope I don’t get picked on. In my previous degree which I failed I would avoid as many as three lectures a week because I feared speaking out so much”.

## **Safety Behaviours**

### **Rehearsal and preparation to avoid looking foolish**

People with social anxiety often engage in safety behaviours to relieve anxiety or to avoid some feared outcome. In clinical terms these are frequently regarded as counterproductive as can occur when a student covers up her mouth when speaking to avoid drawing attention to herself. However, the most common safety behaviour reported by students faced with the prospect of doing a presentation or being asked a question in a seminar or lecture was to carefully prepare or rehearse so as not to get ‘caught out’.

“For presentations I find that if I spend a lot of time preparing I become more confident and am usually ok”.

“I spend a long time preparing: I try to read as much as possible about the subject that will be discussed either in lectures or seminars so I don’t have to ‘blag it’.

“Avoid the situation where possible by any means possible, if it’s unavoidable I spend loads of time preparing”.

“I spend longer preparing than most. I sit near the back and hope to be last...as we usually run out of time and don’t finish everyone”.



For some students, doing extra preparation was clearly helpful. For others, however, it seemed to have little effect. Furthermore, there was a suggestion that over-preparing could simply heighten anxiety levels and so become counterproductive.

“I spend loads of time preparing, but it doesn’t make it feel any better”.

“I avoid giving presentations. However much I feel prepared for presentations, I am always sick with fear at actually doing them”.

“I over-prepare for presentations, but still am so nervous that they can be disastrous”.

“I prepare for classes and especially presentations vigorously, but sometimes I feel that I might over-prepare, so if I deviated from my plan I would become totally lost and terrified”.

### **Getting others to do the speaking**

Some students indicated that they would offer to take on particular group tasks in order to avoid having to speak out. Alternatively, they would sit with people who did not mind speaking.

“I avoid presentations etc if I can minimise my input in the standing up part by doing extra research”.

“I sit with a group of friends who are more than happy to answer questions on behalf of the group, so I don’t volunteer to answer any”.

### **Dealing with issues head on**

Some students recognised that speaking out was painful, but important so they dealt with their anxieties head on.

“I always turn up to a presentation, because I feel if I do more I will overcome my nerves”

“I used to try to avoid situations where I would feel put on the spot, but it never worked and it sometimes magnified the negative feelings.....now I try to just get on with it and if I’m making a presentation I don’t hide that I’m nervous”.

## **Diverse coping strategies**

Whilst avoidance, rehearsal and preparation were the most commonly methods of coping with challenging learning events, students also cited a wide range of alternatives. These are listed below without examples. However, a Word version of the student responses to all of the free-text questions is included in Appendix 2.

- Stress management: Practice breathing and visualisation techniques
- Take water or mints or a live animal into the presentation
- Rush answers to get it over with when asked a question.
- Pray to improve confidence.
- Use alcohol or herbal remedies as a social prop prior to presentations
- Walk away from lecture theatre if all ready full of people/always arrive early to avoid being conspicuous
- Only visit library or use IT facilities at the quietest times
- Sit close to the exit in the class or lecture theatre
- Talk to lecturer by email after class
- Help seeking: Go to Disability Assist Services, GP, counsellor, psychotherapist, internet self-help, prescribed tranquillisers,
- Wear three pairs of pants

## **Improving support with a magic wand**

The final free-text question asked students what improvements or facilities they would like the university to make if they had a magic wand. This resulted in four inter-related themes: Entering and embedding into university life, providing support for social anxiety, seeking help and miscellaneous issues. The themes show the issues and solutions as seen by the students.

### **Entering and bedding into university life**

#### **Fostering opportunities to socialise**

Many students suggested that there were opportunities early in the first year to help people mix and develop new social networks on entering the university. However, several students commented that there was a stereotyped expectation that all socialising occurred around the student union bar.

“When people come to uni, its either make or break in their first year, so you have to get them out of their shells early before they have a chance to start to worry about socialising”.

“More in terms of getting students together when they first arrive, not only socials set up for drinking and partying, some book groups set up perhaps”.

“More activities in the evenings in the students union that weren’t revolved around drinking”.

“An understanding that not all students feel happy to enter the UPSU bar, day or evening, alone. This is especially difficult for mature, older students who may recently have become single again”.

Some students indicated that there were problems with the university’s physical environment, which constrained social interaction.

“Got good friends now, but the whole setup made it loads harder. Robbins\* is laid out in a way that you can’t knock on people’s doors, everyone should have access to the corridors and a common room is needed”. \*hall of residence

“A common room with hot drinks machine! (PAHC\*\*). It would provide an environment where people could mix and get to know each other which may promote better relationships”. \*\*satellite college

Students saw themselves as part of a discrete ‘shy’ group and suggested that the university, their course, programme or their faculty needed to be more proactive in helping students interact.

“At the beginning of the year more opportunities should be made to let students get to know people on the course they are on. This would help students to feel more relaxed with the people they are with.”

“I would like to see more social events put on by my faculty during the first year so there is a relaxed situation to get to know other students on the same course”.

“Course social gathering would help as unless something is organised it is hard to make the initial steps to meeting others outside the classroom”.

“Perhaps more integration as a course. I lived at home during my first year and found it hard to integrate because have very few lectures and it’s hard to form relationships in a lecture cos you’re supposed to be learning!”

### **Organised social interaction**

Some students felt that they needed to be forced to interact, believing this would ultimately benefit them through making friends and reducing insecurity.

“Less hype and more community social development stuff, I mean if we actually did regular group building exercises, expressive and open tutorial sessions then our insecurities would die and our surroundings would seem less threatening”.

“Do more to bond with the subjects. For example, I am now in my final year and within my uni course we didn’t have a trip or anything fun as a subject (sociology), would have been good in the first year to get to know everyone which would have helped in the succeeding years”.

“There should be more opportunity to be involved with similar groups of people where you are forced to take a role and put yourself into a social situation on a low-key scale”.

For some student, however, forced interaction was not an attractive proposition. In addition, one student pointed out that creating groups to foster social interaction might not work, precisely because the students for whom they were intended would be too shy to attend. Another student, however, suggested social groups for first year students could be run by means of an informal mentoring system.

“I don’t like being forced to interact with new people or large groups”

“A society for socially anxious people could be good, maybe with some quieter group activities away from noisy bars/clubs, but then you have the problem of people being too anxious to run it or show up”.

“I think social groups for first year students is a very good idea, to show them Plymouth, and create a social group for nervous people by actively advertising for them around Uni. Then, if that has helped, then the original group of first years can become the people to help the next year’s freshers”

## **Providing support for social anxiety**

### **Raising awareness about social anxiety**

Students suggested a need to improve staff awareness of social anxiety and the problems associated with it such as lack of confidence and fear of unsolicited attention.

“If I had a magic wand I would make the tutors take into consideration the amount of difficulty I face when I am the centre of attention during debates and presentations”.

“There seems to be a lot of emphasis on social aspects, group work and it feels like it is taken for granted that everyone is really confident. It would be nice if there was more understanding that just being in a lecture theatre is a real big achievement for some people!”

“It would be ideal to work alongside students/lecturers/staff who don’t judge by appearance or make presumptions on someone’s intellect by someone’s speech or mannerisms”.

### **Communicating with students**

Several students pointed to a need for more effective modes of communication to advertise existing support services.

“I had no idea until the reading the options about support on this survey that so much was available ....more publicity of these issues which plagues some peoples’ university experiences”.

“Maybe help could be made more accessible, as I don’t really know who I can go and see!”

“It wasn’t clear to me that both the learning advisory and counselling service could help me with this problem”.

“As a part time student at a partnership college I feel the same service is not available and I don’t know where to go to get help”.

### **Therapeutic support for social anxiety**

Several students commented that they’d had very positive experiences when seeking support from Disability Assist, Counselling and Learning Development Services.

“The university is very good and I feel that they do offer a lot of differing kinds of support already which is up to us to utilise”.

“Overall I think that Plymouth University and its partnership colleges do this very well”.

In addition to the aforementioned issue concerning the need to improve access to support information, however, several students commented that waiting times to see a university counsellor were too long and others pointed to, what they perceived to be, a lack of specific expertise in treating social anxiety issues. In response to these issues students offered a variety of ‘self-help’ solutions, in addition to calling for access to more specialised one-to-one clinical services for social anxiety.

“Maybe having a decision diagram/questionnaire on the intranet, which helps people decide who to talk to in different circumstances and helps people realise they have a problem”.

“A discussion forum on the university web-site so shy people can ask for advice and correspond with others without coming face to face initially”.

“Maybe a short course on improving self-confidence and self-esteem in social situations”.

“More specialised services would be nice – the counselling service wasn’t equipped to cope with social anxiety in my experience”.

“Support for social anxiety on a one to one basis, to share experiences, reducing the feelings of isolation and exclusion, explore any underlying issues and offer practical guidance and strategies that will help me cope with these situations if not overcome them”

Other suggestions for support included: stress management workshops, drop-in centres for stress and counselling, a telephone enquiries helpline or first year students, better sports facilities to relieve stress and boost self-esteem, better support for mature students living off-campus and more access to female staff.

### **Pedagogic support for social anxiety**

Students were split between wanting the right to say ‘no’ to presentations, to stating that they felt that, although painful, taking part in learning activities that involved speaking out was good for their personal development.

“If we can’t do a presentation we should be given the choice not to”.

“I need to overcome my fears of standing in front of a group of people and sharing with them my work”.

It was also evident that some students felt aggrieved, because they believed they were being disadvantaged by their lack of confidence.

“I understand that presentation skills are important, but people shouldn’t benefit because they can talk openly with more confidence”.

“Stop forcing people to do presentations and to choose other forms of demonstrating knowledge. The difference in my marks from essays to presentations is significant enough I think to cost me a classification”.

A number of students felt that the university should provide a higher level of support for doing presentations and public speaking. There was a clear sense that this was necessary and fair given the perceived issues for people with social anxiety or shyness. This support ranged from public speaking workshops, to instruction in how to use *Powerpoint*, to workshops for confidence building and stress management. One student suggested that events currently taking place were not well advertised.

“I think that some sort of club or society specifically to help people with public speaking would be a great help”

“Workshops to help people calm down and prepare for presentations”.

“Offer more opportunities in training and development programmes that continue through the module programmes so that people have the ability to speak confidently in public”.

“Perhaps more emphasis on small events where verbal presentations skills can be taught. I am aware that such events take place, but they don’t seem to be publicised”.

“I think it would be a good if there was some kind of confidence booster sessions that you can drop into once in a while”

“Maybe a short course on improving self confidence and self-esteem in social situations where there is a friendly group setting to practice public speaking, etc”.

“I think that a workshop regarding giving powerpoint presentations would be good as I had to learn it through trial and error”.

Some students suggested that presentations could be made less stressful if they took place in safe settings where the group size was small. Indeed, there was a consistent call for smaller group sizes in seminars and lectures.

“Maybe offering them to give a presentation to a smaller group of people then eventually build up the numbers once the person has gained more confidence”.

“Smaller seminar groups, smaller lecture groups that feel more intimate and allow students to get to know their fellow course mates and lecturers...even in smaller seminars and workshops that I have been to it often feels very impersonal and therefore makes it harder to speak aloud”.

## Seeking Help

Whilst many students indicated the need for more and varied forms of support the issues of stigmatisation as a potential barrier to seeking help was raised. Of equal concern, however, is the fatalism expressed by a number of students who seemed to believe that nothing could be done about their social anxiety.

“I think how I feel is directly related to my confidence and self-esteem. If I was to attend some of the services available to me I would probably feel a lot better, but I don’t want others to label me for attending”.

“I haven’t tried the uni facilities yet as I avoid uni at the moment....there is nothing physically wrong with me and I would feel daft coming in saying that I am scared of coming in”.

“An assisted suicide clinic. I’m not convinced that anything can be really be done – the world demands communication skills and therefore the university too”.

“I think they do the best with what they have but you can’t sugar coat people from the world and it will get to them eventually!”

## Miscellaneous Issues

Other issues raised included the use of alcohol as social prop to cope with social anxiety, the need for smaller, more discrete IT facilities and better access to personal tutors (though several students were complimentary about their personal tutors and seminar leaders). Tight assessment deadlines were viewed as particularly problematic for mature students with families and for single-parent students living off-campus.



## **Discussion**

### **The study's limitations**

As far as the author is aware this is the first study to explore the impact of social anxiety on well-being and learning in university students. It should, however, be regarded as exploratory and limited in scope for two reasons. First, no measure was applied to gauge how severe each participant's social anxiety was and, given that social anxiety exists on a mild-severe continuum, the student data may be skewed to either end of the continuum. The second issue is that numerical analysis was not applied to the free-text responses and, whilst every effort was made to ensure accuracy and fidelity in interpreting the raw data, it should be noted that terms such as 'several', 'some', 'few', 'frequently', etc are based on subjective impressions.

For these reasons caution should be applied in extrapolating the findings. This caveat aside, the main findings will now be reviewed briefly in light of existing research where appropriate.

### **Review of the findings**

#### **Quantitative data**

##### **Emotional distress**

The majority of students (83%) in this survey reported frequent anxiety, embarrassment and inhibition whilst participating in presentations. Lower, but noteworthy, levels of frequent distress were found for seminars (45%), lectures (26%), problem-based learning (25%), OSCEs (13%) and use of shared IT facilities (13%). As previously shown the students' distress was typically linked to anxiety about having to speak out in public during these learning activities.

Although there is no directly comparable data to draw on regarding the impact of social anxiety on learning on students in higher education, it is known that public speaking anxiety is common in the general population. For example, Stein et al (1996) reports that approximately one-third of adults experience excessive anxiety when speaking to a large audience. Furthermore, concern about public speaking can have serious educational repercussions. Ameringen et al (2002), for example, studied 200 patients with an anxiety disorder and found that a significant proportion of those with a lifetime diagnosis for social anxiety reported problems speaking in front of the class as one of the main reasons for leaving school early. Similarly, Monroe et al (1992) studied communication apprehension in 1400 students over a four year period starting in the 9th grade and found that students who were highly apprehensive regarding communication with others were more likely to terminate their high school education prior to graduation. Moreover, 25% of these students

cited communication apprehension as the primary reason for dropping out of high school.

### **Concurrent mental health issues**

In this survey students also reported frequent emotional well-being problems in the six month preceding the survey with stress being the most common(55%), followed by depression (24%), panic (24%), anger (16%), thoughts of self-harm or suicide (7%). The students reported frequent problems with social relationships the most frequent being loneliness (31%) followed by feeling inhibited with other people (29%) and discomfort in social settings (28%). Similar findings were obtained in two recent surveys carried out by the University of Leicester (2001) in respect of depression and Loneliness and in respect of discomfort in social settings (Voitkane 2004).

### **Help seeking**

This survey found that the majority of students (70%) typically sought support from friends and family, whilst less than 10% of students sought help from support services, such as student counselling with 17% seeking help from their personal tutor. It is interesting to compare these findings with data from the aforementioned, surveys carried out by the University of Leicester (2001), which employed a normative sample of more than 2500 students to explore issues relating to psychological help. The comparative data is shown in table 22. What is immediately striking is that the students with social anxiety in the Plymouth survey were much less likely to seek help from their personal tutor or the health centre, than students drawn from the normative, University of Leicester sample, though there is no real difference in respect of seeking help from family or friends, the Students Union or Chaplaincy. These findings broadly appear to support other research which places family and friends as the most important source of support for students (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2003) and research which shows that people with social anxiety are generally very reluctant to seek professional help for their condition (Bruce and Saeed 1999).

<b>Source of support</b>	<b>University of Plymouth</b>	<b>University of Leicester</b>
Family and friends	69%	66%
Personal tutor	17%	55%
Student Counselling	9%	8%
Health Centre	3%	40%
Student Union	5%	1%
Chaplaincy	1%	2%

Table 22. Comparative Data for Help Seeking Behaviour

## **Review of the findings: Qualitative data**

### **How participating in Learning Events Affected Students**

#### **Anticipatory anxiety, fear of ridicule and somatic symptoms**

Schlenker and Leary (1982) were among the first psychologists to suggest that anticipatory anxiety is the hallmark of social anxiety. They proposed that people with social anxiety are driven to present a favourable public image, whilst holding negative beliefs about their ability to do so. Veale (2003) elaborates on this by stating that when socially individuals enter a social situation conflicting implicit *rules* are activated (i.e. I must appear witty and intelligent), together with *assumptions* (if he really gets to know me he will realise I'm dumb) and *unconditional beliefs* (people find me boring). This juxtaposition generates a strong fear of being ridiculed by others, which is inevitably accompanied by unpleasant somatic symptoms.

For students in this survey, anticipatory anxiety was commonplace around learning activities which involved or might involve speaking out in public. This was particularly evident around learning events involving presentations. Furthermore, fear of ridicule led many students to fear being 'put on the spot', as might occur if asked an impromptu question in a seminar or lecture, because they were worried they would respond in a way that would make them appear foolish to others.

In this survey students also experienced a range of unpleasant, accompanying somatic symptoms, such as those typifying the flight-fright response (dry mouth, racing heart, trembling, etc). However, other, more disabling symptoms were also reported, such as being sick, speech difficulties and panic.

#### **Being the centre of attention where mistakes are amplified**

Another key feature of social anxiety is a state of acute self-consciousness that occurs when people with social anxiety find themselves the unwanted object of others' attentions (Buss 1980). Veale (2003) explains that this occurs when people in social situations believe they are in danger of being negatively evaluated. At this point an attentional shift occurs towards detailed self-observation and monitoring of internal sensations and images. This information is then used to infer how others are evaluating them. This aspect of social anxiety was strongly evident in the students' responses and, again, the main focus of concern was on learning events where impromptu questions might be asked or presentations to peers where being the centre of others' attentions was unavoidable. In addition, some students referred specifically to concerns about saying something stupid, appearing nervous and concern about being different by way of having an accent or having a skin condition. Notably, there is some research evidence that people are less able to absorb information from external cues when acutely self-focussed and this is likely to affect learning (Clark and McManus 2002). There was some evidence of this in the survey.

For example, one student stated that excessive self-focussed attention during lectures led to them absorbing nothing from the lecture so 'it became a pointless exercise'.

### **Avoidance**

Earlier reference was made to the commonality of public speaking anxiety in the general population. However, Liebowitz (2003) states that what differentiates social anxiety from 'normal' public speaking anxiety is the severity and pervasiveness of the underlying fear together with the avoidance behaviours that frequently accompany it.

In this survey avoidance behaviour was clearly evident in many forms. These included students' simple attempts to avoid interaction with lecturers by hiding or avoiding eye contact, to more extreme forms of avoidance, which included failing to contribute to group work, abstaining from seminars, lectures, presentations and modules or in severe cases avoiding people and public places.

It seems likely that such avoidance will have a deleterious effect on student learning. For example, avoidance of eye contact or short, mono-syllabic replies to a lecturer's questions may be attributed to a lack of interest or knowledge. Furthermore, complete avoidance of learning activities (as reported by several students in this survey) could have a marked affect on student learning and performance.

### **Cognitive and behavioural impairment**

For a long time it has been known that high levels of anxiety and autonomic arousal impair cognitive functioning (Yerkes and Dodson 1908). As previously noted, many students in this survey reported feeling acutely self-conscious and anxious during learning activities and this was associated with reports of cognitive and behavioural impairment with students reporting variously that their mind would go blank, or their thoughts would be muddled or they would stutter and stumble over their words and be unable to express themselves fluently.

### **Post event rumination**

Clarke and McManus (2002) state that people with social anxiety frequently engage in negative post-event rumination, a term which is used to describe the incessant mulling over of events in a manner that extracts the negative rather positive elements of a given social event. There was some, limited evidence of this in this survey. However, this may have been due to the wording of the free-text questions, which asked required students to focus on learning events rather than what occurred afterwards.

## **How students coped with learning events**

### **Avoidance**

As previously noted, students in this survey reported a variety of ways of coping with challenging learning events. These included rendering the self inconspicuous by hiding at the back or middle of lecture theatres, sitting behind tall people, avoiding eye contact and pretending to be busy writing when the lecturer was scanning the room for someone to 'pick on'. In addition, students avoided sessions where lecturers were known to ask questions and avoided modules that involved presentations, etc.

### **Safety behaviours**

Veale (2003) states that safety behaviours may be adopted in feared situations as a means of preventing disaster. When the disaster fails to occur it is erroneously attributed to the safety behaviour rather than any personal effort to act effectively. This process maintains the safety behaviour(s) and this often prevents the individual from learning new skills to deal with the events and situations they fear.

Safety behaviours can also have a paradoxical effect so that an individual who is talking quietly to avoid drawing excessive attention to the self may actually increase others' attentions as the audience strain to hear what is being said.

In this survey, the primary safety behaviour involved a high level of preparation and rehearsal so that students could not get 'caught out' if asked a question or look foolish when delivering a presentation. On the face of it this appears to be a desirable outcome of social anxiety and it may well be that these students' academic performance is enhanced as a consequence. However, some students reported that rehearsing simply increased their anxiety or failed to help on the day when their thoughts became muddled regardless. It is also worth noting that excessive preparation for events such as presentations may detract from learning in other domains.

Evidence of safety behaviours was also found in reports of offering to do research or technical preparation if others in the group would do the speaking and sitting with people who were confident in speaking out. In respect of assessed presentations, these safety behaviours may raise potentially interesting issues about what and whom is being assessed when the finished product is intended to be a group effort.

### **Diverse coping strategies**

Whilst avoidance, rehearsal and preparation were the most dominant coping strategies reported in this survey, students reported a wide array of strategies some of which were positive and others not. Among appropriate coping strategies students referred to stress management techniques, using faith and prayer, seeking professional help from a counsellor, GP or psychotherapist, contacting the lecturer

by email or waiting to talk when the class was empty. Dysfunctional coping responses included the use of alcohol as social prop to bolster self-confidence.

## **Improving support for social anxiety**

### **Support for embedding into university life**

#### **Fostering opportunities to socialise**

The first year is important for the social integration of students into the academic and social fabric of university (McInnis 1998). Indeed, this is often regarded as the make-or-break period for new students as they face a range of transitional stressors, particularly when starting university entails leaving home (Fisher 1994). These stressors are exacerbated where the student has lost their normal social support network and a key element of successful bedding into university life is the development of new social networks (Robotham 2006).

In this survey students' recognised the importance of developing social networks. However they also saw themselves as a discrete group with special needs and they expressed reluctance to socialise and gain new friends through the 'normal' routes, which invariably involved drinking at the Student Union, partying and clubbing, etc. In addition, students noted some problems with the physical environment, such as the lack of a common room in a hall of residence, which they believed hindered social interaction.

#### **Organised social interaction**

Recognising a self-reluctance to engage in social events, some students suggested that the university needed to take some responsibility for fostering social interaction. There were suggestions, for example, that group development activities could be built into programmes and that Induction Week could be organised to actively help students get to know one another. This was seen as having potential benefits for group based learning later in the year.

Some students, however, were opposed to 'forced interaction', but there was a suggestion that year two and three students with social anxiety could mentor new, socially anxious students entering university for the first time.

There were also numerous calls for alternative clubs or societies that were not based on stereotyped, drinking activities. However, it was noted that students' social anxiety might prevent them from attending in the first place.

## **Support for social anxiety**

### **Raising awareness of social anxiety**

Social anxiety is a common but poorly recognised condition (Furmark 2002; Bruce and Saeed 1999), which usually goes undetected by professionals and tends to be invisible in the classroom (Kashdan and Herbert 2001). This was reflected in this survey with various student comments relating to lecturer's needing to know and understand the condition and how it impact on student behaviour and learning.

### **Improving communication with students**

Students indicated that there was a need to advertise existing support services and to communicate how they could benefit students with social anxiety. One student, for example, expressed surprise on learning that she could obtain help from both learning advisory services and counselling services, whilst others commented on having no idea just how much help was available.

### **Improving therapeutic support for social anxiety**

Several students in this survey commented on their positive experiences with university support services. However, there were also some complaints about access to counselling services, whilst others pointed to a need to provide specific expertise in treating social anxiety issues. There were also numerous calls for drop-in workshops and short courses for issues such as confidence and self-esteem, stress management and public speaking. In addition, some students pointed to 'self-help' solutions, including having a decision diagram/questionnaire on the intranet to help people decide who to talk to in different circumstances, a telephone-enquiry helpline and a discussion forum on the university web-site so that shy people could ask for advice and correspond with others without coming face to face initially. Furthermore, some mature students drew particular attention to the need to consider support for students living or studying outside of the main Plymouth campus.

### **Barriers to support**

Whilst many students indicated the need for more and varied forms of support the issues of stigmatisation was raised as a potential barrier. Indeed, Bruce and Saeed (1999) note that a major obstacle to seeking professional help is shame and fear of being negatively evaluated. In this regard it is interesting to reconsider the comparative data referred to earlier in table 21, which shows low rates of help-seeking from personal tutors, the health centre and counselling services and to note that one might reasonably have expected higher rates given that the data is drawn from a discrete group that have problems with anxiety. As one student put it; "I haven't tried the uni facilities yet as there is nothing physically wrong with me and I would feel daft coming in saying that I am scared of coming in".

Of equal concern was the fatalism and negativity expressed by some students whose commented that nothing could be done about their condition. Taken as a whole, the expressed fear of stigmatisation and fatalism suggest that much more needs to be done to communicate the possibilities for support available for students that have social anxiety.

### **Improving pedagogic support for social anxiety**

Attention has already been drawn to the potential impact of social anxiety on learning and academic performance and the students' concerns around public speaking. This theme was reiterated when students were asked to consider how the university might improve support for students with social anxiety. As noted earlier, students were split on the issue of presentations with some demanding the right to be offered an alternative, whilst others suggested that presentations were a painful necessity that required appropriate pedagogic support. In addition, several students noted, what they perceived to be, the injustice of assessments that took no account of the problems associated with having social anxiety. They expressed the view that the ability to communicate seemed to take precedence over acquiring knowledge so that, in their eyes, style was seen to triumph over substance.

In respect of support for these issues, there were calls for public speaking workshops, instruction in how to use *Powerpoint* and workshops for confidence-building and stress management. Furthermore, there were repeated calls for smaller group sizes in seminars and lectures.

### **Conclusion**

This exploratory study contains some interesting findings and highlights some potentially important issues that require further investigation. It is evident that learning activities which involve public speaking cause students with social anxiety great concern. It is also apparent that avoidance of learning activities may hinder learning and academic achievement, though this may be offset by extra rehearsal and preparation. Staff and student understanding and awareness of social anxiety needs to be improved as does support for students and their communication and advertising. Furthermore, some of the improvements that students suggest, such as web-based information, students mentoring and improvements to student induction week could be instigated quickly and with relatively low cost. Other measures, such as drop-in workshops, would have greater financial cost, but would be of benefit to the wider student population given that problems with anxiety and public speaking are not restricted to students who have social anxiety.

In conclusion, the findings from this study provide tentative evidence that social anxiety should be taken seriously when considering curriculum design and student support.



Appendix 1.

The Web Survey Tool, Page 1 (Introduction and Screening)

<b>Student Social Anxiety Survey</b>	
Do you worry about having to speak in seminars or presentations and are you often shy and embarrassed?	
Please look at the three questions below...if you answer yes to these please click the link marked 'yes' at the bottom of this page	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Being embarrassed or looking stupid are among my worst fears</b></li><li>• <b>Fear of embarrassment causes me to avoid doing things or speaking to people</b></li><li>• <b>I avoid activities in which I am the centre of attention</b></li></ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Yes</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>No</u></a>

## Social anxiety survey

We are conducting a survey which will provide valuable information about the impact of social anxiety on student well-being and learning activities such as seminars and presentations

### Consent

Please respond to the following questions; this should take no more than 10 minutes. In providing this information you are consenting to take part in this survey. However, the information you provide will be anonymised and your email address will be invisible when you reply.

---

### Information about yourself

I'm enrolled on the following type of programme

- Certificate
- NVQ
- Diploma
- Foundation Studies or Degree
- BSc or BA
- Post-graduate studies
- Other (specify)

I am aged

- 16-20
- 21-29
- 31-30
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 or over

I am studying at one of the

- Main university campuses
- University Partnership Colleges
-

I am a

- 1st year student
- 2nd year student
- 3rd year student
- 4th year student
- Other (please describe)

## Your Learning Experiences

Sometime students experience embarrassment and anxiety or feel inhibited taking part or speaking out during learning activities.

Please indicate whether you experience embarrassment and anxiety or feel inhibited in one or more of the following situations:

Seminars

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Presentations

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Problem based learning

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Lectures

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

OSCEs

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Using Shared IT Facilities

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never
- Other (please describe)

Please describe how taking part in these activities affects you personally. For example, do you feel anxious, embarrassed or shy, do you have problems speaking out?

Please describe how you cope with or manage these activities. For example, do you sit where you are less likely to be noticed or to be asked questions? Do you avoid classes where you might be asked questions or have to do a presentation? Or perhaps you spend extra time preparing?

## Support

Please identify the main sources of help that you have used in the past

- Friends and family
- Personal tutor
- Student Counseling Services
- Students Union
- Student Health Centre
- Student Learning Support
- Chaplaincy
- Night Line
- Other (please describe)

## Emotional Well-Being

Some students find that studying at university or college is stressful and their emotional health suffers. Please indicate whether you have experienced any of the following during the past six months:

Anxiety and Stress

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Depression

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Panic

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Anger

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Thoughts of self harm or suicide

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

## **Relationships**

Some students experience relationship difficulties when studying at university or college. Please indicate whether any of the following affect you:

Difficulty forming relationships

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Discomfort in social settings

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Difficulty relaxing with other people

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Feeling inhibited with other people

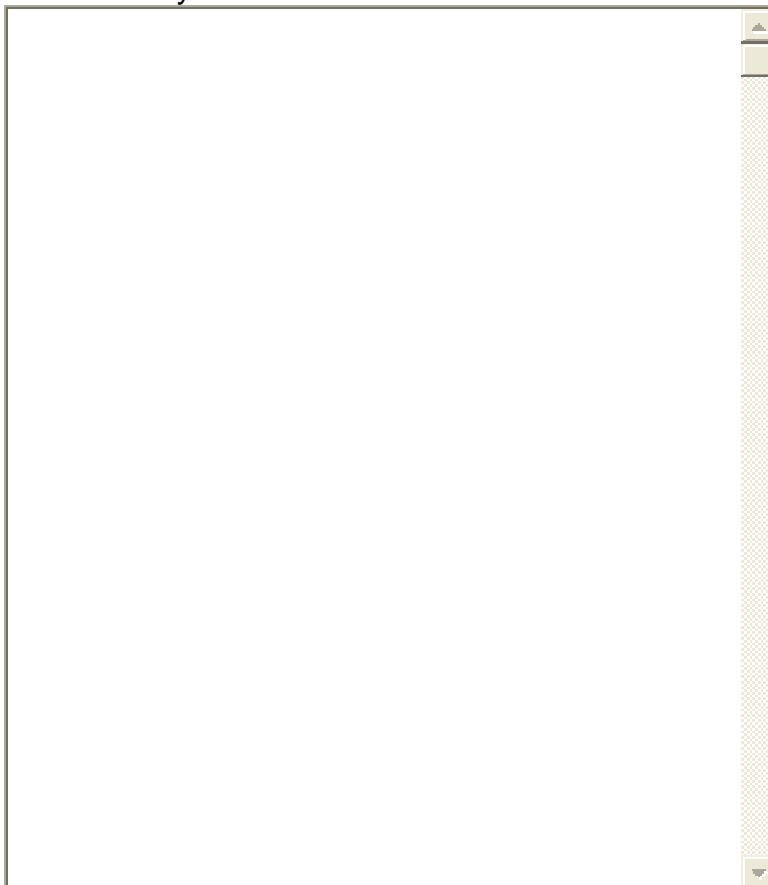
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

Feeling lonely

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never

### **Making Changes**

We are interested in gaining your views about things that could be done to support students like yourself. If you had a magic wand what improvements or facilities could the university offer?



## Can you help us?

Finally, we would like to interview a small number of students (this may be done in person or via the telephone) to gain more detailed information about the issues covered in this survey. If you would like to take part please email

[graham.russell@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:graham.russell@plymouth.ac.uk)

We would be delighted to hear from you.

## Support

If you are troubled by any of the issues raised in this survey and would like support please contact

Mr [gcrussell@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:gcrussell@plymouth.ac.uk) or Ms [abrown@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:abrown@plymouth.ac.uk)

Information about these issues can also be obtained from the National Phobics Society Website, which can be accessed at:

<http://www.phobics-society.org.uk>

6.0.162	Z2NydXNzZWxsl	c29jaWFsYW54e	SOCIAL ANXIETY	socialanxietyurv	socialanxietyurv
	Q1 N;Q1Specifiec	Q1;Q2;Q3;Q4;Q5		You have already	
<input type="button" value="Submit Survey"/>					

## Appendix 2. Raw data from the free-text response questions.



**Q.11 Please describe how taking part in these activities affects you personally. For example, do you feel anxious, embarrassed or shy, do you have problems speaking out?**

• Text box 1

- makes me anxious feel shy, nervous
- makes me anxious feel shy, nervous
- I become tongue-tied and feel shaky, hot and cold, like all eyes are on me ready to criticise
- I feel shy and get very embarrassed which just makes me more embarrassed!! I go very red which makes the situation even worse.
- anxiety - nervousness about speaking, replay seminars later in my head and worry what people will have thought of me - have I said the wrong thing
- I often hold back my opinions during discussions, i find it particulary hard when the rest of the group is quite quiet as well. These feelings only tend to affect me when I am not in charge of the situation.. for example if in my previous job I used to train and give presentaions to large groups and I was fine. It will also depend on the lecturer - some deal with incorrect answers tactfully others are not so tactful!
- All of above. Also affects my speaking as begin to stutter etc.
- it's a phobia, hence it's like the same irrational response someone might get to a spider.
- i tend to speak very fast as i just want it to be over i hate standing out the front
- I feel very nervous. I worry about freezing or not being able to answer questions correctly.
- I have difficulty articulating what I am thinking as I am spending too much time worrying about what everyone else is thinking ababout me. I get embarassed easily and often blush quite badly when giving a presentation etc.
- It's easier to say nothing than to speak out.
- All the above with addedd haedaches and stomach aches, alos unable to read and make lots of mistakes, oh and go bright red
- -anxious that people aren't interested in what I'm saying & so embarassed that I have to do it -anxious that people are very critical -worried about workshop leader or tutor's reaction if I give a wrong answer
- In a presentation situation I can feel very nervous and anxious depending on my frame of mind that day. I can experience blushing, sweating and embarrassment. Sometimes I would avoid asking a question in a lecture, if I felt I may appear stupid.
- I will not speak out in a lecture and often feel nervous if I believe I might be asked to speak out. I used to suffer from panic attacks quite badly when in social situations and this seems to be a reminant of that problem.
- scarred embarrassed, get very nervous and hands start to shake and voice gets vey nervous and shakes, embarrassed when being asked a question go red and get sticky palms and go hot.
- i feel stupid, it affect my reading if i am reading off a sheet if i am speaking from memory i forget what i am sayiny, i start to shake, i sweat feel the need to be sick
- i feel anxious i will gt asked a question, i feel nervous if i have to speak and this makes me stutter and speak very quickly so i cant be understood

- I start to feel physically sick: hot, shaky and sweaty and anxious.
- I feel shy and scared about speaking out in front of people
- It makes me shy and withdrawn so that i hardly talk to anyone
- i can feel embarressed and continually worry that if i do speak then i will get it wrong.
- i dont mind speaking aloud, but when it comes to your own work i hate it it makes me nervous for days even weeks before and i often decide not to attend these presentations as i am too nervous.
- Anxious
- I feel very anxious, very sick, my legs wobble, voice trembles and face goes bright red.
- Have problems in recalling material
- Physical symptoms, hyperventilation, panic, paranoia, stuttering, alogia, Psychological effects - disconnected to other people in room, preoccupation with threat makes it difficult to take in/learn from what other people are saying, including lecturer.
- Anxious, embarrassed, difficult to get words out when speaking publicly, leads to more anxiety and embarrassment.
- Anxious, embarrassed, difficult to get words out when speaking publicly, leads to more anxiety and embarrassment.
- shy, embarrassed and very small.
- i feel nervous when i am asked my opinion in seminars because it feels like what i am saying is wrong or irrelevant.
- Blush and feel scared
- Problems speaking, words come out wrong, fear of being wrong
- I feel very embarressed and shy and often go red which puts me off participating. This makes me feel anxious about what people think me.
- shy, worried that i'm asking a stupid question or have prepared the wrong information. I'm too quietly spoken
- shy, problems to articulate myself (international student)
- Its mainly presentations or speaking out loud in class. Im quite an outgoing and really friendly person, I just cant stand having everyone looking at me!
- Presentations make me nervous and I start shaking. If I have a questions I often don't ask it even though sometimes it can be a valid point
- peaking in seminars is difficult because I feel much more stupid than the rest of the group. I prefer to listen rather than contribute which is selfish of me but i find it less stressful
- embarressed when speaking out
- I suffer from anxiety anyway, so presentations etc are terrifying for me
- I just worry that what i might say might be wrong and then then i will get laughed at so will get very shy.
- I feel anxious; I start fidgetting with things; I'll feel extremely embarrassed if I get anything just slightly wrong, and even if something was right, I'll still feel really self conscious. I find it near impossible to speak out unless it is a small group and I am sitting near the front.
- Very nervous and shakey and anxious
- shy - I have problems when I have to speak more than a short sentence - I start stuttering when I think everyone is focused on me
- im just a shy person. i dont like giving presentations as my voice starts to crack. if im made centre of attention i go red and cant think of anything to say!

• I feel anxious, i sometimes cant sleep the night before thinking about it. I stand in front of the group i get sweaty, i mumble, it is the worrst things i have to do in my life

- embarrassed and anxious
- I get really shy and nervous and I am sometimes sick before the event.
- I feel anxious, concerned by what others think of me.
- When I feel anxious I tend to find I have difficulty in communicating my point succinctly. My thoughts tend to be muddled at times and I feel as though I come over as a bit half-baked.
- Anxious and unable to concentrate
- anxious about saying a stupid answer or asking an obvious question
- The main problem I experience is speaking out in a large group of people even if I have a question to ask or I know the answer to a question the lecturer has asked. I anticipate that speaking up in lectures will cause the attention to be focused upon me, which I do not like or enjoy one bit!
- do not like to draw attention to myself, i put this predominately down to shyness
- Certainly have problems speaking out. I get anxious and blush badly which inly makes the problem worse.
- Don't like speaking in front of people, think I will say the wrong thing or answer the question wrong. Especially find presentations very scary.
- More physical signs of anxiety when doing presentations, hard to breathe, cant look at people, voice goes wobbly
- Shy, anxious, afraid of making a mistake, lack of confidence in my ability
- i choose not to speak out in seminars just in case i get the answer wrong even when i am often correct
- i have problems talking in front of people
- My heart rate increases and I feel sick if asked to do something on my own in front of a group of people who are my peers even if it is as simple as reading from a book
- in seminars when asked to contribute or participate in presentations i feel a heightened sense of nervousness, which can manifest in a kind of nervous laughter, physical symptoms include sweating, fast heartrate, i dont like attention focused on myself,
- presentations esspecially make me stutter and never get my point across clearly. i think i lose marks because i cannot clearly put across my opinion and ideas in these situations
- I have difficvulty with speaking in most tutorials and in particular presentations.
- I do not like talking in social situations, as i feel uncomfortable. I am also worried that my opinions are not valid.
- Anxious at saying wrong thing, don't speak out even if I know the answer
- i feel embarrassed about speaking out loud in front of people, worried ill say stupid things so i jsut clam up.
- anxiety, feelings of inadaquecy
- My biggest problem is that i just seem to go completely red, face and neck, i'm not embarrssed did i end up in a right mess. It always seems to happen when i need to talk about myself or my own work.
- Too anxious to speak properly. Unwilling to speak out as it draws attention.
- i try to speak out but find myself anxious and afraidof saying something wrong or embarrassing.

- giving presentations makes me extremely nervous, i tremble and my mind goes completely blank, so much so that i cant give hte resentation
- scared to say anything because i think it's stupid. or when i do say something it's just a smart ass comment.
- Working in groups that are larger than about 3, i find myself being overpowered by louder memebers and just keep myself to myself rather than share my ideas. in small groups i feel much more comfortable to speak out.
- I start to feel sick and then i think i will be sick and start panicking about being sick infront of everyone
- feel embarrassed and stupid in comparison to other people. feel anxious
- Anxiety, embarassment as experience blocks with speech due to stammer.
- Doing presentations makes me very nervous, shaky and fortunately I havnt yet been put in this situation at university but had bad experiences at Secondary School. The anxiety is a problem as over the past year or two i've started to feel physically sick when anxious. Last March I visited Reading University but spent the morning being sick and ended up two days later in hospital because my body wouldn't accept food or fluid, the same happened hours before a flight on holiday and when I first moved down here, (which led to a few tests in which another problem was found and is being investigated which was kind of a double blow at a time when I wasn't feeling at my best, it kind of spoilt freshers week because I felt unable to go out.) I've settled in quickly though and havnt had these problems since although I'm not sure whether the stress and worry leading upto a presentation could bring back the problems I had.
- I'm a confident person...until it comes to doing presentations etc. My throat swells up, my heart rate increases!!
- feel anxious and get nervous when presurised into speaking out loud. I know i will go red when talking out loud.
- In situation of speaking outload often have a shortness of breath which in turn affects my speech. My heart races and I often forget what i have prepared to say. As a result i tend to avoid all presentation work and never participate vocally in lectures and seminars. General crowdedness in social areas often leaves me very nervous.
- embarrassed
- Embarrassed and shy, although if I am with people I know I am okay, other than with presentations.
- i stutter when i speak to the class and am normally loud and bubbly but speak quietly
- I feel very anxious speeking in front of a group of people or people I think know more about a subject than I do. I believe that they will all think I don't know what I'm talking about. I'm always worried about saying something wrong or being asked a question I don't know the answer to.
- I feel very anxious, I am terrified I will be asked questions - not because I dont know the answer but because I become speachless and cant find the right words when I am the center of attention in any situation. I have dyslexia and stumble over words frequently getting them in the wrong order or using entirly the wrong word!
- Embarrassed talking in front of people
- avoid eye contact, don't speak unless I have to, feel anxious and panicky
- Anxious, and embarassed that everyone will be looking at me and judging me behind my back.

- I do not like being the centre of attention and do what I can to avoid being put in a situation where this may happen. I always go red when put in these situations and feel vulnerable and embarrassed.
- don't want to speak out incase i'm wrong. don't want people to think i'm stupid can't do presentations, avoid them at all costs!
- usually start to get nervous when I think about the presentation. What people will think, what they will be looking at. I don't like having all the attention put on me. During lectures I tend not to answer questions, only when we are in small seminar groups do I feel comfortable
- I go red when centre of attention, therefore I tend not to speak out, especially when in a large group
- get very nervous and go red, although people say i come across as being quite confident
- Feel anxious embarrassed and shy, am worried about saying the wrong things and muddling my words, or being criticised
- i hate asking questions in lectures as i have a irish accent and generally have to reapeat myself several times before a lecturer will understand me, and i dont like the thought that i am the only one not getting the point and that everyone else is understanding what is being taught
- i have a problem when i hear my voice on a microphone. i am waht you call mike shy. this presents problem as i am trying to overcome this and be able to sing. sometimes even when i play bass guitar in a group i get embarrassed particularly if it is met with applause, oddly i deal better with rejection than praise.
- I feel anxious or shy but i dont think i feel embarrassed. I feel anxious if i am unsure of whether what i am saying is correct of if i am talking alone to a group (eg a presentation).
- When waiting to take part in a debate or having to present some findings to the class, i feel very fidgety, dizzy and as though i need to get away. In the past i have just walked out of the room due to very high levels of anxiety. It feels as though im about to faint, and if i stay then i shake alot, struggle to talk, and forget what it was i should be talking about.
- dont like answering questions or speaking to others makes me embarrassed
- i feel shy at being put in the spot light so i feel i can't voice my opinons as mush as i'd like too
- they make me nervous, i am worried people will be judging me and looking at me and just waiting for me to slip up.
- get nervous, and then have trouble speaking out clealy and for another to understand, also always trip over my own words.
- Even if I have a sound understanding of the topic in hanD, I find I am unable to come across clearly. I go exeptionally red, shake feels sick and sweat. Its horrid!
- In my final year of study I have increased amount of presentations and the like and I feel that it can be unfair as my embarrassment and nervousness at doing these often does not reflect my full ability or knowledge as I completely lose myself during these due to lack of confidence rather than lack of understanding or work done.
- i commonly feel that i know less on topics under discussion then others in the room and that they know this.
- I get nervous speaking to a group of four or more people, sometimes if its even only my friends. The nerves can cause me to have problems with my speech,

such as mumbling etc that i do not usually have problems with. Its is something that I always dread doing.

- I fear that people might misread me or disagree with me and that my opinion may not be considered valid. Mostly it's just a mild pre-panic, panic attack type thing that makes me question what I am doing and how to who? I worry about people's judgements of me. Not all of this is on a massive scale, however I have left my course due to a fear of bad performance.

- yes, i always worry about speaking publicly and often dont do so even if i have a question or wish to contribute

- I begin to stammer and then become incredibly self concious, I worry about people thinking I don't know what I'm talking about and I feel like I'm being judged.

- yes

- I become very anxious, especially when taking part in presentations. I feel as if everyones judging me in a negative way.

- I'm not sure what OSCEs are, its mainly when I have to speak and eveyone is looking at me - panic, anxiety if I do a presentation it has to be planned down to the last intonation - scripted and rehearsed several times, although I have got better, I still have to plan and rehearse - I have tried visualisations, some of my friends take beta blockers, one of my friends had a panic attach and ran out

- i go bright red whenever I have to speak out in a situation where people are looking at me. I am very aware that people are looking at me and judging me and so this makes me anxious.

- Yes to all of the above, i cant breath, i just wish the ground would open up and swallow me. I want to run away. I feel like crying and have an intense sense of panic. Then sometimes i think it could be easier if i was dead then i wouldnt have to do any thing, of couse that is extreme so i wouldnt do any thing drastic, but i do feel sick and stupid and embarrassed and scared and afraid.

- Feel anxious and worried that things will go wrong or I will say the wrong thing

- i always feel embarrassed and i go really red if i have to answer any questions or if i have to stand in front of people. if i'm doing a presentation, i get short of breath and stumble over words.

- Have problems controlling my nervousness when giving presentations. This makes me shake etc.,

- Embarrassed

- dont feel confident to speak in front of people, feel that im going to do it wrong, dont feel confident in my abilities. even if i know the topic or know what im going to say, when it comes to it i feel too nervous and have to read off of the cue card

- I get panic attacks and I do not feel comfortable with others on my course. I get extremely anxious and have to force myself to attend seminars as I am afraid of being asked to speak. I have changed modules to avoid having to do presentations.

- I feel anxious before and embarrassed during presentations to my seminar group. I often feel anxious when speaking in seminar discussion, especially if I am trying to express disagreement with a point being raised/

- I have problems speaking in front of people and develop a stutter and my voice clearly shows nervousness, especially in presentations

- I don't like giving presentations or seminars really as it makes me feel nervoust. Im quite a confident person but don't like standing up in front of people.

- I often feel really nervous about meeting new people or airing my views in these situations as i worry that people might not agree with what i say. I also worry that the tutor will say that I am wrong in front of everyone and make me feel stupid!
- Feel shy especially when have to do a presentation in front of people I don't know or hardly know.
- become very embarrassed and cannot talk properly
- There is a constant fear that what you are saying is wrong. In a unviersity environment all lectures have a greater understanding of any subject you are supposed to talk about and so you feel regardless of what you say its wrong. In presentation there is also anxiety from people looking at you.
- I have just done a presentation and I was worrying and panicing about it ages before, when i had to get up and do it, i was shaking, felt sick and felt very stupid.
- I have no problems socially, I am outspoken and confident, however when I have to give a oresentatin I lose it all, I dont worry about being embarrassed but feel extremely anxious about doing it, to the point where its all I think about and it makes me feel ill
- Hate speaking out, I am dyslexic and find I get words mixed up or just can't pronounce them correctly
- Get extremely nervous before presenting in front of people. Sometimes I will shake. Like stage fright!
- I find it hard to be in a room full of people, I find it especially hard doing things in front of people and even go to the extent of arriving early at lectures etc so that I can guarantee a seat at the back of the room. If I have two lectures back to back, I can't go to the second lecture as I might have to walk into the lecture theatre in front of people, and will probably have to sit with people behind me...which mekes me feel nervous and anxious.
- anxious and embarrassed- stumble on words- worried that i will say something stupid and people will be judging me- prefer to stay quiet- it's safer!
- feel very embarrassed dont like everyone looking at me, can make me stutter on words when presenting. However only really suffer in workshops/seminars.
- largely stems from fear of not grasping the subject fully-despite careful preparation. Looking as if i dont know what im talking about in presentations. my problem is not with being the centre of attention, simply not looking like a student taking their course seriously,
- It affects me in thinking and personal judgement. If I feel people are judging me for something I am saying, wether it be factual or opinonated, it makes me nervous. We all care what people think, but it depends on who its in front too.
- Problems speaking, shy and very anxious that what i have to say is not relavent and that i will look stupid
- Feel embarrassed, nerveous, worried about looking stupid and going red!!
- i feel that my seminars are too much about providing the correct answers rather than actually discussing and exploring the issues, i believe that this causes too much pressure and can discourage the expression of opinion rather than fact.
- mostly shy and embarrassed
- Anxious, shaky voice
- worried that what i say will be wrong and i will look stupid
- i feel embarrassed and shy also i get really nervous
- tend to have panic attacks

- If I am unfamiliar with a group that in a seminar I would feel embarrassed if I spoke out and what I said was stupid. Even if others in the group didn't say anything I may still think this. This type of situation is worse if I am aware that the rest of the group know each other well as this can make me feel like an outsider. If I know the group well then it feels easy to speak my mind even if others may not agree. Lectures usually feel too overwhelming to speak out in. I think the lecturers know this and therefore do not ask for much participation. The size of the my course means that we often are in large lecture halls and far away from the lecturer so if asked something I would feel highly embarrassed. Generally though I feel fine as no discussion is needed. Presentations
  - nervous. I am afraid I will give the wrong answer
  - feel people are staring and laughing at me
  - i feel very anxious and go very red, i usually come across clearly but inside i am so nervous
  - The large groups make it difficult for me to ask questions. i'm scared to use the IT shared facilities because the rooms are so big and feel like everyone is staring at me.
  - I feel really anxious like everyone is looking at me and thinking i'm stupid for asking a question. I get totally embarrassed because everyone is looking at you especially if you get the answer wrong or ask a stupid question. Therefore I will never answer or ask a question in a lecture or seminar e.t.c unless forced to.
  - I feel very anxious, face turns red, hands sweat.
  - During Lectures, i have problems speaking out on some number of occasions. It gets harder when i have an important question to ask the Lecturer but i feel shy. For Presentations, i will say it is more like an anxiety. For seminars, i feel if or whenever i walk to the stands i will totally embarrass myself.
  - it makes me very nervous. when i have to do presentations i can feel myself shaking. my stomach feels all clenched up
  - all of the above particularly presentations. I feel quite sick before them
  - Feel anxious in speaking out, used to suffer with panic attacks which are now under control. Presentations are the worst where the focus is solely on you, more so than in lectures.
  - i think many people are afraid of looking stupid and getting it wrong
  - embarrassed, causing extreme blushing when asking a question in front of classmates. Would rather ask the lecturer one on one after the lecture. Presentations are a nightmare with stammering and other nervousness present in my voice. i Don't know what an OCE is...
  - Go really red and feel totally embarrassed. think people will be thinking of everything i do wrong and find fault with what i am doing. feel anxious prior as well as during. i am a shy person anyway so this does not help
  - I feel anxious about being asked questions in seminars, as I will often go bright red, can't think properly to give an appropriate answer, feel that everyone is looking at me and judging what i'm doing. I avoid presentations completely because I feel anxious for weeks leading up to it.
  - i feel very shy when talking in front of people. i often go red.
  - all of the above like the world is a horrible place to be and i am being judged by everyone for every little thing its horrible experience that i hope no one ever has to experience!
  - anxious and shy



- very anxious can't speak properly in front of people and get embarrassed about what i'm saying.
- i feel anxious as i feel my opinion isn't very interesting, or i never know what to say.
- Feel very anxious especially during presentations. Have occasionally suffered panic attacks in the past and the feelings of faintness tend to reoccur if there is a presentation to give. This tends to lead to a poor quality presentation.
- high anxiety and stress levels causes blushing, heart palpitations, speech impediment, slurring/inaudible speech, social phobia, reluctance to speak (one-line replies), high level of self awareness, low self-esteem, and general poor persona to the public. It also causes negativity, lack of self worth, and lack of motivation in academic life because of lack of self belief.
- shy and embarrassed
- anxious, nervous, dry mouth, racing to get words out, shake.
- I don't like to feel people are looking at me or judging me on my appearance.
- Anxious, embarrassed and shy, panic feelings, throat tightens, sweating. Really do hate speaking in front of people, but just make myself get on with it. I have to say my confidence has grown since moving away to a new area and also since I have got into my late twenties. I would never speak to anyone I didn't know well when I was at school, let alone ask a question in class - which i think is probably why i failed my gcse's so miserably!
- i don't mind so much when in seminars to speak out as long as i'm not pushed to do so. if i am pushed or asked i forget the answer and feel intimidated. i especially hate presentations.
- extremely anxious, terrified, embarrassed, scared, a bag of nerves etc
- I feel embarrassed during and stressed in the run up to public speaking.  
(Seminars and similar)
- Shy, and that my opinion will be wrong
- I always feel that I am going to say the wrong thing and look stupid in front of the class. I often feel anxious about giving presentations to a large number.
- Feel anxious and embarrassed
- Afraid of stumbling over words and not making sense; Saying "um" too much or speaking too quietly. Anxious of being asked a question I don't know the answer to.
- Problem asking questions in front of a lot of people in case the answer is very obvious or the lecturer has told us the answer and i just missed it. no problem asking questions if working alone and the room is noisy generally, but start to get anxious if i keep asking questions
- not liking to be the centre of attention feel anxious and have to build myself up to say anything
- If i get asked things i worry that i might know the answer, or say something dumb, i usually go really red and feel embarrassed
- I feel embarrassed and anxious because i feel that if my answer is wrong i will look silly or make a fool of myself! If i am confident that my answer is correct then i have the confidence to speak..
- often shy and resent being picked on by a tutor or member of staff. If I am asked to contribute I try but often end up having trouble expressing my ideas verbally.
- anxious about being questioned

- Get very anxious at the thought of speaking out and then get angry at myself for being so silly.
- I have plucked up enough confidence to get up in front of people in the past, but I just get embarrassed and go clammy and sometimes shy - though I've learnt not to let my voice go quiet - referring to printed notes and slides often occurs.
- anxious before presentations. embarrassed when giving presentation. not very good at speaking up when not completely confident about subject
- I get all the physical signs of anxiety; shaking voice, uncontrollable shaking legs, sweaty palms, dry mouth, blushing and everything becomes very surreal. I even fainted in my GCSE French oral. The thought of a presentation coming up makes my stomach go over! No matter how well prepared I am, I still cannot overcome my nerves.
- Feeling of being watched, very anxious to the point of being ill. Fear of being laughed at or being wrong if I speak out. Physically unable to speak or think clearly. Very difficult to walk into lecture if slightly late so would rather miss & have to catch up. Unable to show the real me - come across as incompetent.
- Anxious, frightened of sounding stupid or not being on the right track. Not frightened of speaking out, just subject matter.
- anxiety and paranoia
- I just feel really nervous everytime I have to give a presentation AND often miss them because the nerves are too much!
- When I am the centre of attention I feel shy and even think I might say the wrong things and people will think I am thick.
- I can do all of it, but I feel uncomfortable. I always get firsts for my presentations but I am uncomfortable doing them. The only thing that puts me off doing phd or higher is the thought of having to lecture. It's weird because I am a musician and have played big gigs all over the place and loved it. I just don't like the sound of my own voice and want to take a back seat. When it's really important I will speak out but only if it's really necessary and I can build myself up to it. As a musician I have always been too shy to sing publicly and put forward songs I have written. If I'm drunk I am fine and will talk to anyone but I don't want to rely on alcohol.
- I feel very anxious, get sweaty hands and my heart races. I then end up rushing what I'm trying to say, which often ends up not making any sense and I sound like I'm mumbling. I find it very difficult to articulate what I want to say.
- I generally feel very shy and embarrassed when speaking out in front of people, because I feel that I am not good enough to speak out in front of certain peers, in case of humiliation.
- I stutter or feel lack of control when doing presentations. A sort of lack of awareness of what I'm saying and how I'm saying it, because I get so nervous. After the presentation I realise I can't really remember what I said and whether I got my points across clearly..
- I forget what I'm going to say/want to say and struggle to remember. I just make something up and finish as soon as possible.
- I worry that I might get anxious in certain lecture rooms (Scott Building 001,002 etc). Sometimes certain subjects I learn about (e.g. stress - I do biology) makes me feel stressed and anxious
- embarrassed, anxious, scared, red faced,
- Anxiety causes depression
- Withdrawal

- never volunteer answers or responses even if i know it, tend to go red if im specifically asked something!
- I find it very difficult to speak in a group, especially if the tutor is going round the group in turn, then the pressure of the expectation to speak is really unpleasant
- no matter how prepared i am for a presentation, i have panic attacks and chest pains. Also severe abdominal pains and emotional problems. I miss going to lectures where i have to perform a presentation as it makes me so ill. Tried talking to my tutor yet he says i have to as its an important part of my course! The more lectures i miss because of this, the more i get nervous about the whole situation.
- I feel anxious people won't respect my comment, or if I'm asking a question I don't want people to think less of my abilities if my question has an obvious answer; when I have done presentations I have experienced snow-balling of insecurities from anxiousness right through to shame for me not performing to my best and my thinking I've made a fool of myself.
- Feel really anxious about presentations, makes me feel sick with nerves
- feel very anxious-like everyone is waiting for me to look stupid, find it hard to contribute to group work even in small groups
- have problems speaking out, and get very embarrassed
- have problems speaking out, and get very embarrassed
- I feel that people will think I should not even be on the course. I have even been sick before with nerves.
- I get very anxious about speaking in front of peers and tutors for fear of looking stupid. I am usually fine on a one to one basis, but still get nervous before hand
- I may sometimes have opinions on something but will be too embarrassed to put them forward. Having an upcoming presentation can really put me on edge. I don't want to go to the graduation ceremony for example because I don't want to stand up in front of all those people.
- Suffer with significant anxiety prior to these activites, I do have problems speaking out as I worry I won't be able to express myself, and my mind will go blank and I will sound stupid.
- cannot sleep the night before. increased heart rate, sweating and jibbering!
- Shy and anxious about speaking in front of many people.
- anxious, shy, dont like my own voice
- I have these problems during Practical examinations and on clinical placement (I am studying towards an allied health profession degree). I am fine participating in the above situations, but when I am placed in an assessment situation, I get extremely anxious....I have been known to start shaking before now. My mind sometimes goes totally blank and it gets worse the more anxious I become.
- I get worried when I know thta I'm going to ahve to do them the next day. The night before presentations I can't sleep properly. During speaking I will be unable to make my sentances coherant even if I know exactly what I want to say. I never speak out in lectures unless picked out specifically.
- I have a big problem in controlling my nerves when giving presentations in particular and I believe it affects my academic performance not only in the subject in which the presentation is to be made but also in my other subjects. I have already failed one module this year due to this problem.
- i feel really nervous, like i am being judged on what i say and get really embarrassed

- i tend not to say anything even if i know what i have to say is worthy of a mention. i get frustrated with myself because i really want to speak up and come across as a friendly social person, which is what inside i feel i am.
- Tend to mumble more when nervous. Cant think as clearly when I'm meant to give an authoritative, formal presentation, dont feel relaxed or confident, often start off badly but get better as I progress. I'm quite good with discussions though (they make you think more too)
- embarrassed
- i have problem speaking out
- i get really anxious, and get my words all jumbled up and then i feel embarrassed.
- very anxious, shaky & unable to speak
- I am a shy person with a speaking and learning problem. Therefore, I am anxious and embarrassed when I need to speak.
- Anxious that I will forget what I want to say ,and because I speak quietly people ask me to repeat myself which makes me feel more embarrassed.
- I feel very nervous before the presentation. When I need to speak I feel sure that people must notice how scared I am and that I will look ridiculous. In lectures I am too nervous to ask questions even if I really want to in case I look stupid.
- Problems speaking out, worried I will look stupid if i get the answer wrong.
- Get really embarrassed, go red and find it hard to say what I want to say, particularly in presentations
- I feel anxious and very self-conscious, when 'put on the spot' my mind often goes blank, even if I know the answer! I hate everyone looking at me. This is despite the fact that I have a little teaching experience, I was fine then. Haven't a clue why this should be different. I'm not too bad in a small group though.
- I feel anxious with physical effects, embarrassed and shy, I have problems speaking out and usually avoid at all cost anything that involves.
- Get embarrassed and can feel myself going red. also worry that i will say something wrong and then look stupid.
- anxious, words don;t come out as planned
- I feel anxious and embarrassed, i worry what other people will think of me and my work.
- Panicked and shy with problems talking.
- They make me feel very anxious, so that I want to avoid them at all costs.
- Anxiety, I tend to stutter then my self worth flies out the window. I maybe feeling a little inadequate as im older than most students, although I have amazing life skills. academically/ technologically im not up to scratch! vertical learning curves.
- I have never felt comfortable displaying myself and when "forced" to represent myself orally it feels as though i am having my opinions, beliefs, judgement, personality, intelligence and more criticised by many other people. The fact that I did not individually choose to stand generally leaves me feeling inadequate to represent myself as there is doubt in my mind of the certainty what i am portraying or expressing. we are then QUESTIONED in front of people for the end of the dissertation. ARE YOU TRYING TO PUT US THROUGH HELL.....
- i always go red and panic when speaking out i am generally an outgoing person but i am restricted because of this .
- loss of breath, disorientated, loss of speech
- When I am nervous I blush profusely and can end up having a panic attack

- it's more a case of nervousness than embarrassment. However, I remember feeling that way when I was younger.
- I am a very shy person and tend to keep myself to myself and only talk to people if they speak first. I want to speak up and make friends but I just can't, I'm too shy and nervous.
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- All of the above
- My mind tends to go blank and I can't think of anything to say.
- get very nervous and when put under such pressure find it hard to speak out, for fear of being wrong or just being shy
- Anxious I will forget what I'm talking about
- sometimes embarrassed and shy
- I feel anxious if I want to ask a question in lectures and often won't ask a question I need an answer to. However, I don't feel nervous giving presentations as I know I have researched the subject and already know about it. I mainly worry about asking something stupid that everyone else knows.
- I just feel what I say is unimportant. I hate the feeling of everyone staring at me waiting for me to say something good and all that will come out is rubbish!
- Anxious, embarrassed, Scared, Tongue-tied.
- Sometimes I cannot think clearly due to nerves taking over. I become very self-conscious
- Feel embarrassed and nervous about how people are going to react to what I say.
- Shy, don't want to speak out in case I say something silly or wrong. Often mature students are intimidating due to their knowledge and undermine what I say. Presentations are a nightmare to give, I don't feel confident in my abilities to speak in front of an audience, due to being shy and embarrassed and worried about what other people think.
- presentations, forget what saying. red, speak fast. embarrassed, anxious, all of it.
- I get really anxious and panicky I find it hard to speak when I have to stand up in front of people.
- Occasionally I will feel anxious when having to give a presentation, I find my voice wavers and it is easy for me to lose my thread of thought. However, if it is just a general class discussion I do not suffer the same worries.
- I do get very embarrassed when speaking out, I know I go red in the face, get hot, and tend to speak too quickly. When asked questions I tend to say the first thing that comes into my head, which is often said in an amusing way, I think to cover up my embarrassment. Afterwards I nearly always think why did I say that, why didn't I say that etc.
- sometimes it depends on the tutor, some are better at chairing discussions and can create a relaxed atmosphere. I am becoming more relaxed and have found that getting up and doing stuff like presentations makes you less fearful
- anxious and embarrassed
- I always feel nervous that someone will ask me a question that I have no idea how to answer and I tend to get really embarrassed and start to panic a little. My cheeks end up turning red and I often forget what the question was.

- I hate standing up and presenting something because I am shy and some people are able to do it so well and with such confidence. I also feel even more put of when people ask questions as I worry I may not be able to answer them or I worry that I can't even understand what they are asking
- feel anxious, especially with new group of people
- Sometimes I feel really embarrassed about speaking out in the seminars in case i say the wrong thing, or ask something that is not relevant
- i have difficulties speaking out
- Nervous, can't speak properly, lose my thought process, forget really simple things such as names and simple words.
- i always go bright red!! i absolutely hate it i clam up and develop a really bad stammer!! even though talking with friends my speech is fine! then my stammer makes it all worse and i feel i look so silly when i know exactly what i wanna say in my head.
- feel anxious, heart rate increases, start to panick as time gets closer to having to speak
- just a bit nervous about making stupid mistakes and am quite a shy person until i get to know people.
- Feel very anxious, its like im being judged and watched! Nerves affect body language and speech.
- I go red and embarrassed and i forget what i am about to say even though i have had to learn it for a presentation. I can feel everyone looking at me and i fall to pieces.
- Do not like to speak out at all in seminars, even try to avoid going to them. Presentations not as bad because have planned what to say but still feel very nervous in the time leading up to the presentation. Do not feel anxious in lectures because I know I don't have to speak and no attention will be paid to me.
- anxious
- i begin panicking long before i am due to do them. i feel shy and introverted and will not speak out in any situation. on a few occasions my anxiety about a presentation has been so extreme that i have not been able to make myself leave the house therefore missing the presentation and losing marks
- I have problems in any type of group situation, which requires me to offer some kind of verbal contribution or response, no matter how long. The physical and psychological effects of these situations is a heightened state of anxiety, which gives rise to a rising temperature, racing heart, trembling and sweaty palms. I also cannot concentrate or focus on what is being said, think clearly and gather my thoughts together and am constantly fearful that I may be picked on to say something. As a result I rarely get anything out of group situations. When I do have to make a contribution in a presentation, I feel self conscious, vulnerable and judged.
- anxiety, sleeplessness, word finding difficulties,flushing
- I tend go red when speaking out in class, more so in large groups because everyone is looking at me
- Embarrassed when having to talk to a huge group of people
- Anxious, embarassed and shy... walking into a room of 200 people!
- Since reacghing my forties I am more confident, however I can only discuss subjects I feel confident in, doing those things I am unsure about really make me feel sick and babble rubbish. Writing essays scares me to death, and I need lots

of support and start an essay as soon as it is handed out for fear of not getting it done.

- Since reaching my forties I am more confident, however I can only discuss subjects I feel confident in, doing those things I am unsure about really make me feel sick and babble rubbish. Writing essays scares me to death, and I need lots of support and start an essay as soon as it is handed out for fear of not getting it done.

- I feel incredibly anxious, getting hot and flushed. I feel embarrassed and shy and paranoid everyone is looking at me.

- Makes me shit a brick

- I sometimes feel anxious, embarrassed and panicky in tutorials, this makes me feel very low. I have had speech problems - stuttering - since childhood, although I manage to disguise it well now, this affects me mostly in tutorial presentations, and inhibits me from speaking out more in lectures.

- anxious and embarrassed. don't like to draw attention to myself

- problems speaking out in front of a crowd if it is voluntary question or something I haven't prepared, fear of getting it wrong in front of a crowd and looking embarrassed. If I know what I have to say and when I have to say it I am fine,

- Feel shy and embarrassed.

- Anxious

- Very anxious for a couple of days before and during. Especially presentations. If I know I will be asked questions in a lecture I generally avoid that lecture. I feel embarrassed and sick and just don't want to be there. I get quite depressed about it. Even group work.

- very nervous in public speaking with two or more people, being put on the spot or having more than one person stare at me, regardless if they are genuinely listening to me or not.

- I feel unable to relax, which prevents me from gaining the understanding of the information being received.

- Certain student who makes nasty comments makes me feel inhibited, however normally I try to avoid speaking and feel slightly embarrassed if I am asked a question

- I feel slightly anxious as I fear I may not be able to discuss the correct matter at hand. I worry that I am going to look stupid!

- anxiety and embarrassed. I have a small speech impediment so that makes it 10 times harder

- Anxious and fearful of making an idiot of myself

- I feel more embarrassed about submitting my written contributions to the rest of the group in group problem based learning than speaking during the sessions. I worry whether I will have answered the question assigned to me well enough.

- Feel like everyone else will judge what I say and therefore don't have the confidence to speak out. Makes me feel anxious about attending and then anxious throughout the activity in case I am asked to speak.

- I am often worried that I will give the wrong answer and appear stupid, so this stops me from answering questions even where afterwards I realise I did know the correct answer.

- I feel scared of talking out loud in front of people

- Feel anxious, have trouble asking questions.

- anxious and embarrassed

- Feel anxious and shy. Worry that what i say might be wrong, which stops me from saying very much
- feel shy, when speaking out loud in case i am wrong, proven wrong or make a fool out of myself
- i have problems speaking out, i don't confident enough in myself and really dont like everyone looking at me, i can never sleep the night before.
- i'm shy, get nervous - go red and start to shake
- I get very nervous beforehand but then after I have started I feel ok again
- I always feel anxious before giving presentations, I hate the way I start talking really quickly to get all the information out and get a red face!!
- nervous when i speaking in front of several people. When several people are all looking at me even if they are friends i get embarrassed and can feel my face glowing bright red and hot, and then i stutter my words. I also get nervous being the centre of attention even in a conversation
- I fear being put on the spot in front of other people, and it makes me afraid to voice my own opinion on things because I think people are going to laugh at me.
- i feel anxious to the point of holding back questions. Once i am singled out for a presentation or some other task im ok
- I worry about saying anything and sounding stupid, but i also worry about saying nothing and sounding stupid! If I do say anything I dwell on what I said.
- i feel very anxious and often have trouble sleeping the night before. I am quite a shy person so the thought of having lots of people looking at me, makes me feel uncomfortable and uneasy. However, I do manage to complete the tasks I am given mainly because my degree is very important to me.
- I become quiet and shy
- yes i do i have been to the doctors because of this he says tablets are not always the answer.
- fast pulse,hear myself speak from afar, think my voice is going to go - other people don't seem to notice
- Presentations and seminars are the worst! Getting up and talking in front of people you don't really know. Usually feel really nervous before presentations, and stutter whilst presenting them!
- Very embarrassed, I got bright red and my voice changes
- i feel ick my hands start to sweat and my heart beats faster, i feel that my voice won't come out and be so quiet no one will hear me anyway
- anxious, embarrassed, exposed
- I'm absolutely fine speaking out, sometimes I worry that the information I am saying to people is not right, or unsubstantiated.
- I often feel embarrassed, and worry greatly before contributing, as I am mainly afraid of getting things wrong and looking stupid, so thus i don't usually speak up unless I am certain of what I am saying
- I feel my face starting to burn and feel tension in my neck. When I feel like this the problem gets worse. I would like a crash course in presenting.
- I feel nervous and my hands shake, which i think is really visible to every one else, and will show every one how nervous I am so I'd rather not do it, but I try and hide it.
- I always feel nervous about speaking out in lectures, the fear stems from being laughed at among peers and saying something which is wrong
- I sometimes feel anxious when i'm expected to speak out having always been very shy



- Anxiety attacks leading to panic disorder
- very anxious, feel my opinion is either incorrect or will be laughed at - rather stay quiet
- Problems saying what I want to say, even reading from a prepared script can not get the words out correctly.
- I don't like everyone staring at me, makes me feel self conscious. Afraid my voice will not carry to those at the back. Fear of not being able to answer all the questions after a presentation.
- all of the above!
- i feel anxious when talking to groups of people i do not know
- Anxious and nervous tone of voice.
- I feel nervous because all eyes are on you and if you make a mistake, although the audience may not laugh, i still feel embarrassed.
- Panic attacks
- i feel nervous and find it hard to speak
- anxious and self conscious
- Get a few nerves before presentations, but have not had much practice of them. Worry about what I'm going to say.
- very shy. feel self conscious. sometimes sick. hot flushes. when speak it is rushed & sometimes can't physically say what i want to.
- Suffering from psychotic episodes - the lime light stresses me, to the extent that i need extra medication to keep my psychosis under control. However, i feel that it is an important part of CJS/sociology to complete/take part in all seminars and presentations.
- I hate the thought of being the centre of attention in presentations, any mistake you make is amplified by the fact that everyone is concentrating on you
- I get really nervous when I have to do a presentation & I worry about it for ages before. I feel very anxious.
- yep
- i shake
- I feel nervous and shy. Sometimes I do not feel so bad. I feel pathetic when I think of what real problems must be like compared with my own internal struggle.
- I have a slight speech problem and a bad hearing problem so I cant talk or listen to what is happening
- When under assessment, I feel anxious. Not getting out all I know and getting things wrong are amongst my worst fears.
- I tend to feel sick and shaky, and I speed up when I'm talking. I often feel embarrassed and like I'm a know it all if I have too many opinions.
- anxious and shy, presentations are the most daunting
- Feeling of not being in control of my own actions, despite knowing that taking action would be positive for me.
- Makes you feel small, I feel worried that others may laugh at what I say. I don't like everyone focusing on me. Embarrassed and shy is something that affects me all the time.
- tend to be very quiet and dont give my opinion, have problems speaking unless i am prepared
- I always feel my knowledge isn't good enough so that if i suggest or argue about a subject i would be afraid i wouldnt have the knowledge to back up my theory

- I worry how what i say, may interpret my intelligence to other people. I do not want to be viewed as stupid because of something that i have said in a seminar.
- feel anxious, embarrassed or shy
- I feel very embarrassed all of the time,even just walking from one place to another. These feelings are especially relevant if I have to give a presentation. I feel as if everyone is judging me and looking down on me, although this is probably not the case I am stil left feeling anxious and 'stupid'.
- I feel stupid, shy, blush like mad, stumble over what I'm saying and it gets quieter and quieter. I also feel rude if I speak before everyone else has a chance to.
- fearfull of speaking out, not sure how people will react to me
- shy - not able to get point across
- embarrassed and shy! i have problems speaking in front of people
- I feel anxious to speak out loud if i don't feel totally comfortable in the situation
- I feel incredibly anxious and nervous before and while taking part in a presentation or any public speaking. However, going to lectures or having to go to classes is not scary in the slightest.
- I feel anxious, and the thoughts that would naturally come to mind so that I could make a point wouldn't, so I feel as though I have nothing or no ideas to contribute, which makes me shy. However in situations when I don't feel anxious, those thoughts do come to mind and I am outgoing and talk a lot.
- i do not like to speak out in front of strangers incase what i say is laughed at or wrong.
- have problems speaking out, feel anxious, embarrassed and shy, heart race increases, feel slightly dizzy, mumble.
- Just get really anxious, developed a speech problem when I was 16, only dealt with it last year, so am afraid that it'll come back
- I get all nervous and cannot get my words out. i clam up and want to stop doing the presentation.
- My legs/ knees shake, I get short of breath, I feel faint, I sometimes stutter and yes, I feel embarrassed and shy.
- i've never had trouble in the past, though recently have been unable to speak publicly about my work. i've been embarassed about the problem and become slightly isolated from my course
- feel shy, embarrassed
- i am usually quiet and dont get my point across in a clear and consice manner
- Problems speaking out go red and embarrassed
- anxious, shaky, embarassed incase i get things wrong
- I dont have a problem speaking out, but when i do have real anxiety as to how i being perceived, and become embarrassed. Within lectures, i am by myself. i tend to focus more on the fact i am by myself than on the lecture. therefore i fail to take anything from the lecture, and it has become a pointless exercise.
- Where possible I try to avoid these types of sessions. My recent OSCE that I was involved in I went blood red, sweating and started stuttering.
- very nervous before presentations, feeling sick and loosing sleep. I dread them.
- nervous and panicked. have problems breathing
- Very shy, difficult to get my point across and show my level of knowledge.
- yes

- Because I have a skin condition on my face and on my scalp, I feel reluctant and paranoid about it - I feel so anxious about standing in front of people because I'm worried they'll be judging me.
- Yes all of above plus panic stricken, I tremble, perspire profusely, fast heart rate, feel stupid and inadequate and really would rather just curl up and hide in a corner.
- Feel anxious and embarrassed. Softly spoken normally and feel embarrassed at people not hearing me.
- I feel anxious and often find it difficult to be myself and to communicate with others. I think that the anxiety comes from being afraid that I won't be good enough and that people will judge me badly. The end result being that I do not enjoy the time spent on it.
- I feel anxious when giving presentations, I never look at people and I always talk too fast. I get nervous in large crowds of people, and I have a sweat problem. I tend to sweat a lot when I am anxious or nervous so I can only wear black or white generally.
- Feel like everyone is watching me in the IT access areas - I guess it's just paranoia though
- I always feel very anxious and self-conscious. This in turn makes me get flustered and I get hot & flushed making me feel even more anxious. My voice wobbles and I usually have the shakes as well. I am not a shy person but I hate the attention being on me, it unnerves me.
- I always feel like what I have to say is wrong or too obvious or stupid and that others will laugh at me.
- anxiety, stress, embarrassment
- I tend to feel very anxious more than shy. I tend to think and worry a great deal before hand sometimes for days. This causes loss of sleep.
- embarrassed and I go bright red

Sample Answering: 396 responses

**Q.12 Please describe how you cope with or manage these activities. For example, do you sit where you are less likely to be noticed or to be asked questions? Do you avoid classes where you might be asked questions or have to do a presentation? Or perhaps you spend extra time preparing?**

- Text box 2
- throw a sickie if it's a presentation or hope someone else does the talking
- throw a sickie if it's a presentation or hope someone else does the talking
- Sometimes I avoid classes. I nearly always avoid the bar. Extra preparation doesn't help, as these are social anxieties, not work-related
- I try to avoid being in those kind of situations. I sit in an inconspicuous place and I don't talk to anyone. I try my utmost not to draw attention to myself
- I avoid some seminars if I don't feel confident. I make arrangements to do presentations separately with lecturer only present.
- I usually cope by just staying quiet unless I am certain of what I am going to say. In presentations I spend a lot of time preparing, but get incredibly nervous to the point of feeling sick!

- Sometimes miss presentations if I can think I can get away with it or not worth major marks. dont actively participate in work to avoid speaking in front of everyone.
- Either avoidance, or sucking it up and hope no one notices me stuttering too much.
- i have done one presentation last yeaqr and took a live animal to take the pressure off me
- I spend a lot of time preparing, but it is not always constructive because I am so anxious.
- I simply tried to avoid talking to a group of people. If I have to give a presentation I ensure I am properly prepared so I do not get flustered and just try to get it over and done with as a soon as possible.
- Usually avoid classes that involve more student input such as workshops
- HIDE and avoid these situations as if my life depended on it sit at the back dont make eye contact and cant listen to whats going on cos too busy worrying about what to say if I am picked! Look as if taking lots of notes and thinking. people dont pick you if you look like you are thinking!!
- -
- I would usually try to avoid drawing attention to myself and would not make eye contact with a lecturer if I thought I may be asked a question.
- I sit right at the back of lecture halls so I'm less likely to be spoken to by a lecturer. It also means I can get out of the lecture without being noticed too much if I feel anxious! When it comes to presentations I make sure I'm fully prepared. I have a habit of worrying about them months before they occur.
- sit where less likely to ask questions
- i do not ask questions in a lectures or seminars i would rather email the lecturer if i have one. i aslo practice 7-11 breathing while telling myself that it is nothing to worry about
- i sit where i cant be seen, avoid looking at lecturer/ making eye contact and sit with a friend who i know will try to help me
- I just keep quiet and hope I wont be asked to speak. I am fine in small groups of 4 or 5 but any more than that and I do panic.
- Firstly I pray and God provides me with the confidence to cope with whatever will happen. I also try and sit where I won't be asked questions and I do try and prepare more if I know questions are coming
- I sit at the back so that i wont be noticed and try to become invisible
- i try and sit with group of people n avoid eye contac if a question is asked. with presentations or somewhere i will hav to talk i spend much time rehearsing to get it right.
- Sit in places less likely to be asked questions
- I try to avoid getting into the situation however have participated but struggled due to the shaking. I am always prepared but it appears that i know nothing.
- prompt cards etc
- Avoiding all classes- learning only through lecture notes on interet and books. Takes a lot longer to do anything-completing coursework takes a very long time because extreme self awareness cause difficulty writing. I have once written the same piece of work over 20 times!
- Mostly avoid situations where I may be centre of attention, especially presentations. If unavoidable spend extra time preparing, which still doesn't seem to work.

- Mostly avoid situations where I may be centre of attention, especially presentations. If unavoidable spend extra time preparing, which still doesn't seem to work.
- try avoid stand up public speaking, does not matter how much time I prepare still feel really awful.
- I sit where i am least likely to be noticed and i do occasionally miss seminars where i am likely to be asked a question.
- Sit at the back in class Prepare extra hard if i need to speak out
- I sit where i am less likely to be noticed, avoid eye contact. I do try to spend more time preparing but then when it comes to the lecture i am often scared to speak up. I have given a presentation as part of a group i felt nervous, shy and went red so this puts me off. Even after doing the presentation i still dread the next one i have to do.
- in lectures i sit at the back or avoid eye contact with the lecturer. During a presentation i look at the powerpoint slides or imagine i'm in the room alone or ignore how i feel till afterwards
- Problem seems to be gone if I get to know the people I talk to
- Yea I always try and avoid being asked questions, I have been known to get a little tipsy before giving a presentation and overdosing on kalms! If I volunteer to answer a question its less embarrassing, its just when Im caught unaware or if I have to do something which I dont want to do.
- I just go in like any other question. If I am told to speak I do but often feel like my words are going to get muddled up. Sometimes I say too much in that I repeat my self. I find it hard sometimes to express my self so being under more pressure in a crowded room makes it more of a challenge as people may judge you afterwards.
- I tend to avoid seminars which I think will be more difficult and as my course setup is such that I only write about 4 or so of the subjects studied, I attend these classes more often.
- sit where less likely to be asked avoid making eye contact
- I do not go to lectures if I know I have to give presentations. I have swapped modules several times to avoid doing presentations. I believe it is completely unfair to demand that of students. I was told my course was 100% coursework, however I have had to do several assessed presentations and that is not fair or acceptable.
- I avoid speaking... i get my friends to say the answers for me... i avoid places i might have to take part... if i do have to do presentations i spend a lot of time practising and self motivating myself
- Used to avoid classes which required frequent input from me, try and sit near the back, usually away from others.
- sit surrounded by people so i cant be seen, sometimes void classes, no matter how much preperation i do it doesnt help.
- I spend extra time preparing for presentations, I only speak in statistics lectures when I am absolutely certain of the answer because I have double checked it first.
- i take classes that my friends do so im not on my own. wear inconspicuous clothing if i have a lecturer who picks on people!
- I've tried to avoid modules that require a presentation. I sit usually in the corner near the back. I have to concentrate soley on the presentation, and usually have to have an alcholoic drink before i go into class

- I am on medication for it and I have to sit in certain places where I can see everyone but they can't see me.
- Avoid areas in the class room, prepare more for presentations.
- I try to believe that this is not a problem exclusively for me and that other people also get nervous when having to speak in public. I also try to mentally slow my rate of speech down so I can be more deliberate in what it is I'm trying to say. Finally I try to rehearse what my speech might be so that I not only know the content inside-out, I can also do it without notes so its seems more natural.
- Avoid times when I know I may have to do something in front of people.
- i try to sit in the middle of everyone, and ask my friends questions instead the lecturer.
- I normally sit in the middle of a lecture hall and will sometimes avoid going to seminars when I know that the person running them likes to put students on the spot by asking for our interpretation of certain theories etc.
- spend extra time preparing
- Sit towards the back and try to avoid eye-contact with lecturer. Put off doing presentations until I really have to.
- Try to prepare for seminars so that if I was picked on, then I am more likely to know the answer. For presentations I make sure I have done loads of research and am in a group. That way it is less scary.
- Try and get it over and done with a.s.a.p
- I just feel the fear and do it anyway. Anxiety doesn't get any less with experience though
- in seminars i do a lot of preparation just in case i get asked a question/my view on a topic and i normally try and sit in the middle among others to blend in more.
- i try and avoid being noticed
- I never volunteer and look away when the lecturer is looking for someone to help. Sometimes I will avoid a lecture if I know that I am going to be put on the spot during it.
- i tend to sit near the back of the class, avoid questions from either lecturers or other students. i tend to avoid seminars unless attendance is marked because i dont like contributing to them. i bring work to seminars, but generally tend to sit there in silence.
- i try not to get eye contact with teacher, and i feel very wound up in a presentation and try to get it over and done with as soon as possible,.
- In tutorials I generally sit at the back and try not to be noticed, and in presentations I have to prepare alot in advance to make sure I get it right.
- I tend to avoid sitting with people, as this seems to allow me to wrok on my own. I also avoid looking at the tutor, as this seems to allow me to work and listen without having to participate!
- Spend extra time preparing for presentations. Try to make myself answer questions in class.
- i send abit more time preparing for seminars so ill know what they are speaking about, i tens to sit aaway fromt the teacher and try not too look obvious
- i sit at the back, in an aisle seat, so i can escape easily
- I just avoid anything to do with speaking
- Sit as far back as possible, avoid presentations wherever possible.
- I do avoid classes where I have to make a presentation and where I do not know anyone as I feel very self conscious when I sit on my own.

- avoid the situation where possible by any means possible, if its unavoidable i spend loads of time prepearing, if its a group presentation i try and say as little as possible.
- i make sure not to do anyhting sifferently, except i fidget and have trouble concentrating. and i smoke when i get nervous which definatly isn't a good thing
- i always sit at the back of any classes i attend and sometimes miss workshops wheer we have to work in groups - though often when i do go i am pleasantly surprised as they are not as bad as i think they will be
- I sit right by an exit, bring water and mints and so breathing exercises
- I would avoid being asked questions by sitting in an inconspicuous spot. If I have a presentation or anything tro do I will just practice for ages and get on with it, feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable the whole way through
- Spend extra time and worry, try and slow down speech.
- I tend to sit near the back of lecture theatres and if asked any questions keep them as short as possible (even if it misses out important things)
- If truth be known, i'll have a couple of vodkas before a pres!! get that nervous!
- Tell myself its not actually that bad...everyone else can do it!
- I often sit behind someone ins eminar situation, head down at all times writing notes so as not to be noticed by lecturer and asked questions. Avoid all presentation activities, avoid crowded social venues and areas.
- Keep out of the way
- Avoid the situations where possible, and make notes of questions to ask at the end or email the lecturer with later.
- i do not avoid classes but will make sure that i am really prepared and confident about what i need to say
- In seminars/workshops/lecture I won't offer answers to questions or give my opinions in front of a group of people, even if I do know the answers or have a strong opinion about the subject in question. When I have to do presentations for the course I will rehearse it over and over again to myself and tend to the rush the actual presentation to get it over with causing myself to miss out pieces of the presentation or not to pronounce words correctly.
- I always sit at the back and often avoid attending if the situation can be avoided. no matter how long I prepare for - words escape me on the day, I choose to attend lectures where the numbers will be low,
- avoid seminars, sit at the back
- Try to sit in a place so not in direct contact with lecturer.
- When I have to do presentations and speak out in front of a group of people I deal with it the best that I can. I do sit where I feel I am less likely to be asked questions and avoid eye contact when questions are asked. I think that if I did have to do more presentations etc it would probably become easier but I would never actively put myself in a situation where I had to do presentations.
- i avoid presentations, i only answer in lectures if i'm sure i'm sure of the answer.
- Tend to sit towards the back of the room, dont like being crowded. I have always turned p to a presentation, because I feel if il do more I will overcome my nerves, so far hasnt really helped. Get embarressed quite easily, and annoyed with myself for being so.
- I sit where I'm less likely to be asked, avoid eye contact with lecturer. I also practice lots before presentations

- sometimes i avoid eye contact in large lectures. in seminars i don't care and often speak out. for presentations, i have to practise many times at home before i do give one so i am prepared
- i avoid modules with assessed presentations, sit at the back,
- i give presentations only when i have to and i dont generally ask questions in class, if needs be ill email the lecturer after the lecture if i have a specific problem, if a question is asked i dont make eye contact with the lecturer
- try to be inconspicuous?
- I would be more likely to sit where i am less likely to be picked on (for example not at the front), and prefer being prepared so can answer questions.
- Luckily i havent had to do any presentations this year, but in the past i havent been able to deal with it and my presentations have been awful. I always try to avoid doing them, and if i am in a lesson where there is a possibility that ill have to talk out in front of the class, ill sit where i am least noticeable. I have been to the doctors to see if they could help and he just gave me some beta blockers, which dont work at all! Ive also looked on the internet but havent really had the chance to put the techniques into practice.
- sit where im less likely to be noticed. if possible avoid situations like that
- i sometimes avoid the big seminars, although i do prepare prior to going to them
- i make sure im sitting with someone, i can talk through answers before saying them and try to sit in a place i feel out the way in and also way from those who i think will be judging me
- try to avoid eye contact in class, then when having to do a presentation try to prepare, but when it comes to presenting always goes wrong.
- I spend longer preparing than most. I sit near the back and hope to be last...as we usually run out of time and dont finish everyone.
- It has in the past made me avoid going to lectures if I know that I have to speak out, only recently going as the presentations are assessed as part of my final module grade.
- I use to avoid these kinds of situations sometimes by skipping lectures where i know the likelihood of being asked questions was high. Or those where u may be required to take part in a debate or conduct a presentation. Now i just prepare more beforehand so i am better prepared for these sessions.
- I do sit in places where it is less likely to be picked out for questions. I also try to avoid eye contact with the lecturer in such circumstances. I also spend a lot of time preparing for presentations when it is essential that i do them.
- I always spend extra time preparing - in all walks of meeting and talking with others.
- i spend extra time preparing and feel very anxious until presentations are over. i never ask questions and avoid seats in view where i might be asked to participate in public activities
- I tend to avoid as many situations as possible where I am needed to speak and put my views across.
- sit where not likely to be noticed
- I feel that confronting the situation rather than avoiding it is best, therefore, i still take part in presentations in hope that the anxious feeling i have goes away.
- Ive probably answered this one already, I'm ok in the lecture but its the presentations that are bad. I always make sure I breathe slowly and speak slowly and always have a glass of water handy - if I start getting panicky and stop take a



sip of water, breath deeply and carry on - If we had had more actual tuition on doing presentations it would have been easier, we had no tips just had to do it!

- Yes I spend lots of time preparing if i have a presentation, to try and avoid me looking stupid. And i generally try and sit somewhere where I dont think I'll be asked anything.

- yes i always try to sit where i wont be noticed, i have even hidden in a corner out of sight. i try not to avoid classes now but have done so. my tutors have been very great with me though in supporting me, when its time for presentations and assessments etc. their help and patience has at time been a real comfort. Im still trying to work out a useful strategy to overcome my next presentation, which i hope to be able to record beforehand to show instead of standing up in front of the whole group. which would be like complete torture.

- Avoid eye contact in seminars to avoid being asked questions and with presentations I just get on with it as I am mainly nervous before presentations not while I am doing them.

- i spend a lot of time on presentations so i know it back to front, in classes i avoid eye contact if i know the lecturer is going to ask questions.

- Don't mangle very well - just do my best to get through.

- I do not avoid seminars or presentations but I sit where I am less likely to be noticed

- avoid seminars unless they are compulsory

- I try to sit in a place which is out of the way. I avoid eye contact with the tutors and busy myself with note taking to avoid unwanted attention.

- I try not to think about presentations, which makes it worse! I often don't raise points in seminars/lectures.

- I tend to look through my notes when a lecturer asks a question, so i don't catch eye contact. I practice presentations and questions I want to ask several times before I say it in front of people

- I get on and do the presentation but I feel its unfair they mark you on it as when i get nervous i cannot give a good presentation and my voice gets shaky and it doesn't run smoothly due to my worry. therefore i get a poorer grade.

- I either try to avoid these situations or make sure that if I'm doing a presentation etc that I completely know what I'm talking about.

- If presentation is part of an assessment I just do my best but keep it as short as possible. Am likely to sit where I am less likely to be asked questions.

- sit in a place where i am less likely to be noticed or avoid classes when have to do presentation

- I tend to try and avoid speaking where possible and in presentations for assessment i try to prepare well and have to try and cope with the feelings of anxiety.

- for my presentation, i spent extra time preparing compared to the first one i gave in the previous term, this however did not make much difference and it was still a horrible experience. In a different situation, i always try to avoid being asked questions, usually lack of eye contact works.

- Spending extra time preparing makes no difference personally, if I know a lecturer picks people to answer questions I will try to hide, so far I have been unable to avoid presentations as they are a course requirement, so I have had to just do them as they count for part of the module

- tried preparing for long periods of time, going over and over so I am sure about what I am going to say in presentations but still feel very nervous and shake....hands, legs !!
- Stand behind something, next to a wall... prepare as though lots of people are watching me.
- I try to read as much as possible on techniques so when doing practical work I minimise the risk of looking stupid. I try to arrange my seating and working area away from other people and if I have a choice I choose quiet times to do practical work. Presentations I practice at home, but because I am more in control I don't feel so nervous. i feel more nervous in situations where I don't know whats coming. I try to avoid the library at busy times, I never use public IT facilities unless there's no one else in the room or I have a friend with me. I take books out and return them at the quietest times.
- i try to sit at the back and keep my head down- if i HAVE to do a presentation- i rehearse over and over.
- i dont really prepare but make sure i go and just get through it. Make sure i am involved to try overcome worries
- If i feel i dont understand the subject intimately enough i will avoid seminars where my opinion might be asked, as i would feel i was unqualified to speak my mind, as i simply dont think it would be valuable to the discussion.
- I dont think about it! I have found preparing adequately, but not rehearsing or thinking about it too much til it happens helps as I dont get stressed too much, and therefore stops me worrying about other things too.
- I over prepare for presentations, but still am so nervous that they can be disasterous. By talking in seminars ets any other anxiety does reduce over the course of a term.
- Try and prepare for things that could come up. Find sitting when giving a presentation less intimidating.
- i do tend to avoid public speaking to a large group, but it doesn't tend to be a problem when in a social setting or small discussion group. when required to do a presentation several of my friends on the same course work together to practice and constructively criticise, this gives the speaker more confidence and backup.
- avoid questions sometimes
- I cope with presentations using Power point and I don't speak in class very much
- do not sit near the front so less likely to be asked a question and avoided modules based on seminars
- i sit somewhere i am less likely to be asked questions or avoid the class
- Try my best to take part- never gonna get over it by avoiding it
- There is a good chance I may miss lectures, tutorials etc if I am likely to feel uncomfortable in them. If I don't know anyone at all in the group I usually like to arrive a little early so as to get a seat out of the way. I am unlikely to enter tutorial or lecture room if I am late for fear of having too much attention drawn to me.
- Asking the question again
- i aviod askign questions get others to ask for me and when giving a presentation i do it first so i cant compare mine to other peoples
- i sit in the middle never the front, i ensure that i work with people that have no problem with presentations

- If i have a question i need answered i find it easier to email my lecturer and if i need to use the IT facilities i try to go late at night or early in the morning when there are not very many people around
- I avoid sitting where I can be noticed, I avoid meeting the lecturers eyes and I pretend that i'm writing so they do not ask you a question and expect you to answer.
- in lectures I try to be un-noticeable, but if i have to do a presentation, i will prepare for it.
- With the case of presentation, i try my best to try cover all the bits & pieces required on the topic before the presentation but it does not make me more confident still will feel the anxiety. For some lectures where i met be asked question if am not really good with the module i try my best to find a hidden place where the lecturer cannot find me. For the seminar, i try also to cover extensive research on it before uttering a word to the speaker for any question.
- i spend extra time reading out loud in my room for presentations. i avoid answering questions in lectures/tutorials
- Just grit my teeth and get on with it.
- Now spend more time preparing
- i always avoid eye contact and try 2 sit at the back, i feel like i want 2 avoid classes where we have presentations
- Spen extra time preparing, having prompt cards for presentations, know the presentation slides off by heart. I used to get really wound up in lectures where i was asked a questions, it happened to be my hardest module, which didn't make it any easier. Sitting in the corner where less likely to be noticed gets you a reputation as a loner.. which doesn't help at all.
- Sit where less likely to be noticed do group work with confident people and people who are not afraid to talk.
- I do not attend classes where I will be asked to do a presentation, I avoid them at all costs even if it means loosing 10 per cent of a grade.
- i tend to sit within an area which would not lead me to answer questions and tend to avoid classes qhich require alot of own discussion.
- sit in the middle so not asked questions as much as the front or back, avoid some terrifying classes but mainly make sure im on time so not to get called out! wear unexcitable clothes and basically dress down my appearance to fade into the background!
- i sit where im hidden from direct sight of the lecturer
- sometimes avoid classes where a presentation has to be given spend loads of time preparing for speaking.
- For seminars i only speak when spoken to, in presentations i avoid eye contact alot and rush through it. In social situations i dont say much only until a subject is brought up that i can contribute to.
- Spend extra time preparing.
- sit where i'm least noticed, usually alone. i usually struggle through presentations but, never avoid them.
- sit at the back and absolutely hate presentations. don't ask questions
- I dont have any coping mechanisms, I only know what ever I feel, I am expected to deliver.
- I spend longer preparing and force myself to participate when necessary.
- I am much more comfortable asking questions in class situations now, and can chat to people i don't know well quite happily. I do spend extra time preparing for

presentations, and often force myself to do things that I find scary! I.e. for my last presentation, I asked my boyfriend to invite all his mates round and I practised speaking in front of them. As they were completely disinterested in my topic and wanted to watch the footie, I knew it would be much better practising in front of my class than them, which it was! But I couldn't have done that when I was younger.

- i avoid class presentations and so do most of my friends. in seminars i avoid eye contact or sit right at the back.
- i spend loads of time preparing, but it doesnt make it feel any better. I never put my hand up, I never speak out. i've tried to sort it out, but cant conquer it
- I only do things that are nesecary for my course. Usually I try not to get asked
- Do preparation, but still keep to the back and stay quiet throughout the seminars
- I just get on with the task in hand and if get asked a question i think seriously about what I want to say before I say it. I spend as much time preparing for the task as possible.
- All of the above
- Sit where I'll hopefully not be asked questions.
- i do presentations unwillingly, but i do turn up. or its my group that suffers i prefer to st where i'm unlikely to be asked questions if i dont understand something i dont generally speak up in lecture/seminar i will email the lecturer personally outside of class
- all of the above
- I tend to sit where I think the lecturer won't ask me questions and I tend to really prepare for a presentation to the degree that when I give it, I know it almost too well and then sound dis-interested when I talk.
- For presentations i find that if i spend a lot of time preparing i become more confident and am usually ok. i usually suffer more from on the spot situations, so i try to prepare as much as possible.
- I still am concious of where i sit but not as bad as i used to be. If its a presentation that i am giving i make sure that i know my topic well. I prepare what i might say if asked a question that i dont know the answer to.
- If I know I have a presentation I will prepare as much as I can so I don't become tongue tied. Tend to avoid eye contact in seminars or tutorial situatins to avoid being noticed
- spend extra time planning what I want to say and preparing for questions
- I will only answer a question if im a 100% sure that it is the right answer. I am trying to push myself by aiming to speak up in lectures and group talks.
- I spend a lot of time preparing anyway! and still seem to give off the wrong impression (it is easy for lectureres because they do it all day every day) - I know I can do it, but its just getting confidence from practice, though by choice I wouldn't do presentations.
- just try and get on with it. dont do any avoidance
- I try and push myself into public speaking as much as possible. In a seminar, my worst fear is having a question fired at me and not knowing the answer, so i always try to speak as much as i can so the tutor is more likely to pick on someone quieter. I prepare for classes and especially presentations vigorously, but sometimes i feel that i might over prepare, so if i deviated from my plan i would become totally lost and terrified. I just need to relax, so i try bullet points, to try and be natural, but with some support.

- Presentations need twice as much effort and preparation - will take herbal tablets on the day otherwise too ill with nerves. Attend lectures etc so long as not late & know others in the group. Will sit at the nearest available computer in the access centre etc, to avoid having to walk around looking.
- During the first year, I didn't have a problem with presentations. My original fear was handing in coursework and collecting same. My first year results were good which I expected would give me confidence in my work but it didn't. During the second year I have found it extremely difficult to cope even though in some cases I do not feel nervous until I commence speaking. I do not normally demonstrate avoidance behaviour, just burst into tears when I start speaking. Initially, as a mature student, I felt inferior amongst students who had recently studied A/AS levels but that has now passed. I feel exhausted.
- all of the above
- miss presentations
- I normally sit at the back of the class and try by all means to avoid presentations
- I always sit at the back and avoid conversation. some people probably think I am rude but I am just shy. Yes I have avoided classes that involve interaction and only do presentations if they are for coursework.
- Depending on how I feel on the particular day with regards to my confidence levels. If I don't feel great I may hide at the back, or avoid the session if I can! The last presentation I did I spent a lot of time preparing and talking it through out loud to myself which did make it a lot easier for me but I still didn't enjoy it.
- try to prepare and talk to my mum and others about how i am feeling. i will normally see if i can work with a pair or in a group so i am not center of attention.
- Always sit at the back.
- extra time (too much) preparing
- I just make something up and finish as soon as possible.
- i sit at the back of lecture theatres, near the exit. i always sit on the end of a row.
- avoid presentations, prepare as best i can, engross myself in literature
- Prefer to sit at the back. Try to prepare beforehand. Try not to avoid.
- Say nothing
- it puts me off attending lectures where i know the lecturer picks on people
- Recently I've sat nearer the front of the room and then I hope I'll be chosen to speak first and I don't have the awful tension waiting. I sometimes avoid a class if I'm very stressed or if I have to say something.
- Yes i tend to avoid the classes as i dont see the point in making myself ill. I will involve myself voluntarily, yet when there is pressure to do something, i get far too nervous, and cant control it. Its something i worry about everyday when i am informed about having to do something like this.
- I used to try to avoid situations where I would feel put on the spot, but it never worked and it sometimes magnified the negative feelings I had when I tried to pretend that the inevitable wouldn't happen, but I HAD to do the presentation so the pressure I felt was ever so much more. Now I try to just get on with it, and if I'm making a presentation I don't hide that I'm nervous, or whatever, I sometimes say that 'this is scary' or something similar - this doesn't help me one bit but I think that maybe the people who are listening will excuse some of my mistakes for nervousness rather than incompetence - and I find now that the after-effects aren't as bad/don't last as long.

- avoid presentations or try and do them when there are less people watching
- avoid seminars if i possibly can, in presentations, make sure i get the smallest part to read and avoid the answering of questions afterwards
- would avoid classes if i have a presentation, or would hope a friend would do the talking
- would avoid classes if i have a presentation, or would hope a friend would do the talking
- I do not say as much in lectures as I could because I fear looking silly. If it is a presentation I have to do I repeatedly go over it and have to have a script to read from even if I know it very well.
- I always sit towards the back to look less conspicuous, I will avoid being the delegated speaker for feeding back group work, and try to be extra prepared for presentation and seminars
- Don't make eye contact with the lecturer if they are asking questions. Do most of the written work for a presentation so I have an excuse not to do all the talking!
- For presentations, I have to be very well prepared & normally find once I start presenting I'm ok. Otherwise I attend classes as normal, and feel fine in lectures where it is the students choice to contribute & find I tend to contribute more in these sessions. Find the most stressful lectures where a question goes around the class for everyone to discuss, or group discussions where I don't mind the discussion but panic I will have to feed back to the wider group
- avoid the situation in the first place. try and have a minor part to play
- with friends
- dont make eye contact, sit where not noticed
- I cannot avoid these situations - they are an integral part of my course assessment.
- I spend time running through presentations and trying to write the most effective notes to help me, I often forget simple words through nervousness so have to include them with the key words. I avoid sitting at the front in lectures where I know the lecturer asks questions.
- I generally try to ignore the assignment (which involves a presentation) until a week or so before it's due, so I don't have a constant reminder of what lies ahead. Although I have giving two presentations in the past and have never refused to give one when asked, I can't face the one I have to give in the next week and am planning not to participate this time.
- i avoid eye contact when they want a volunteer or looking for an answer, try to sit out of sight
- i tend to sit at the back in seminars and lectures, sometimes i feel more anxious than other times. hated going to communication seminars when having to practice in front of class but did turn up for my presentation and hated it
- Dont avoid it cause want to get better at doing such things.
- >Spend extra time preparing for presentations
- yes
- i try to spend a lot of time preparing and go through presentation with my close friends
- sit at the front and try and push myself to be more confident and deal with it as worrying makes it worse
- I can not set where I am not seen, as I will not be able to hear anything. Therefore, I just keep quite and hope I am not asked any questions.

- I spend a lot of time preparing my presentation, and before I speak remind myself to try and speak clearly.
- Regarding presentations I spend more time preparing and going over what I have to say. In lectures I sit where I am not too noticeable and very rarely speak out.
- sit and go un noticed, extra time preparing.
- Spend loads of time preparing, usually like to go first to get it over with. Don't avoid classes or presentations, just get on with it and hope it will become easier with time ( but it doesn't ever seem to!)
- I spend as much time preparing as possible, so that I almost know it by heart. I also have to practice talking slower as when nervous I talk very quickly.
- I sit where you I am less likely to be noticed or to be asked questions. I avoid classes where I might be asked questions or have to do a presentation.
- I just go along, and a large amount of the time, would rather take in what everyone else says than comment on the area myself. however, when there were only 3 of us in a seminar i was more than happy to speak as there so few of us in it.
- extra time preparing then try and sit at the back
- I do sit near the back where it is less likely to be asked questions. I find i tend to rush presentations because i want it to be over as quickly as possible.
- Sit in a less noticeable place, try to avoid presentations or groups of people
- As part of my course, it has been necessary to present to other students, and if I can, I try and operate the IT equipment and put my skills to use here. If volunteers are asked to present, I avoid making eye contact!
- I tend to sit off centre near the front so clicking pens & others dont distract me, I spend forever preparing & preparing again often im worn out before i begin. I am dyslexic/dysbraxic DAS have been great although looking at the list below takes time to seek these busy people out. Which i am now doing, I hope its not to late!
- I have learned to try and relax about social situations, many situations have much improved such as group workshops by seeing everything as voluntary and 'a laugh,' that there is no pressure to perform perfectly but voluntary learning or participating. The rest of the time, subconscious fear takes over (just at the thought of oral presentations, putting urself up 4 scrutiny; I do not want to be forced into a situation where i am or feel judged thankyou) and my life RUINED by panic attacks and vomiting which i have spent YEARS trying to get over with counselling and drugs.
- i dont speak out if helped. even if i know the correct answer
- extra time preparing, getting it over with as fast as possible
- Presentation skills would be a useful part of a degree course. I think the more presentations we do, the less intimidated we are.
- sometimes I will just 'throw' myself into the situation, other times I will try to totally avoid it. I do tend to sit where I will not be noticed.
- I guess I just try and act confident and try be myself.
- I will sit on my own, i have a few friends in lectures and try to sit by them when possible. Whan i have a presentation to complete, i will wprk hard on it and practice constantly. During lectures where i will be asked questions i get very nervous and my heart beats really hard and fast.
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- Panic, not sleep the night before
- I try to slow my speech down and take deep breaths.
- tend to sit near the back and avoid eye contact with professors etc. also avoid any situations where i would have to speak or answer questions
- Spend extra time preparing
- spend extra time preparing
- I prepare for presentations well so I know exactly what I will say and practice in front of close friends. I dont ask questions in lectures and if I really need to know, I will email the lecturer at a later date.
- I tend to like sitting with my back against a wall, in a corner is preferable. I don't like sitting next to people i don't know. And if discussion comes up, i just keep my mouth shut. If i'm asked a question i tend to try and deflect it onto someone else - there's always someone who will answer instead.
- Prep Loads!!!!!! Sit at the back, coz then if i'm asked a question no-one can see me!!!
- In class i sit close to the lecturer so that if i do answer a question i don't have to shout it out and then look stupid if its wrong
- In lectures I prefer to sit where I am less likely to be asked questions. I try to mentally tell myself not to worry what other people think of me, and just take my time and few deep breaths during presentations.
- I don't tend to talk out where I don't have to avoid saying anything. If i have any problems I tend to ask a tutor after the seminar so as not to embarrass myself in front of anyone else. For giving a presentation I practice lots before hand but nothing really prepares me - i try and go first if there is a list of people presenting to get it over and done with and to avoid being after someone who is very good and i panick more.
- spend ages preparing, no better.
- I just have to get on with it sometimes i pretend i have a cold so that people think my voice is shakey because i have a sore throat
- I do not shy away from these activities anymore although I used to when I was younger. I am quite pragmatic about it now although my being able to rationalise my fears does not elliviate them altogether!
- I do prepare well before hand, and usually have a script ready, but then I hate reading from a script, I find it boring and I expect others do to. I have never avoided classes where i would have to do a presentation, but this is usually the first thing I look for when given a module descriptor and outcome.
- luckily we don't seem to get targetted with questions, if we did i might hide away for fear of not knowing the answer. Avoiding presentations isn't an option i don't think, it's just one of those things you've got to be prepared to do. Good preparation is definately helpful, but i'm not disciplined enough, so i make it harder work for myself.
- In Seminars, i tend to only give short answers because it makes me feel anxious that i'll say something that doesn't make sense, especially when its quite a large group. With things like presentations i tend to look at the paper or a wall or anywhere but at the people. Because i'm quite short sighted i tend to sit at the front of the room so that if there's anything on a white board, or the projector is used, i can see it but when questions are being asked i tend to look at the ground and avoid eye contact or pretend i'm writing something to avoid being asked



personally. Also for presentations i tend to put in a lot more practice than other people to try and make sure i understand everything and can pronounce things correctly.

- I always sit at the back out of sight, I dread doing presentations, particularly those which are marked.
- spend extra time preparing
- Sometimes try to sit somewhere where i will be less likely to be asked a question
- try to avoid having to speak up
- Stay quiet, skip the seminar, if it's a presentation offer to do all the work if someone else will do all the speaking. I also try and sit at the back and/or hide. I don't really cope, I just end up making a fool of myself and messing up in front of people.
- as soon as i walk in to a room, i check it out and devise a place to sit where i have the least attention on me and avoid eye contact so that a lecturer won't pick on me to answer a question.
- attempt to get others to speak rather than self, feel better part of a group rather than alone
- spend lots of extra time preparing my mind just goes blank if im put on the spot
- Cant avoid the classes or presentations, so I have to build myself up for them. Presentations I have to go over and over what I am going to say, and have found that it is easier from eye contact point of view to look towards a person but im not really looking there (looking at something else in my mind). When it comes to being asked questions in class, I try to sit somewhere less noticeable or next to someone who likes being involved. When a question is coming I tend to avoid eye contact and most of the time this works - majority of the time I know the answer but as I am never 100% sure I'd prefer not to answer.
- In lectures i will work with people who are confident enough to say what we have discussed or worked on. I always make sure that i prepare enough should i ever have to say a word to the group.
- For presentations I plan especially well what I will have to say. In seminars I try and sit somewhere I will not be noticed and have even missed classes where "students must contribute" to seminars.
- i sit with people who are happy to speak up in class. i sometimes just don't go in to uni if i think its going to be too stressful
- Usual strategy is avoidance by either not attending lectures, seminars etc or not speaking up in them at all. If I have to do a presentation, I will spend time preparing, but I am unable to speak spontaneously and end up reading my notes.
- avoid presentation, or interviews if required to give presentations, do not ask questions in class
- Avoid eye-contact with the lecturer if they are asking a question
- When giving a presentation I try and get through it as quickly as possible
- as above,
- as above,
- I avoid presentations etc if i can or minimise my input in the standing up part by doing extra research. I read and re-read the notes over and over
- where 3 pairs of pants
- I just sit it out try to relax and distract myself although this does not always work. We have large lectures so few people speak out, although I would like to more. People aren't usually asked direct questions, but general questions

sometimes go unanswered, I have to 'feel right' before answering any to avoid embarrassing myself. During presentations I try to be prepared and talk through them, although I am not always able to and notice the difference.

- gwt on with what has to be done
- i sit with a group of friends who are more than willing to answer questions on behalf of the group, so i don't volunteer to answer any.
- Spend extra time preparing, don't answer questions in seminars.
- I don't cope very well with it. If it is unexpected then I try and avoid eye contact with lecturer/whoever is running it. Look busy or sit behind someone tall. If I know it is coming I tend to avoid it to the detriment of my course. Which then makes it worse as I think I will be pointed out more as I haven't been in as much or am behind on my work. So I avoid uni even more.
- Try to avoid being the focus of attention in presentations, have the smallest part to say in presentations. Try to sit in a non-vulnerable position in class in view of all class. Spend much time worrying about interview situations, presentations, seminars etc
- This depends if I am with friends or on my own. If I am on my own I am less likely to ask questions or speak out. If I am with friends, its takes some of the pressures I feel away.
- The presentation classes have been compulsory. Fortunately there has been more than one of us, and I hide behind the other people. They say I come across as confident!!
- I try to not get noticed so that i do not get asked a question. However, if i know an answer i will speak up.
- i am usually reluctant to answer questions even though i know the answers.
- Try to sit near the back and take the least active role during presentations. Hardly ever ask questions
- Tend to put off completing my contribution and end up doing it late, thereby letting the group down and making the problem worse.
- Avoid seminars or sit where I am less likely to be picked out. Avoid eye contact with lecturer.
- I tend to over-prepare for presentations, and will spend much more time at going over these before hand than my peers.
- i cope with this in seminars by reading off the sheet, but wonder if i am losing out on marks because of my resentation style. I don't give anyone eye contact and keep my head down. I feel as if the audience dont really connect with this style of seminar.
- Sometimes avoid classes where I think I'll be ask to speak in front of everyone
- sit at the back of class. spend a long time preparing yet I can't actually deliver the presentation.
- Spend extra time preparing in case im asked a question
- sit away from the front, stay silent
- I will look down in hope i don't get picked. in my previous degree which i failed i would avoid as many as 3 lectures a week because i feared speaking out so much. i have gained a little confidence since then, i spend ages preparing if i know i have to speak out.
- try to sit so i am less noticed, avoid eye contact with lecturers
- Extra time preparing and rehearsing and lots of breathing excercises

- I try to prepare myself as much as I can, running through the information before hand, I also try to work with people who I know are confident in their abilities therefore making me feel calmer.
- i dont ask questions in class, and try to avoid situations where i will be the centre of attention
- The first presentation I had to give, I knew the subject extremely well and that made me less nervous as I was aware I knew more than the rest of my group because of my previous degree. The presentation I had to do at the beginning of this year I purposely missed the bus because I felt physically sick thinking about standing up in front of the rest of my group.
- i tend to keep my head down when i dont know an answer. its hard to hide in a group of 10
- Sit at the back, keep head down, or make silly jokes. Or, if the lecture will be streamed over the internet, I will stay at home and watch it there rather than go to the lecture hall.
- I spend a lot of time getting prepared for the talk or presentaion so that I know exactly what I'm talking about and would hopefully be able to answer any questions I might get asked. If I am in a situation where I have not been given the chance to prepare then I will try not to be asked questions by sitting at the back and keeping quiet
- I prefer to sit further back in class rather than at the front, or at the side. I don't avoid the presentations or classes though. If its is a big presentation i make sure im well prepared.
- i avoid classes sometimes
- deep breathing and thinking it'll will be over in whatever length of time it takes ...trying to apply logic
- Spend lots of time on my presentation, so that i can prepare to answer any questions (so that I don't look too stupid!) and make sure my presentation is factually correct. Usually sit at the back of class, so that if I have to answer a question, people can't see me.
- I never answer questions.
- sit towards the back, spend lots of time preparing will sit up most of the night before to make sure its right
- do you sit where you are less likely to be noticed , yes Do you avoid classes where you might be asked questions or have to do a presentation? , yes, also avoid modules with group coursework, asking questions when others can hear etc
- I try to make sure that everything I research is reliable and informative, as it tends to lay to rest most fears.
- I have avoided classes which people i feel particularly embarrassed in front of attend, and go to an alternative.
- sit near the door in lectures and avoid modules with presentations.
- I read around the subject loads, use power point as it guides me through my own thoughts and prompts me, I 'front it out' by acting as though i'm confident and in control, but i don't put my self forward I only do presentations when i am asked to.
- I tend to sit among those in my group whi i am most friendly with and those who i know dont really like to speak out either. for a presentation i take ages to prepare & get really worried about presenting it

- I usually leave the talking to other people, although I will try and speak out if I know I have to!
  - Prescribed tranquilizers Sit there sweating and panic stricken till the task is over, there is no other cure.
  - try not to get involved with presentations, will voice my opinion in small groups but try and avoid feedback to the rest of the class
  - Spend time preparing, have never avoided classes, just get on with it then feel a total failure afterwards.
  - I try and spend as much time as possible on my chosen subject before the presentation. I don't mind speaking out as part of the audience if I fell strongly about something, ie, when I feel something is unjustified. Do not like sitting at the front of the class as part of the audience.
  - sit at the back of the class
  - am less likely to speak out
  - Yes sit out of site. Spend extra time preparing for presentations.
  - I try and sit where I hope not be pickded to do anything, slouch in my chair behind someone.
  - sit at the back, dont say anything
  - do not sit at the front. spend a very long time preparing for presentations
  - Spend extra time preparing, so I know what to say.
  - sit further back. don't really answer questions incase get asked in future.
- Avoided english lit degree because i knew there would be alot of talking infront of people & presentations.
- I take extra time in preparing and put the majority of information on powerpoint so that the lime light is taken away from me.
  - I avoid giving presentations. However much I feel prepared for presentations, I am always sick with fear at actually doing them.
  - I try to make sure I am well prepared, but I still feel very anxious.
  - prepare loads for presentations then just try and get it over and done with as soon as possible instead of putting it off.
  - i try to avoid any situation where i may have to speak in front of people
  - I do not try to avoid the situations. I want to confront my fears.
  - I avoid these events
  - I'm evassive, I try not to get asked questions, even if I know the answer.
  - I tend to think over what I'm going to say in great detail and consciously slow my speakin down. I also tend to avoid eye contact and pretend to be doing something else. I still go to the classes though.
  - generally try and avoid all conversation in seminars
  - I do sometimes creatively avoid these situations, but I try to stay positive and just do the thing anyway before my mind has the chance to react negatively. I find preparing beforehand can make me more anxious.
  - I sit at the back to avoid being asked questions. I get presentations over and done with quickly. I try not to make eye contact because it makes me nervous, so I scan across the room.
  - sit near back and avoid eye contact so not asked questions. can do presentations when well prepared
  - I dont avoid any classes but i avoid eye contact with lecturers. I manage my fears by remembering that everyone else in the room is feeling the same as me
  - Well, i have missed a presentation as i was worried about speaking in front of people. however sometimes it does not seem to worry me.

- sit where you are less likely to be noticed
- I try to sit in places where I won't be noticed and I always avoid eye contact with people. If I have to give a presentation I get really stressed about it and it plays on my mind a lot.
- I just don't answer unless I have to or am 1000% sure of the answer.
- avoid the situation if possible
- try to avoid direct contact
- Tend to sit where I won't be noticed! I feel better if I sit with people I know
- I just get on with it really as I want to build confidence
- Where possible I will try and avoid being centre of attention in a lecture. For instance, I wouldn't take part in an optional presentation. However, I don't sit where I am particularly less likely to be noticed, I just sit wherever the nearest seat to me is.
- I often miss the seminars where I will be expected to talk, which then makes me even more anxious about going to the next one- it's a cycle and I hold myself responsible because I know I'm being stupid. When I do go to the classes, I always go in with the attitude that 'today I will be more confident' but then when it comes to open discussion I freeze up and can't think of anything to say.
- I tend to not answer questions if there is a large group of people - especially amongst strangers
- have avoided presentations, but have also taken tablets to help deal with anxiety by lowering heart rate. have avoided seminars before. tend to do better in small groups, such as meetings with personal tutor and group.
- I don't answer in lectures or seminars, and when I have a presentation I make sure I know what I'm saying and that I've practiced it a lot
- I find it pretty impossible to deal with the situation.
- I spend a long time preparing: I try to read as much as possible about the subject that will be discussed either in lectures or seminars so that I don't have to 'blag' it. I feel that I am not able to make answers up on the spot quick enough and that the audience will get bored waiting or feel that I don't know the answer. When giving a presentation I know that it helps me to breathe deeply - all the way down to my toes - if my feet feel solidly planted on the ground I am more able to project my voice and feel confident in what I am saying.
- I feel confident about speaking until I actually go to deliver whatever I'm saying. I hope it doesn't affect my body language, I don't feel differently about social situations as I only really become anxious when speaking about my work
- Just go for it - see what happens
- I tell myself not to worry as other people probably feel the same. I usually "put" myself in a happy mood, where I will be more confident to speak and share my views and opinions
- Sit at the back and try to not get involved in any discussions
- extra preparation, so I am sure of what to say
- I have become insecure about the course I'm taking, so I tend to avoid interaction with other students and avoid seminars and lectures.
- Take deep breaths and try to relax and avoid answering questions in class unless I am sure of the answer.
- spend extra time practicing
- yes

- I arranged with a seminar tutor to make a presentation in front of her only ! I avoid going to seminars whenever I can, and when my skin condition is at its worst, I avoid going to lectures.
- Yes sit where I hope I would not be noticed. Keep head faced down as if concentrating on note taking. I do spend endless hours preparing both physically and mentally yet always go through all of the emotions mentioned above and at some point either during or after presenting I cry. Crying is something I do not normally do only normally when bereaved of someone close.
- Sit where I am less likely to be noticed. Spend extra time preparing for presentations
- I spend lots and lots of time preparation for what I know are going to be difficult situations. I run away ASAP (eg at end of lectures, presentations, practicals...etc) and therefore have little social interaction with other students.
- when i have to give a presentation i try very hard to hide it, sit next to my friends, pretend to be quite laid back, when underneath my t-shirt is a big nervous rash and sweat patches under my arms. i try not to think about it, offer to go first. get it done quickly and then relax.
- make sure i am with someone - just when im on my own that i feel conscious
- I do make myself speak out quite alot but not as much as I feel I would like to participate. Quite often I will look away or 'busy' myself so that I don't make eye contact with lecturers/speakers.
- I avoid eye contact and never volunteer myself for answers.
- avoid answering questions aloud, spend extra time preparing for presentations but with little benefit.
- i tend to try and avoid taking part if possible especially when talking directly to peers.
- i dont answer questions and dont make eye contact with the tutors

Sample Answering: 388 responses

**Q.13Specified\_9 Please identify the main sources of help that you have used in the past - Other (please describe)**

- Other 4
- cccccccccc
- cccccccccc
- counselling outside college
- Disability Assist
- none
- perscribed medication
- other students
- Doctors, medication
- none
- Haven't asked for help directly yet ...
- other students
- speaking with fellow students
- myself - self help
- none
- I have tablets to calm me down which I take occasionally

- lecturer
- eating disorders therapist at EDS (Plymouth)
- my Pastor in my church at home.
- a child psychologist
- speech and language therapy
- alcohol...and i'm not joking!!
- No one!
- Lecturers
- GP
- Self-Help Study / Reading
- none
- None
- other approachable tutors.
- Have mainly dealt with it myself
- none
- outside counseling service
- none
- DAS
- none
- None
- my faith (christianity)
- who CAN help?
- Online material
- GP
- counsellor occasionally and hypnotherapy
- outside counsellor
- NONE - I'm too shy too ask for help.
- Dr doctor
- counsellor
- disability assist
- I have never had any help because I never knew it was a
- I have never had any help because I never knew it was a serious problem
- Peers
- none
- pop psychology books
- i haven't
- tutor that I feel comfortable with, not personal tutor
- tutor that I feel comfortable with, not personal tutor
- the crapper
- Speach Therapist at Hospital
- sporting instructors course (confidence builders)
- Old teacher/friend
- none, seeking help in this manner is just as difficult socially
- no help
- Have not had support
- I have a one to one carer that i meet every week
- none
- Books
- none
- GP

- psychotherapy,
- don't find tutors supportive about anything!!
- none

Sample Answering: 70 responses

**Q. 24 Question 24**

If you had a magic wand what improvements or facilities could the university offer?

- everybody would be smily and welcoming and people would be invited into social groups they had not experienced before. Being quiet would not mean being anti-social, just that one is in need of some encouragement
- When a student has paperwork from DAS that explains their difficulties and says regularlar additional contact might be necessary it would be nice if lecturers actually contacted you, it is actually quite difficult to contact a new lecturer and explain the probems. Some are really helpful and others have said things like (quote) "I can't do anything for you I wouldn't do for an other student."
- I think I am lucky already to have reasonably small groups in my lectures - the thought of attending letures with 80+ students in isnt appealing! Im not so sure the university needs a magic wand - if i had one i'd use it on the people that were having trouble!
- Make verbal presentations opional with replacement activities for those who wish not to do them e.g. posters, leaflets, powerpoint preparation or written speach.
- Make it so induction week actualy helps students other than those who would meet people anyway. Don't put too much weighting on coursework involving presentations?
- some practice at giving presentations before i actually have to do one
- One to one help. It would need to be a specialist who understands what is needed for that particular student regarding the module they are studying. If not you would spend all your time explaining what you need to do and getting more anxious.
- more focus on support from lecturers when need for clarification. more space between assignments. ONE assignment per module not 'drip drip drip'of assignments. More publised pastoral care. I am dyslexic and have difficulty accessing and reading ALL material, this is fustrating, maybe having some set books that are taped? or even naming three or four books with enough content to make an argument not book lists of 20 - 30 books which when you cant read that well does not help. Oh and the portal..... one way in and ONE folder per subject eg not subject, then year, then module, then notice board or even one place for messages per degree!! trawling through the portal to see the info can be fustrating and time consuming and not disability friendly!! apreciate there is learnong support but with so many dead lines there is no time to arange access!



- -not having to do presentations! -or having support sessions with advice on how to give presentations. My main problems at University have been the large workload. As a single parent I find it difficult to find enough time to keep on top of the work. I also find I am unable to socialise, as I do not come into the SU in the evenings, when most of the other students get together, therefore I do not really know my fellow students.
- possible to get to know other people well during a lecture or tutorial. This isolation and outside commitment makes group work more difficult, as finding the time to meet with other students to work together is very difficult, which leads to tremendous guilt and feelings of letting others down. I feel very pressurised and responsible for other peoples marks. Also, not knowing other students well makes presentations more anxious and difficult. I do not think there is a solution to this problem, as the only option for reducing the workload would be to go part-time, which is not a viable option for me. If I had a magic wand! , I would not have to partake in group coursework or presentations!
- It would be great if students had a choice about whether they wanted to do a presentation. Could possibly do an essay instead if they felt uncomfortable. Also, perhaps confidence building seminars would be of use?? I seem to be managing my anxiety quite well these days but it would be nice if lecturers would stop picking on people to talk when they clearly dont want to!
- extra help for giving presentations maybe workshops but not to make the workshops sound as if its for people who have a problem, maybe more socialising activities to get to know more people like social events when starting university such as a ball or night set up for just 1st years, because none of this happend when i started in my 1st year and it would help get to know more people and make new friends, rather than just having to sign up to a society or club and make friends that way. Maybe just more social events to gain more confidence, bbq's in the summer mayb or anything just to communicate around people which would help get over finding it hard to talk by gaining more confidence which can help in a presentation.
- more counselling facilities and more sympathetic/understanding counsellors. More support services - group workshops/talks etc with tips and hints and they were also let u know u weren't the only person feeling like this
- The university is very good and I feel that they do offer a lot of differing kinds of support already which is up to us to utilise.
- If lecturers do like asking questions then make the lectures/ seminars etc smaller say about 10 people!
- Have sessions at the start of term where people can get to know the other people that they will be studying. Have presentations and tasks in which involves people standing out and talking in front of people as optional and not marked.
- for it not to be compulsory to do presentations, i would prefer another essay instead
- Better student counselling services that don't take weeks to get back to you!
- not sure there is a magic answer, one to one sessions perhaps were you could show the tutor that you can do it and know the information but do not have to put yourself through it in front of everyone else.

- Better support from lecturers and more feedback on previous work P.S I am in age group 31-40
- Give out more information on the subject. Give grounds for special exam circumstances etc Allow students the opportunity to speak to their respective lecturers with an advocate from an advocate service to work out how they could study as normally as possible but taking into consideration their particular circumstances.
- more open help.
- course social gathering would help as unless something is organised it is hard to make the initial steps to meeting others outside the classroom.
- I don't think these problems are necessarily university related and if somebody is too shy to talk to a group of people they're probably too shy to go to special group meetings or seminars too.
- I don't think we should be made to do presentations, and I think we should have more classes for students to help them work through their social anxiety.
- Make the environment in which we can ask questions more relaxing by not putting pressure on us. Seminars/lectures could be smaller.
- Specific questions or a list of topics that will be covered in each seminar. More knowledge of what will be discussed to allow for extra, or more relevant, preparation.
- someone to listen and take us seriously, because no one does at this university. I have personally asked for help many times from various student services, and everytime I'm shown how little the uni cares about us students... except when it comes to you taking money from us, then the uni is really interested!
- Maybe have some nights where students who feel left out can go to and make friends and chat, talk, go out.
- Reduce pressure by avoiding continuous closely placed deadlines eg five or six within a week right at the end of the second semester. Assessment deadlines spread more throughout the year would improve student performance and reduce stress and anxiety and more accurately reflect the pressures of most workplace environments. Provide more support for dealing with and planning time management and make counselling services more visible and easily accessible for students that find themselves in real difficulties and overwhelmed
- An assisted suicide clinic. I'm not convinced anything can really be done - the world demands communication skills and therefore university does too. While students with recognised disabilities, for example dyslexia are entitled to extended test times, people suffering from social anxiety can't be given much to help them actually in classrooms. More specialised services would be nice - the counselling service wasn't equipped to cope with social anxiety in my experience, although there is likely not enough demand to warrant such specialised services. Wider recognition of the condition may help with people's understanding, but that is unlikely to help anyone suffering other than knowing they aren't as different as they may think. A society for socially anxious people could be good, maybe with some quieter group activities away from noisy bars/clubs, but then you have the problem of people being too anxious to run it or show up :P This is down to the students themselves rather than the university though.

- The ability to get mental help quicker than you currently can
  - Maybe having a kind of decision diagram/questionnaire on the intranet, which helps people decide who to talk to in different circumstances and helps people to realise when they have a problem that can be supported. There are lots of facilities and it can be confusing especially when you don't want to admit you have a problem, to know who best to talk to.
  - not to force people into doing presentations-with a group is fine, but i dont think someone should have to do a presentation on their own if their not comfortable with it. other than that i think with all the groups and clubs the university offers, it would be easy for someone to come out of themselves
  - Stop forcing people to do presentation and to choose other forms of demonstrating knowledge. The difference in my marks from essays to presentations is significant enough i think to have cost me a classification. I'm told that its skills that i will need to use in employment however not all jobs require that skill and is an incorrect asumption.
  - Smaller lecture sizes.
  - perhaps more advertising for support maybe via student email, maybe a support portal on the university network.
  - Offer more opportunities in training and devopment programmes (that continue throught module programmes) so that students have the ability to speak confidently in public.
  - More in terms of getting students together when they first arrive, not only socials set up for drinking and partying, some book groups set up perhaps.
  - im not really sure, what i have done to help my situation is join MTG and throw myself in at the deep end to get over being shy!!
  - Smaller seminar groups, smaller lecture groups that feel more intimate and allow students to get to know their fellow course mates and lecturers. It sometimes feels that in lectures and seminars the lectures see the students as one mass of people and not individuals. Even in small seminars and workshops that I have been to it often feels very impersonal and therefore makes it harder to speak aloud in front of the group when they and the lecturers feel mostly like strangers.
  - a lot of the above listed problems are linked to confidence, individual confidence is primarily inherrent, but there are techniques that can be used to boost confidence and specifically social confidence
  - I don't know. I think for me its more a personal thing I hopefully will grow out of. I don't think anything done by the Uni would improve me.
  - I know...presentations are an important 'life tool' but i wish we weren't put through it!!Some people love it and are thus more likely to receive a better grade...i think is somewhat of an advantage!almost like taking notes into an exam!
  - less pressure- by having less essays to write or spreading deadlines out over a longer period. More exam support - some lecturers dont even mention the exams!
- 
- I had no idea until reading the options about support on this very survey that so much help was available more publicity of these issues which plague some peoples university experience.

- After the start of the first term in the first it is very difficult to get to know other people on the course, however I don't think that forced group work would help, as it would just make some people more withdrawn. I think it could be useful if there were more presentations (I've only have to give one in three years) and also if group work involved working with people you did and didn't know, eg pair up then random pairs put together. Re giving presentations its when people look bored, click pens or talk amongst themselves that is the worst, and really puts you off
- i think that presentations are beneficial but am more able to perform when i am with people i know, being put in groups with people u cannot trust to do their work it becomes more stressful. Plus it seems ridiculous having to do no end of group work in the third year and having to rely upon others for your grades.
- Go back to the way the course was set out the year prior to the year I am in, in which the students had to write an essay following their placement as part of their course rather than complete a presentation!
- I would rather not be put on the spot.
- not having to do presentations!!
- I need to overcome my fears of standing in front of a group of people and sharing with them my work. We exhibit our work alot on our course and I need to learn how to do this with some professional approach. We also loose 20% of our final module grade if we do not attend or present, I think this puts alot of pressure on a student, but it is a good way of encouraging them to improve their presentational skills. Maybe if the tutors offered times for students to talk to them about their presentation and offer help. I'm not really sure what could be introduced, I believe there is already support fo students for presentational skills.
- perhaps more integration as a course. i lived at home during my first year and found it hard to integrate because have very few lectures nad its hard to form relationships in a lecture cos youre supposed to be learning! other students in halls find it easier and make friends with people they live with so don't need to make friends with ppl on course as much. for example, having more seminars where ppl can talk unlike in lectures
- Help groups with counsellors free to students, and widely advertised. Drop in centres.
- i think my issues about talking in public are a personal thing and not really anything the uni can help with but i guess seminars on how to give good presentations would be helpfull for all courses as i have to give a presentation and answer questions on my dissertation in may and the thought of that is pretty awful!!
- grants rather than loans. take the pressure off trying to pay rent and other living expenses.
- I feel I have 'improved' on my shyness which is what in particular makes me anxious and feel that presentations and speaking out to people challenge me and so I overcome that. I have improved greatly compared to when i was younger.
- If i had a magic wand, i would make the tutors take into consideration the amount of difficulty i face when i am centre of attention during debates or presentations. Ideally there could be an advisor or support worker that pays visits to the college.

- maybe more of a relaxed bar like area; more like a cafe bar than a nightclub.
  - to ensure that all students are encouraged to work in a way that they feel comfortable in. encouragement and information to enhance those of us who aren't overall confident.
  - i would have all my lesson take place in my main subject area as i feel more comfortable these than the two tutor groups together as its a small group and i have got to know these people more as we a common interest that binds us together.
  - I went to see the student counselling service about my anxiety, but they weren't much help. I was told they were too busy. Anyway I come across as a confident person and i dont think they really thought i had a problem. I can't think of what would make my situation better in terms of the university, i think its just something i have to get over on my own.
  - I'm not sure i still struggle with this question myself. if it was a Magic wand then i'd prefer that students like me didnt have this problem at all and could function (normally) there is help available, i know because ive been in touch with the right sources. The problem is embedded in me and i guess im the only person who can make the changes. bit by bit. Im sorry if this hasnt really answered your question, its a difficult question i guess.
  - I don't personally think there are many additional services that the university can offer with regard to this.
  - maybe somewhere to go and do speeches in fount of others who are in the same situation?
  - Presentation skills workshops in the first year.
  - Lecturers should be more aware that not everyone feels comfortable speaking out and this should not hinder their seminar marks, for example
  - I think that smaller groups would be a big help, but presumably for financial reasons the groups are as big as they are. I would certainly feel more comfortable at university if the groups were smaller. If the groups had been smaller from the start I think it would have been easier for me to get to know people and therefore feel less panicky in group situations.
  - The uni offers great help at the learning centre but I think it is something I will never be comfortable with and there is a lot of pressure on Students to give presentations with the reason given.....you will be expected to give presentations and speak out in groups in your employment (social work) perhaps there will be but it wont be in front of 70 odd people!!!!
- 
- Workshops to help people calm down and prepare for presentations, giving advice on techniques to use to make people feel relaxed before they have to talk in front of people
  - I understand that alot of people are at uni for the social aspect as well as the educational aspect...but its not the same for everyone. There seems to be alot of emphasis on social aspects, group work and it feels that its taken for granted that everyone is really confident. It would be nice if there was more understanding that just being in a lecture theatre is a real big achievement for some people! When I joined the university I had to spend a day here doing stuff like the library tour and having lunch in the SU. I felt so ill at the thought of it, that I was nearly sick in the library and I felt like a freak when I had to explain that I don't eat or enjoy sitting in public places, and didn't want to go. I

was made to feel as if I was being awkward because I didn't want to socialise or use my lunch voucher. As far as I could tell, my not being there for lunch was not ruining it for anyone else, so why the big issue. If the whole social thing could be a more voluntary aspect rather than a 'forced onto you' feeling it would be better for others like myself...if there are others that is?

- maybe a short course on improving confidence and self-esteem in social situations- where there is a friendly group setting to practice public speaking etc
- I cant really think of anything specific
- perhaps more emphasis on small events where verbal presentation skills can be taught, i guess practice essentially, i am aware that such events take place but they dont seem to be publicised enough, considering their value.
- I think social groups for first year students is a very good idea, to show them Plymouth, and create a social group for nervous people by actively advertising for them around Uni. Then, if that has helped, then the original group of first years can become the people to help the next years freshers. When people come to uni, its either make of break in their first year, so you have to get them out of their shells early before they have a chance to start to worry about socialising.
- When presentations are part of the course, more support from the lecturers about what is expected. More guidance on what you are doing.
- more social events
- I would like more support and information more accessible for mature students, especially those that travel, as we feel detached from the social circle of university life. The tutors have been very supportive though.
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- There is nothing that the university could really do to help
- I need something to motivate me!
- none
- i think it would be good if there was some kind of confidence booster sessions that u can drop into once in a while just make an appointment even?

- smaller IT facilities. But with most things you can always find a way around it, and i think the uni is has the facilities to help with this, like being able to email your lectuerers, and late night facilities.I've been dealing with this since i was 13, and it is getting better and less noticeable than when i was at school. at 16 i turned to alcohol as a way to get around it, as i was not so concious of myself, and then at 18 my doctor told me i ahd to stop drinking as it was bordering on alcoholism.I think people with similar problems as me need to realise that drinking is not the way out of it. Since i have been at uni though it has got so much better and at times i come across as confident to people, and am a good team leader as long as its in small groups.
  - What is available at the moment is good. But within courses it would be great if there could be more activities (such as team-building), where you could get to know the students and more importantly the lecturers better so you become less afraid to speak out infront of them during lectures e.t.c.
  - the university is fine, i just need to learn to overcome my fears.
  - The University in association with the S.U should organise more social events involving students like Balls, parties & invite international or local artistes once or twice a term to make the University a more attractive place. The University can disturbute flyers on what artiste they might bring within their capacity because not all students have the same taste in music genres.
- 
- more info on how to do well in presentations and maybe a booklet on questions to keep in mind when in lectures/ seminars, so will be more prepared if asked any questions.
  - Perhaps publishing the issue more to get recognition of its importance and advertising more visbibly where people can get help should they need it. Maybe make personal tutors more aware of the issue so they can pick up on it and help the student to seek help if they want it.
  - Smaller classes
  - better counselling service, anonymous questions to lectureers, tell us it's ok to go to other lecturers that you can talk to rather than the one thats running the module you're struggling with. Actually knowing who my personal tutor is and being able to ask questions from him/her would also be nice.
  - Make services more accessible and more known about. there is the problem of how you think others will see you for getting help so that would bneed to be overcome
  - More forth right help with social anxiety counseling, less pressure to do presentations as a compulsory part of courses. Lecturers and seminar leaders briefed on how to detect students with problems and also how to deal with situations where students are socially anxious instead of generalising everyone as being outgoing students who dont really care about those types of things.
  - i think they do the best with what they have you cant sugar coat people from the world it will get to them eventually!
  - at the begining of the year more oportunities should be made to let students get to know people on the course they are on. This would help students to feel more relaxed with they people they are with.
  - More practice at presentations maybe with other students that feel the same way.

- it would be ideal to work alongside students/lecturers/staff who don't judge by appearance or make presumptions on someone's intellect by how someone's speech or mannerisms. it would help if there was no hidden social criteria (no stereotyping) placed within the campus because of social phobia sufferers. more help and support for students who struggle with work and uni life because of these problems (maybe self assertive classes would help or a day to day, one to one personal support tutor for severe sufferers?).
- At my age there is nothing that can be done for me, My problems started at junior school, with teachers that thought bullying you was the answer to being a quite member of the class.
- More practice of presentations, less emphasis on appearance.
- by doing more group work in seminars and less presentations which make people feel anxious and not want to come to the seminar. where people can interact as a group and are not pressurised to talk they will feel more comfortable in the long run and their confidence may grow as time goes on. group work may also bring people together to form friendships and in the seminars i got to there is group work but mostly it is presentations and speaking and working alone (sociology).
- REAL help with public speaking, being more supportive instead making me feel tiny
- Stop the need for presentations. Thats not really an option though is it? May be some confidence building
- I would like to see more social events put on by the faculty during the first year so there is a relaxed situation to get to know other students on the same course.
- make it more known that depression is not the fault of the person who is depressed but an actual condition. and that some people are genetically more able to cope with 'problems' than others. possibly open counselling. where you can make an appointment online and a location can be arranged. rather than having to go to a specific place just for people having problems. this is good, but it means that you constantly wonder if they're problems are more important than yours and that they are more worthy of help than you are. To be reassured that if you have an issue that is getting to you, it does matter and it is worthy of help, no matter how crap you think it sounds when you try and explain it. I dont know if there is a christian/religious counselling service... i'm christian and would feel less of a freak explaining some of the stuff to an older christian that will take me seriously instead of secretly thinking ive gone cuckoo! (which hasnt happened... but its one of the reasons i dont talk about my problems!)
- there should be more oppotunity to be involved with similar groups of people where you are forced to take a role and put yourself into social situationsbut on a low key scale
- More activities or evenings in the students union that weren't revolved around drinking. Making the SU more bright and less depressing, hopefully the improvements will take this into consideration. Nightline is not advertised enough, I didn't even know it was still in operation - what's the number, where is it, who runs it? those types of questions could be more advertised.
- A common room with hot drinks machine! (PAHC). It would provided an environment where people could mix and get to know each other which may promote better relationships.



- make more allowances for people who may be anxious of certain situations look at teaching methods/styles and consider which are suitable
- make sure that the uni realises that those who do not live on campus may not have the social side of those that live in shared houses/halls. When you start the course spend a bit of time bringing the whole course group together.
- Instead of plonking people in the deep end in front of a lecture theatre of 150, perhaps smaller groups to begin with of say 10-15 and gradually increase the numbers. (Being a male myself I wouldn't picture everyone in the room naked - especially as a vast proportion F-o-Tech students are male!)
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- I think that some sort of club or society specifically to help people with public speaking would be a great help. I really believe that the only way to overcome your fears is to face them, which is why I try hard to be verbal in class, because I do feel better afterwards and almost get a buzz. Somewhere where students would meet once a week to talk to each other about their fears, learn handy tricks to achieve a confident look and of course talk about steps to actually overcome the anxieties would be great. I think public speaking assignments should be set also, where individuals, or groups of people are asked to present to the rest of the club, would be a difficult, but very worthwhile activity. I would certainly benefit from something like that.
- Greater understanding that it's not avoiding a task because of laziness etc & how restrictive it is. An option not to make presentations! Help on overcoming it, but not sure if possible or how.
- The University, Disability Assist and Counselling Support have provided excellent services.
- scrap having to give presentations unless you want to be a teacher after you graduate!
- I think really it is quite difficult to say what can be done as I have noticed the tutors are very friendly and approachable. I don't know if it's possible to have some time at least once a month where students like myself could meet up and

try and help ourselves by discussing coping strategies and have confident people talk to us and tell us how they cope.

- more forced interaction and money. the biggest problem was i had to get a job which took up all my spare time. as a consequence i had to leave the club I joined when i got here and lost contact with all the friends i had in it. a grant of enough money to live on would have prevented this and helped with the social aspect of the course. for me it has been work, work, work with no play. If not for my girlfriend I would have gone home in the first term of the first year like the only two friends I had on this damn course. Well you did ask. when I told friends back home about the lack of interaction they were astounded. a course/ university that cares little for the well being of its students is, as I have found throughout, crap all round. I should have gone somewhere better.
- Lecturers could inform students at the beginning of the course that it is very common to feel anxious when having to take part in these situations, you feel like you're the only one and too embarrassed to tell your peers. maybe some tips could be posted on the website on ways of overcoming the anxiety of presentations.
- i would offer the opportunity for students to do individual or paired presentation work with just the lecturer or a couple of lecturers in a room.
- consider our anxiety levels when you plan your timetables.. either too many lectures in a day or spaced apart so that we have to come in during the morning and wait six hours for the next lecture can be stressful.. also being told that our placements are unavailable or extremely long distance from home, or without enough time to prepare is stressful....
- an understanding that not all students feel happy to enter the UPSU bar, day or evening, alone. this is especially difficult for mature, older students who may have recently become single again after a long time with a partner.
- not being out in awful lecture theatres - scott building ones. what can u do really?, its in our heads and unfortunately the mind is v powerful. Support is good but addressing the problem head on would be ideal. Maybe you could offer support to sort out the problem eg. psychiatrist (that may be spelt wrong), i'm actually seeing one next week to sort out my anxiety and i'm feeling optimistic about it, because if i sort it i wont have to worry about it anymore. thanks for putting this on the portal cos i feel like not many people are aware of it, and i felt like i was the only one when i got it. if more was said about it then people would know about it and maybe see its not a weird thing. i dont really tell people i've got it because it seems stupid and trivial. DAS were really good when i went to them cos they sorted me out with a smaller room for exams cos it will help me concentrate more (my anxiety is a dislike of lots of people crammed in a small space eg. lecture theatres - although social settings are no problem at all). thanks for listening.
- not have to do presentations, smaller groups
- Psychotherapy :)
- Reduce cost of living so that students can access all the wonderful facilities the Uni is so happy to plug above everything else.
- the thing that has helped me most is being made to do presentations as part of assessed work, it was horrible first time but otherwise i never would do it and this way helps

- Perhaps Student counselling services could be more visible as I wouldn't know where to go. Also if tutors didn't put pressure on students to 'go round and share' I'd be more relaxed and hopefully want to contribute.
- Maybe help could be made more accessible, as I don't really know who I can go and see! I also think that this part of the course should NOT be made compulsory! It can be encouraged, but I don't see why we should have to participate in presenting to such large groups of people.
- My course doesn't involve making presentations (I guess I avoided a degree that did) so I don't know what it's exactly like, but I think using PowerPoint as a presentation aid could ease pressure of the student.
- get rid of presentations in lectures, Provide more help in presentations
- if we can't do a presentation we should be given the choice not to
- if we can't do a presentation we should be given the choice not to
- As a part-time student at a partnership college I feel the same service is not available and I don't know where to go to get help. Some form of support network and counselling service that is easily accessible to those of us that work full-time as well would be great, also some sort of news letter about what activities are available on campus such as groups and clubs.
- I think student counselling service is so important even though I haven't accessed it myself. My own counselling experience has been very helpful & I have learned coping strategies like being well prepared for presentations etc, & telling myself the situation really isn't as bad as I think, ignoring the physical sensations of panic as far as possible. Perhaps more information on useful coping strategies could be included in student handbook or something similar, as well as an email or telephone contact specifically for this issue.
- having regular one-to-one input from personal tutor would help
- more field trips on courses
- I found that, although the learning advisory service were as helpful as they could be, they had little understanding of the nature of the assessment of course such as nursing, physio, medicine etc. I feel that, as these courses place students in potentially social anxiety provoking situations (practical exams and placements are far more stressful than a presentation or seminar ever could be I think!), the advisors should be made more aware of this. Also, it wasn't clear to me, as a student, that both the learning advisory and counselling service could help me with this problem.
- workshops for people who get nervous during presentations would be good. Where you can practise in front of an audience without being assessed, and being given tips on how to cope when you get a blank or panic.
- The option of opting out of presentations without losing marks would be good, but unrealistic I guess.
- support leaflets, someone to talk to
- when my anxiety is at its worst I generally feel disabled from the world and this can make uni life very hard. Not sure what is on offer at the moment, but I think you could run de-stress and relaxation classes or something like that we could attend. Maybe a group, so people with the same problem can talk about things in common, might help also in the long run as having to be exposed and talk to people, this might include behaviour change therapy
- A good freshers week, (maybe learning new recipes with loads of people - a couple of times in case you miss it, getting everyone from a block/ hall to meet in a pub/cafe/babbage upstairs with refreshments, speed dating?, drinking

games, suggesting for everyone to decorate the block noticeboard, juggling, unicycling in the courtyards- could get juggling club to help), good music in the union- more specialised nights so your more likely to find similar minded people- its all to much of a mishmash at the min) maybe bookstore/ cake stall outside so can browse and talk, pub crawls maybe specialised ones, rock, sailing, your subject) When I turned up there was knowone in my flat for a week, then 1 unsociable person who I dont get on with, another who dosnt want to look you in the eye and never talks, another that when back to live at home and the girl that replaced her later is nice but allways out and not bothered about having mates outside OCT. Got good freinds now, but the whole setup made it loads harder. Robbins is laid out in a way that you cant knock on peoples doors, everyone should have access to the corridors and a common room is needed. Flats shouls have doorbells, you should be able to open the bottom floor from upstairs, internal phones should be in each room (knowone told me what my number was either) you should share a kitchen with more than 4 people, preferably about 8. And some fresher week activities. Sports clubs are good but should maybe start a little earlier. Geography is allmost entirely lecture based, so your less likely to meet people, disscussions, group work and smaller, more personal class sizes would be better. There dosnt seem to be much of a community here; the union has no mood to it, there aren't many meeting places, virtually no trees or green places, halls are white and unenviting, the nearest cafe seems fake, need a traditional place people are allways in, with lots of corners, where you get chips, internet, eat your own food- somewhere homely with sofa's that isnt painted white. The union should show more films in the evening. Emails to give e-mail links to people/services(such as SU leaders emails, maybe welfare service emails in case you might need it)

- >Better sports facilities! Much of the depression and discomfort that I have felt this term, especially within social situations, has been through gaining weight since joining Plymouth University. This has had a significant impact on my general confidence. Whilst the sports opportunities in general are very good the University gym is appalling and is far too small and crowded at peak times. Improving gym facilities and access to swimming pools etc would significantly improve students' experience at the university!! Although this is only one students perspective I know many of my friends have experienced the same and I believe simply improving sports/gym facilities could significantly reduce depression and improve students' confidence at university!
- be more understand as social anxiety as an illness and not something which you just have to 'learn to manage'
- More understanding by everyone of the problems a student with learning difficalties have to cope with and for them to do what they say they would do to help without being asked every single lesson. I just give up asking in the end.
- Ensure personal tutors are more aware of their students and keep in touch with them , if only by e-mail so students know that their tutors are willing to listen to them if there is a problem. Some students are unable to book to see their personal tutors when they need support.
- I think easing students into situations gradually, particularly with presentations. Make the first presentation a small one, maybe just in front of

your learning set. lecturers should be more aware and sympathetic towards students who have these problems, and maybe it would be possible to set up a support group for people who have these problems, I know many students with similar difficulties.

- Stop presentations!
- Ideally, not to have to do them at all or be able to do presentations in front of smaller groups. It might be a good idea to be able to meet with other people in the same situation and practice in front of them so you know more of what to do in the real thing.
- Keeping presentation groups small. At least until enough have been done that your confidence rises.
- IN YOUR FACE HELP WITH the problems above. Hold a FAIR in the main hall where students can sign up to courses or counselling - NOT HIDDEN AWAY as though its a shameful & secretive problem. GET HELP OUT THERE where it can be seen because people who have difficulty in this area are usually too afraid/shy/inhibited to ask for it.
- I dont think that i really have a problem as i have confidence in other areas, and i personally wouldnt use any facilities anyway, as i would rather talk to friends and family who reassure me.
- Making people more aware of support that is available at the University. At the moment i have little knowledge about any of the support the university currently offers.
- Stop students doing presentations or role play!!!
- More information given at start, as i said previously difficult to track people down often wrong info given But when found overwhelming friendly support offered. More interaction between depts. Empathy from lecturers who are steeped in academia, no real idea of outside trials/dribulations to point one in direction needed. Doing my 1st year at partner college & transferring to plymouth has been crazy bad organisation, & they lost all my details, address, modules were different lack of communication.
- More adequate time slots and services within the counselling service. it seems if you arent about to harm yourself, its a waiting list until you do. More links between Dr.s and university procedures; need 2 take illnesses such as anxiety disorders (actual ones that effect people physiologically not slight 'argh' stress) and depression (again ACTUAL not 'oh i'm a bit sad; it bloomin effects ur BODY) more seriously into account with extenuating circumstances; at the moment i do not believe they are "valid" reasons for extended deadlines etc. despite the permanence and extreme effect of the illnesses.
- many be work shops
- more training and frequent practice at presentations in small groups
- presentation practice skills. How to deal with stress, juggling home life demands and studying for example.
- not sure would have to think about the answer in great depth as I dont think there are any areas that could be improved on. It is down to the individual to seek help. the help is at Plymouth if it is wanted
- I am not sure really. However, I do feel it's important for the university to be a positive environment where all those involved can feel comfortable, secure in order to learn effectively. Overall, I think that Plymouth university and its partner college, Truro college do this very effectively. I think that it's more a

case of students individual personalities and temperments which causes the stress and anxiety.

- Maybe some understanding about the problem. People with difficulty in exams get help and support, extra time in the exam for example. It would be easy and less stressfull for me if I did not have to do a presentation at the end of my final year. Or just having to complete my presentation in front of a small group of people would be ok.
- No presentations, not push you into speaking if you don't want to
- Some kind of stress-release center; Indian head-rubs, Turkish back massages, meditation etc.....I'm sure students would pay towards it.
- more help, guidance for those who do not like to speak up... counselling. despite being able to avoid doing such tasks if i have to i tend to deal with them. experience in such situations often makes u more confident and makes speaking up giving presentations easier...
- can't think it's friday night and I'm pooped
- keep tutors from one year to the next-I have a new tutor this year. I have only seen him once in an organised meeting at the start of the year and feel shy about organising another meeting, whereas I had already build a relationship with my tutor last year through organised tutorial sessions, so it would have been better for me to continue with the same person.
- I don't know, i'd feel sort of stupid having something like that. It would just make me worse, i think. Talking to someone just makes me feel stupid and pathetic.
- Smaller study groups
- smaller seminar groups so easier to speak. Perhaps a mentor who could give guidance and encouragement
- I think the univesity already offers suitable facilities, but perhaps they could be publicised abit more.
- I don't know. It's such a difficult subject and I don't know how to deal and cope with my problems or I would have done something by now. I work on the Exeter campus and really feel that there is no one around to listen to problems - I have no idea about a councillor or nurse available for advice. I would have liked more societies and activities like which are in place in Plymouth to gain more friends and something to do to take my mind off of work much more. But as this campus is now moving this should not be such a problem.
- juts dont put us in those eduactional situations
- classes on how to practice your breathing if you become panicky
- I'm not sure that you could offer anything to me personally that you don't already (i.e. counseling services ect) I have also found (some) of the lecturers very appreciable and should I have wanted to I would have felt comfortable discussing this issue with them.
- Less male tutors, find when we have female tutors I am more relaxed. Being a mature student, I always feel someone will catch me out one day and discover I shouldn't be here. I do work thirty hours a week in a very stressful job, have family commitments and sometimes a life outside of all of the above, maybe some reading material to suggest how to manage of of this might be helpful, you did say a magic wand. good luck with your study.
- Some people are more likely to seek help than others, so it's probably the shyers ones that miss out. Perhaps there should be more equality when it

comes to making contact with tutor, perhaps the tutors could ensure that they get to see all students, rather than just the ones that push for it. Some students may feel that they have nothing to discuss with a tutor but in my experience a good tutor will help the student to identify what they are good at and what they may be struggling with

- Just advice or some kind of a place (confidential) to go and see someone about it. But its more a personal thing. Something that changes with age!
- If presentations are compulsory then at least let people start by doing them in front of a lecture and possibly one or two other people. My first proper presentation was this March (out of a 3 year course) it was in front of 4 lectures, 30+ students as well as 15+ professional people from the industry I want to go and work in. Something has to be done
- I don't think that there are many improvements that could be made as doing presentations is part of the course and will help be in the future when i am a qualified professional. Even though I get anxious about presentation I think that we should have to do them more often as then i would be more used to them.
- no speaking out in seminars. ever.
- more one to one help easily available. more time with personal tutors. i have NEVER seen my tutor in two years and i think they should have more of a role. and they should help point u in the right directions.
- Dont put so much emphasis on carrying out presentations, isolating people to answer questions, and large group work. Role play is also considered fun to most but this makes people like me feel exceptionally uneasy and if you do express your opinion not to participate in role play this is brushed to one side - and your confidence that you may have built up is knocked down ten fold!!
- I dont know this is an insecurity of my own and i am not sure as to who would be able to help
- Perhaps the university lecturers or tutors could recognise when a person feels like this and give more support i.e not put a person on the spot in class. Make more facilities available for people with low confidence that could help to overcome this.
- more seating in food halls
- tutors could be more understanding about anxiety over presentations etc.
- Support for social anxiety on a one to one or group basis, to share experinces, reducing the feelings of isolation and exclusion, explore any underlying issues and offer practical guidance and strategies that will help me cope with these situations if not overcome them.
- no classes where presentations were required as part of the assessment process
- Maybe offering them to give a presentation to a smaller group of people then eventually build up the numbers once the person has gained some more confidence
- Make information less whooly and more specific, stop self learning, as it makes the anxiety worse, we need more support from the tutors without feeling as if we are stupid, but we also know the tutors are stressed and unhappy which does not help.
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feeling as if we are stupid, but we also know the tutors are stressed and unhappy which does not help.

- A hole that i could die in
- Give support facilities offered by Uni a higher profile, information in induction week went over my head as concentrating on Lecture info etc. As a mature student who lives 20 miles away don't have time to explore. Know there are services but don't know where or how to get connected to them
- No presentation.
- I haven't tried out the uni facilities yet as I avoid uni at the moment. Also there is nothing physically wrong with me and I would feel daft coming in saying that I am scared of coming in. Have tried to talk to a faculty member once and was quite rudely dismissed. Which put me off seeing anyone else incase I get the same reaction. I have to come in to talk to someone about my course and I am compleatly panicking about it.
- I think there are services available to help, it's just that I've never considered using them.
- I feel because I am on a part time degree course tutors have very little time with you or are just not interested in your wellbeing. I think every student full or part time should have a personal tutor throughout the lentgh of their degree.
- someone to come and talk to us about how to deal with these difficulties at the beginning of the course.
- spread the workload out so that everything does not come at once
- I'm not sure what else the University could do... you can't change how all the students act! You could make the facilities you do have more visible, sometimes you just don't know that help is available.
- I am not aware of the current facilities on offer so I don't know how to improve them. Perhaps giving partner college students information on what services are available to us so we know what help is out there.
- improve clarity and guidlines for assessments, improve understanding and support for mature students with families
- smaller class sizes for everything, not having to use a microphone for streamed lectures between different campuses,
- I think the only way to combat the problem is facing it, since coming to university my nerves etc have improved however they are still there but they arent as bad.
- \*direct disply of public transport information in library etc so you didn't have to leave to go to train station to find your train is delayed 30mins -1hr and stress at all you need to do. \*have a 'drop' facility for library books at other libraries andconsider students living 60miles away when considering overnight loans.
- sorry, can't see how you can help anxiety like that.
- You would not have to do presentations at all!!!!
- support around speaking in public,
- My own study has pointed towards social anxiety as being rooted genetically and neurobiologically, so is thus not something that can really be changed. However 1 on 1 sessions may would be the best form of support in my opinion.
- Maybe a weekly session in the timetable that improves skills in researching, and giving presentations.



- Offer group meetings where such issues can be discussed amongst peers who understand. Also practice presentations in these groups, then everyone will feel better because everyone can relate to their feelings when you are comfortable to present in front of likeminded peers, public speaking would become easier.
- If there is some thing that could happen then I think that a work shop regarding giving presentations and using power point would be good as I had to learn how to use it through trial and error, and learn through making mistakes. It would be good if tutors gave feedback as well which doesn't always happen.
- I think that my cohort have never really been given the chance to get to know each other, we have only been around the room once and told our names and that was too late in the course as it was a few weeks ago! Team building sessions would have helped me to become @ ease a little more within my group from the beginning of year one.
- maybe have group meetings where other people feel the same the build confidence?
- No so big an audience for presentations/seminars
- support aimed specifically at improving confidence in and out of the classroom - my course is nursing and I feel this type of support would benefit me socially as well as on the wards, with my career.
- Cut out presentations!!!! No really, perhaps self help teaching groups to increase confidence. Advice on presentations for the shy person.
- A discussion forum on the University website so shy people can ask for advice and correspond with others without coming face to face initially. A lot more emphasis on how university takes over your life, especially if you have children and are training as a health professional, more compassion from some lecturers would be good!!
- Offer mentors to first yr students. An advocacy service open to all. A help line for general queries
- Include more presentations on my course (BSc Hons Computer Systems & Networks).
- I think the University does quite well. Maybe improve/initiate special classes for people who find speaking in front of others difficult.
- More support with the emphasis on drop in centres and chat rather than going to counselling; this can take a while to set up and can also trigger off past events rather than dealing with the current problem.
- An alternative to presentations and speaking publicly, such as coursework assignments. Also, practice in small groups could alleviate stress caused by giving presentations.
- I am not sure what could be done, as my main worry is giving presentations & I know that I will have to do these. I think it is good for the tutors to give support, so that we know that, whilst we are preparing, we are on the right track.
- Everyone is different so I don't think there is any "one size fits all" solution.
- More help for students with disabilities
- Continue tutorials beyond the first year.
- More counseling services, they helped a lot. Otherwise I can't think of anything.

- better coverage of the support that can be given to those with low self-esteem and students who suffer from lack of confidence within seminars and conducting presentations.
- more support from personal tutors and formal training would really help. Part of me believes that just getting on and doing the presentation is sometimes the best medicine
- I find some seminar leaders (CJS1009 one in particular) to be quite unfriendly and when discussing topics in class makes me feel rather uneasy! if they were more casual and friendly and on our level communication would be better all round.
- I think how I feel is directly related to my confidence and self esteem. If I was to attend some of the services available to me I would probably feel a lot better, but I don't want to others to label me for attending and this combined with a lack of time and motivation means that I haven't so far.
- I don't like being forced to interact with new people or large groups, so maybe one on one counselling or an advice page on the portal to help overcome, web page is good as don't have to have that uncomfortable personal interaction.
- more personal approach - emphasis of fun on campus
- more group work, more friendly 'get to know each other' sessions/ outings etc
- Much more sport facilities just because there's a severe lack of it.
- Easy access counselling service.
- I do not think there is anything the uni can do for me, it is a personal battle that will fade over time
- assess presentations as a written report, I understand that presentation skills are important but people shouldn't benefit because they can talk openly with more confidence.
- Just making support services better, for example, more counsellors as the waiting list is big!
- Perhaps I am very lucky in that my personal tutors have given me time to talk things through with them. They are both very supportive and lend a kind though critical listening ear to all their students questions. I am on the Steiner/ Waldorf Education programme.  
<http://www.hypnogenesis.com/zimmerm.htm>
- a more efficient counselling service. the waiting list isn't of any help, anxiety affects my work and working relationships as I withdraw almost out of embarrassment. as it affects my work I would rather have support immediately available as opposed to joining a lengthy waiting list.
- Some sort of common room - just sofas and coffee tables - no barriers
- understanding lecturers!!!!!!!
- choice of not doing presentations. Perhaps getting a choice for module assessment e.g. coursework or presentation
- less hype and more community social development stuff, I mean if we actually did regular group building exercises, expressive and open tutorial sessions then our insecurities would die and our surroundings would seem less threatening. If we all, staff and pupils, worked together more equally deciding how the system of college/uni can work we would probably feel more involved empowered and able. We'd want to work because we had part in creating it and felt secure in ourselves to have fun doing so. I think that if you confront your fears with others you are more likely to strive forward in a positive and progressive way.

- I'm not really sure... maybe offering students with anxiety problems to change the way a module is marked, for example if a presentation needs to be made, being allowed to write a paper?
- If I had the answer to this question I would not have the problem
- More guidance on how to deliver seminar presentations.
- I would encourage group activities that would give students rewards for attending (eg free snacks vouchers??). The focus of the activities should be the interaction between different personalities and unknown people in class so that the fear and embarrassment about approaching somebody for the first time is taken away and a strong relationship builds up.
- most of my anxiety comes when i have to speak in front of large groups of people and that can not be avoided. however, as far as course work goes i do not feel very supported. e.g i go on placement and work 37 1/2 hours a week and i do all my summative assessments, but i rent my own place. so i also have to work part time to keep my head above water, so when i failed an essay due to trying to fit in all the work, my tutor never once asked me why i though i failed or offered any support. i personally feel that is a big let down. why have personal tutors if they are not there to support you? and other than paying for me to have botox under my arms, i am getting better at talking in front of people, i think this comes with experience.
- Do more to bond the subjects. for example, i am now in my final year and within my uni course we didnt have a trip or anything fun as a subject (sociology), would have been good in the first year to get to kno everyone which would have helped in the succeeding years. for example environmental science have fieldtrips and a compulsory trip away.
- To be honest I don't know what could be done within the university because I think it is a problem with my confidence and belief in myself. I have always scored highly in oral presentations so I must be doing something right, I just wish it didn't affect me the way it does. Maybe offering group sessions for people who have trouble with verbalising themselves to try and help them overcome their anxieties ? I believe the more you do something the easier it becomes so maybe be offering this sort of service students can overcome their fears by doing it over and over again ?
- Encourage socialising within work groups so you are more comfortable in lectures and seminars.
- allow students to choose between presentation based coursework and non-presentation based coursework.
- i think that a lot of anxiety stems from lack of knowlege fear of the unknown and the ambiguity that is often present. I realise that student led learning is important but to have the guidance outlines for presentasions and or assignment, would help. also more guidance relating to Practice Portfolio compilment.

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