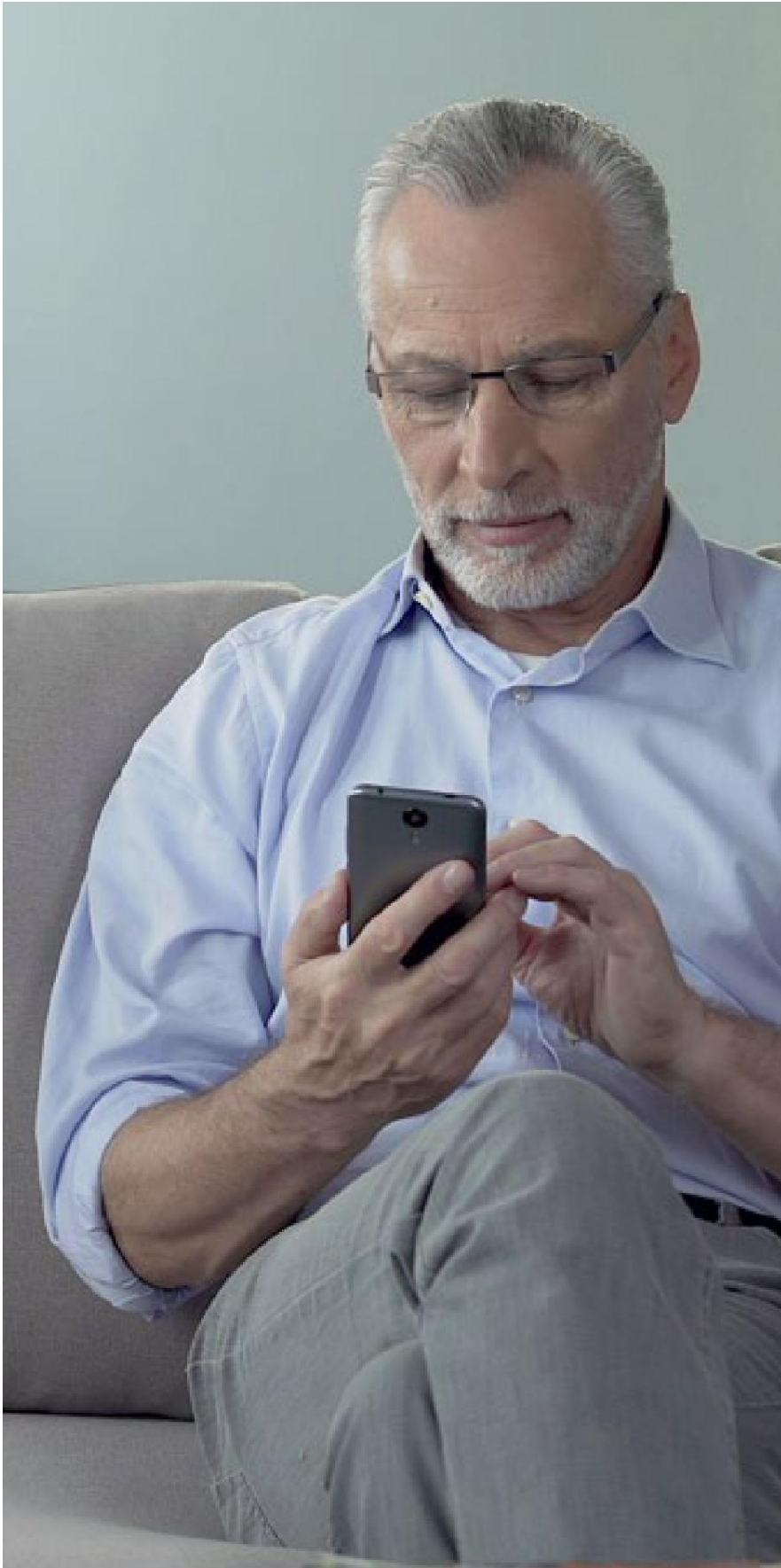




Living With Social Anxiety Disorder

**Overview**

You've been diagnosed with social anxiety disorder, and you're wondering what that means for you. Will you always feel this way? Will it ever get better? The good news is there are plenty of ways to manage social anxiety. These tips will help.

Participate in your care

First, it's important that you take an active role in your own care. So learn all you can about your condition. Find a therapist you like and go to your sessions. Do your homework. Ask questions when you don't understand something. And if you are given medication, take it as directed.

Small steps

Your therapist will teach you skills that will help you deal with stressful situations in positive ways. Instead of avoiding stress, you need to face your fears and conquer them. There are plenty of ways to do this. You can practice making eye contact with other people. You can ask a stranger for directions. If conversations are hard for you, you can prepare for them ahead of time by catching up on the latest news stories. That way you'll have some things to talk about. Your therapist can recommend these and other methods.

Stay healthy

Focus on your physical health. Make sure you're getting regular exercise and enough sleep. Avoid alcohol, drugs and caffeine. This can help manage depression, anxiety and stress. And see your primary care physician regularly.

Reach out

Finally, it's important to maintain connections with loved ones and friends. So reach out. Talk to others. Try to involve them in your treatment plan. These relationships provide a support system for you. An actual support group may be helpful, too. And don't be too hard on yourself. Improvement can take time.

Conclusion

If you work with your therapist and follow your care plan, you can learn to manage your social anxiety successfully.

Actor portrayals in photos

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