



spotlight on health

Can You Imagine Being Allergic To People?

(NAPSA)—Are you or someone you know suffering from symptoms of social anxiety disorder, a condition characterized by an intense, persistent fear and avoidance of social, work or performance situations? If so, you are among the estimated 10 million Americans who have this debilitating disorder.

An awareness campaign about social anxiety disorder which asked, “Are you Allergic to People?” conducted over the last two years has motivated people to seek professional help or, at the very least, made them feel less alone, according to a survey of callers to a toll-free phone line sponsored as part of the campaign by a group of patient and professional mental health organizations.

“It is very gratifying to learn that people who saw the campaign and called to receive more information felt it improved their understanding of this disabling condition, and were prompted to seek professional support,” said Mary Guardino, executive director of Freedom from Fear which sponsored the effort along with the American Psychiatric Association and the Anxiety Disorders Association of America.

The survey of 960 callers to the phone line found:

- Two out of three (61%) of those surveyed said they had heard about social anxiety disorder compared with 38% who said they had never heard of the disorder
- Four in five (81%) said they found the social anxiety disorder campaign made them feel they



were not alone in suffering social anxiety disorder symptoms

- Three out of four (78%) said the campaign improved their understanding of social anxiety disorder; a similar number (75%) said it helped them identify what they were feeling

- Three in five (60%) said it motivated them to seek additional information about the disorder and 44% said it motivated them to seek professional help

Those interested in information about social anxiety disorder can visit the Web sites of the sponsoring organizations at: adaa.org, freedomfromfear.org and psych.org.