

ALISON CARE



Overcome
SOCIAL
ANXIETY

A SELF HELP GUIDE TO MANAGE AND STOP SOCIAL ANXIETY
DISORDER. IMPROVE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE TO
OVERCOME SHYNESS

Overcome Social Anxiety

*A Self Help Guide to Manage and Stop
Social Anxiety Disorder. Improve Your
Self-Esteem and Confidence to Overcome
Shyness*

by Alison Care

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Introduction

Each one of us has experienced social anxiety in different contexts and with different intensities. Think of how you felt when about to make a presentation before a panel or before the board. Think of how you feel when meeting a new person. In these few illustrations of social anxiety, you probably felt a little scared, unease, and uncertain if you would navigate through the social interaction. Fortunately, the anxiety was not disabling, and you managed to navigate through the task or situation with a little impediment to your delivery and productivity. Unfortunately for sufferers of social phobia, the social anxiety is intense is disabling and overwhelming that the person suffers physiological, emotional, and behavioral adverse reaction by the mere imagination of being in social interactions.

Relatedly, this book offers an introduction to what constitutes social anxiety and what qualifies as a social anxiety disorder. After orienting the reader on what qualifies as social anxiety disorder, he or she is taken through specific scenarios of social anxiety that should attract intervention in the form of treatment options. In this book, the reader is introduced to existing therapies for treating social anxiety, the causes of social anxiety, and natural remedies used for social anxiety.

Social confidence is critical in overcoming social anxiety in the long-term, and an entire chapter is dedicated to suggesting ways of enhancing social confidence with a particular focus on self-esteem. Enhancing social skills is another critical aspect of addressing social anxiety as an individual learns ways and tricks of initiating, belonging, and challenging social interactions.

Chapter 1: What is Social Anxiety?

Social phobia concerns extreme fear that eventually creates consistent and long-term feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, embarrassment, self-consciousness, depression, and humiliation. Individuals that become anxious in an irrational manner in social contexts but appear composed and rational when alone are probably manifesting social anxiety. Social anxiety was formerly known as social phobia. Globally, an estimated 7% of the population suffers from some form of social anxiety, and the lifetime prevalence rate for manifesting social anxiety is 13% to 14%.

Equally important is that social anxiety can be specific or generalized. An example of specific social anxiety may include the fear of speaking in front of groups, and an example of generalized social anxiety includes feeling nervous, anxious, and uncomfortable in almost all contexts. Most individuals with social anxiety have a generalized type of social anxiety. Generalized social anxiety manifests as depression, anticipatory anxiety, indecision, worry, and self-blame across most life situations.

In most cases, social anxiety starts during teenage years and may improve when gets older, but for most people, it persists irrespective of age. In particular, social anxiety is an intense fear that does not ease and affects routine activities, relationships, self-confidence, and work. Most people occasionally worry about social situations, but people with social anxiety feel highly worried during, before, and after them.

An individual with social anxiety will fear routine activities such as starting conversations, meeting strangers, working, speaking on the phone, or shopping. One will worry or avoid social activities that include group conversations, parties, and eating with a company if they have social

anxiety. People that always worry about doing something they feel is embarrassing, such as sweating, blushing, or appearing incompetent may be exhibiting social anxiety. If you have social anxiety, you will find it challenging to accomplish things when others are watching as you may feel like you are being watched and judged all the time.

Additional, social anxiety makes one fear criticism, shun eye contact, or show low self-esteem. Social anxiety tends to make one feel sweaty, sick, tremble, or experience a pounding heartbeat known as palpitations. Having panic attacks in which one experiences an overwhelming sense of anxiety and fear that lasts for a few minutes. Most individuals with social anxiety also have other mental health issues such as body dysmorphic disorder, depression, and generalized anxiety disorder.

In brief, one should seek help if they feel that they have social anxiety and where they feel it is having a significant impact on their life. Social anxiety is a common problem, but fortunately, there are effective interventions to reverse its effects. Like any mental health condition, most people will feel reluctant to ask for help, but most health practitioners are aware that most people are affected and will gladly help. General practitioners may start by asking one about their behaviors, feelings, and symptoms to determine more about the anxiety in the patient's social situations.

Notably, social anxiety is beyond shyness, as it is a strong fear of wanting to avoid people and other social interactions. Unlike social anxiety, shyness is a mild fear and does not significantly affect the quality of life that one lives. Most people get a mild fear before meeting new people, but once the interaction starts, most people easily cope and even enjoy the interaction. However, when we become captive to intense fear, then it becomes a phobia, and it is for this reason that social anxiety was initially called social

phobia. The intense and unjustified fear exhibited in social anxiety is mainly due to worrying that people may be critical of you and that you might do something embarrassing.

With general anxiety, one worries that other people are looking at them and taking note of what one is doing. Social anxiety sufferers will dislike being introduced to other people and also find it challenging to go into restaurants or shops. If one worries about eating or drinking in public, then the person is exhibiting social anxiety. People that feel embarrassed about attending public events such as festivals, ceremonies, meetings, and sports may be exhibiting social anxiety. Expectedly, an individual with social anxiety has difficulties being assertive.

Correspondingly, people with social anxiety may hover around the venue without entering as they feel not ready to join in. Some individuals with social anxiety may think that they are claustrophobic when they are not. When a person exhibiting social anxiety manages to enter a hall where they are people, he or she tends to feel as though everyone is staring at them. Some individuals with social anxiety wrongly use alcohol to overcome anxiety, which is counterproductive.

For specific social anxiety, it affects individuals that want to be the center of attraction such as teachers, actors, musicians, and teachers. Unlike the generalized social anxiety, people with specific social anxiety can relate with other people satisfactorily. However, a person with specific social anxiety will become very anxious when asked to perform or participate in a particular activity that will trigger anxiety such as feeling suddenly weak when asked to speak or stammering when asked to speak.

Similarly, the feelings of anxiety for both types of social anxiety include getting worried a lot about embarrassing oneself in front of people as well

as feeling highly anxious before getting into any social context. One will spent efforts trying to anticipate all embarrassing things that can happen when one engages in a public situation. In all the forms of anxiety, an individual lacks the willpower to speak their mind. The person will reflect continuously on the alternatives that he or she could have taken.

Relatedly, social anxiety will also manifest in physical signs and symptoms which include having a dry mouth, sweating, heart pounding, wanting to use washrooms, heartbeats that are irregular, and feelings of numbness in the fingers. Some of the other visible signs of social anxiety include stammering, blushing, trembling, and shaking. All these symptoms can be distressing and aggravate anxiety. Sometimes, one may worry a lot to the extent of exhibiting a worried look. A significant number of people affected by social anxiety tend to align their lives around their symptoms of social anxiety.

In particular, such an individual has to contend with missing out on things that they might otherwise participate in and feel contended. For instance, if one is affected by social anxiety, then he or she may not visit an orphanage, school, or go shopping. Some people may avoid taking up a promotion at work even though they merit. A significant number of people with social anxiety have challenges in building and maintaining long-term relationships. The other people with high risk for social anxiety include people with high expectations for their behavior in public and those that have stammered as a child.

Furthermore, what makes social anxiety to sustain are certain thoughts that activate when one enters a social situation and makes the person anxious. Some of these thoughts include reflecting and trying to activate the rules for oneself, beliefs about oneself, and making predictions about the future.

These thoughts make one think and criticize their behavior from moment to moment. For individuals with social anxiety, such thoughts are automatic and seem to project the true inner self of the affected person. For instance, these thoughts make one imagine that they appear to other people in a specific manner, and that is usually unattractive.

Unfortunately, people with social anxiety will engage in safety behaviors that make them feel that they are in more control of the social situation. The specific behaviors include drinking alcohol, shunning eye contact, avoiding speaking about oneself, and asking many questions of the other person. The counterproductive aspect of these safety behaviors is that they deny one the opportunity to face their fears as anxiety is masked.

What is not social anxiety?

Firstly, imposter syndrome is not social anxiety. The imposter syndrome is an unjustified feeling of fear that one is not as competent as he or she appears. People with an imposter syndrome set a ridiculously high-performance bar for themselves, and when they do not attain that high mark, they feel like they are a fraud, a letdown and not worth their current position. As a way of compensating for the cost of this fear to an individual, a person with an imposter syndrome will avoid people where possible because the individual is always under the impression that people will find out that he or she is a fraud. If unmanaged, the imposter syndrome will manifest as social anxiety but as a secondary condition.

Secondly, fear is not necessarily social anxiety. For instance, if one fears that a social event will embarrass the person and that feeling is short-lived or occasional, then it does not qualify as social anxiety. There are some events and occasions that can heighten one's fear in social settings. For instance, post-trauma can manifest as social anxiety, especially where the

initial traumatizing event happened within a public space. Then there are feelings of shame that can make one avoid certain places and people, but usually, this is short-lived. Social anxiety arises where the fear and uneasiness of engaging in social interactions is unjustified and chronic as well as overwhelming the affected person.

Chapter 2: What is Social Anxiety Disorder?

Notably, social anxiety refers to a chronic mental health condition where social interactions trigger irrational anxiety. Individuals affected by a social anxiety disorder, routine social interactions trigger fear, anxiety, embarrassment feeling, and self-consciousness. For a sufferer of social phobia, the stress of any social situation is overwhelming, and the safe way for the person is to avoid all social contact. A person with social anxiety will consider eye contact and making small talk as uncomfortable. Expectedly, the social life of such a person is affected.

This is the reason why is it very important that a person with this type of disorder gets the help and the attention that he/she needs. This will help the individual to cope and eventually, be free from the troubles of having this type of disorder. It will give them the freedom that they need to be out and about in public. It will enable them to forge relationships with other people, but more importantly, it will give them a sense of security and be able to interact with other people.

Just like social anxiety, people affected with a social anxiety disorder will face challenges when talking to strangers, dating, speaking in public, making and sustaining eye contact, entering rooms, eating in front of other people, going to parties, using public restrooms, starting conversations, and going to school. For a person with social anxiety, he or she will be affected with only some of the mentioned situations and not all. For instance, the person may manage to attend a party but find it difficult to give a speech to an audience. The person may also be suave at having a conversation with another person but experience making a conversation to a crowded classroom.

A person with social anxiety will feel muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, lightheadedness, dizziness, diarrhea, stomach trouble, and feeling powerless. One may start showing symptoms and feeling anxious immediately before an event or may spend weeks worrying about it. An individual with social phobia appears stuck with negative and unfounded uneasiness.

While it is normal to feel and act nervous in some social situations such as going on a date or making a presentation before a panel, social anxiety creates uneasiness in nearly all social moments. However, in social phobia, the intense uneasiness and self-consciousness happen in daily interaction contexts making the person feel anxious and embarrassed due to the fear of being judged by others. As indicated, social anxiety is a chronic mental health condition that may require psychotherapy and pharmacological interventions to restore confidence and enhance the ability of the person to interact.

Just like social anxiety, feeling discomfort, shame, or shyness in certain situations, does not indicate symptoms of social anxiety disorder, especially in children. For most people, comfort levels in social situations vary subject to personality traits and life experiences. Some individuals are inherently reserved, while others are more open and outgoing. Typically, social anxiety begins in mid-teen years but can manifest in younger children as well as adults.

A person with a social anxiety disorder will show persistent worrying about humiliating or embarrassing oneself. If one fears situations, where he or she will be judged, then the person is probably manifesting social anxiety. Individuals with social anxiety show an intense fear of talking with strangers. If you fear that others will notice that you are anxious, and blush,

sweat or tremble, then, you are exhibiting signs of social anxiety. People with social anxiety disorder avoid speaking or doing things out of fear of embarrassment. Against this backdrop, persons with social phobia will shun situations where they might be the center of attention and will spend time after a social event to examine their performance and identify flaws in the interactions. Additionally, children with social anxiety will manifest the condition by showing temper tantrums, crying, refusing to speak in social situations, and clinging to parents.

Theories Concerning Social Anxiety Condition

Using a psychodynamic viewpoint, social anxiety condition emanates from a part of a significant problem that develops during childhood. Advocates of this view treat social anxiety disorder as a childhood disorder. In this model, social anxiety is viewed as emanating from attachments and experiences to the affected person's caregivers and other critical people in a person's life.

According to this theory, an expectation of shame and humiliation activated by harsh or critical parents helps create social anxiety disorder. Additionally, a conflict between the need to succeed and achieve, as well as one's fear of success contributes to the emergence of extreme social phobia. Social anxiety is also caused by a conflict between the need for independence and fear of rejection or abandonment by one's parents. Lastly, social anxiety disorder is assumed to emanate from narcissistic fear of being unable to make a perfect impression.

In one of the studies involving 495 patients with social anxiety, they were subjected to both therapies-psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioral and on the control condition. The outcome of the study indicated that patients that received cognitive-behavioral therapy had 60% to treatment while those

that were given psychodynamic therapy response to treatment were 52%. The individuals on the waitlist or the control condition only managed a 15% improvement.

In the same study and in terms of remission over time, those that received cognitive-behavioral therapy had a 36% remission rate compared to 26% for those that received psychodynamic therapy and 9% who were on control condition. All these findings indicate that getting cognitive-behavioral therapy will lead to an improvement in social anxiety disorder symptoms compared to doing nothing both in the long term and short term. In overall, cognitive-behavioral therapy appears to be more impactful than psychodynamic therapy in treating social phobia. In another study, both psychodynamic psychotherapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy for social anxiety were found to be equally effective.

Components of Social Anxiety Disorder

Emotions and moods

Sandra Hockenbury and Don Hockenbury, define an emotion as a concept that captures the personal experience, complex mental state, behavioral response, and the physiological response of the mind. Aside from defining what constitutes emotions, scholars have attempted to identify and categorize the various types of emotions. Some of the highlights on what constitutes emotions include:

According to psychologist Paul Eckman, there are six fundamental emotions that are universal throughout human cultures. The said emotions are anger, fear, disgust, sadness, happiness, and surprise. These emotions can be broadly classified as positive and negative emotions. Additionally,

psychologist Paul Eckman expanded the fundamental emotions list in 1999 to include shame, embarrassment, satisfaction, amusement, pride, and shame. In this aspect, people that suffer from social anxiety disorder chronically exhibit negative emotions.

Low Extraversion and Neuroticism

The broad dispositional differences in ways individuals tend to think, feel, and act are known as personality traits. Personality traits emerge in childhood and then solidify in adulthood. Neuroticism and low extraversion are centrally related to social anxiety. The defined point of one's negative emotion system is known as neuroticism. A person that has high levels of neuroticism will manifest frequent and intense negative emotional reactions to stressors and will take longer to calm down as well as have more negative thoughts about their environment. On the other hand, extraversion concerns the general set point for the positive emotion system and is attached into the sociality of an individual implying that it is the tendency of one to seek new social contact and exchange. Against this backdrop, individuals that are high in neuroticism and low in extraversion will be highly vulnerable to developing social anxiety compared to someone that has the reverse trait profile.

Social Influence and Relational Value

Human beings are inherently social creatures with relational goals and needs. As human beings, we have fundamental motives for social influence by making people act in alignment with our interests and relational value where being known and treasured by others counts. The emotional system directs us to approach gains and shun losses in relational value and social influence. Individuals with extreme social phobia are highly inclined to shunning losses in relational value and social influence than approach gains

where social anxiety is a function of their basic emotional system orientation. It is this focus on shunning immediate losses that makes such people trapping themselves with time.

Security Versus Attachment

The premise of our relationship system is created in early attachments, and attachment security is the fundamental sense that one is cared for and known as well-being valued by an inner relational circle of an individual. The attachment starts as the dance between infant and caregivers and develops throughout the lifestyle of an individual. For social anxiety, attachment functions in two ways and the first one is that some people that have a fundamental attachment to insecurity implying that they always feel out of context with their caregivers and generally feel unsafe. Then there are those people that have a deep attachment to their familiar premise which functions from wanting to explore more and reach out. In this case, the social anxiety manifests due to the need to stay closer home. In overall, anxiety can still develop in people that have normal and fruitful relationships with primary family.

Fundamental Social Anxieties

They are core anxieties that every human anticipates feeling and these are strangers and uncertainty, performances and comparisons, and conflicts and rejections. The three broad groups of anxiety include stranger anxiety, which is among the most fundamental anxieties that humans have. Stranger anxiety is so basic that it acts as one of the most known tests of attachment called the strange situation where young children and toddlers are unexpectedly placed in the presence of a stranger. There are some children that naturally flip out in such circumstances. In particular, strangers are

related potentially to both uncertainty and threat by not knowing what is coming next.

Similarly, the effective performance of skilled tasks is one of the most fundamental ways that we attain social influence and relational value. Additionally, we are oriented to compare ourselves with others in our intensity of skill and attraction. Poor social comparison or poor performance is attached to the loss of relational value and social influence. It is for this reason that loss is feared and for most people with social anxiety disorder, the idea of giving a social performance such as public speaking that invites criticism is highly terrifying. Conflict and rejection are among the most direct threats to social influence and relational value. For most people, the feeling that one will be criticized or rejected from a group is scary and intolerable for sufferers of anxiety. It is for this reason that most sufferers of anxiety will work more to avoid all potential forms of rejection or criticism.

The Private-to-Public

Through this unified approach, we get a tripartite model of human consciousness in which there is the experiential self, a public self, and a private narrator. Against this understanding, the filter between private to public is critical in comprehending social anxiety. Take a minute and think about our private thoughts and feelings and then think about what you share with others. Even though they are moments that require projecting your true self, in most cases, you exercise a filter between the private thoughts and then think about what you should share with others. All these developments are attributed to the fact that our public behavior is regulated by social norms, reactions, expectations, and judgments from others. It is for this reason that we try to find means of filtering problematic impulses, feelings,

and thoughts from public view to inhibit those unfortunate consequences. When feeling threatened and uncertain, one is likely to exercise heightened levels of private to public filtering, which is called the Rogerian filter and this precipitates the isolation and alienation of individuals with a social anxiety disorder.

In overall, all of these elements help capture the entire scope of social anxiety as these components make up social anxiety. When placed in the learning and developmental history context of a person with social anxiety, they help understand the condition deeper. It is critical to revisit the developmental origins of the social anxiety with a bias for attachment history and any history of trauma as well as what is the current relational context and how skilled is the person in navigating relationships in general. Lastly, consider how the negatively reinforcing avoidance pattern emerges and how do we comprehend the vicious psychological cycle that emerged.

Chapter 3: When Does Social Anxiety Need Treatment?

As a psychiatric condition, evaluation of the need for intervention should be the case by case merit. Social anxiety can cause adverse effects on the lives of those afflicted. A person may decline a job opportunity that needs frequent interaction with new people or shuns going out to eat with friends due to fear that their hands will shake when drinking or eating. The symptoms of social anxiety might be extreme to the point of disrupting the life of the sufferer. When one's daily activities and life such as going to school, work and making friendships is significantly affected, then it is time to seek intervention. Individuals with social anxiety are also at an increased risk of developing major depressive disorder as well as alcohol use disorders.

One should seek treatment when social anxiety continually makes the person feel like the heart is racing and that the chest is tight due to nervousness, and this becomes chronic. The continued panicky state makes the body to frequently engage in fight or flight mode in anticipation of an extreme threat to the body that is nonexistent. The frequent surge in blood pressure, breathing, and burning of calories can wear the body as well as aggravate any other conditions such as asthma, and ulcers. Social anxiety causes this physiological effect due to the unfounded mental trigger that the body is under extreme danger and the body reacts by switching to the fight or flight mode that can wear the body in the long-term as the manifestation of the racing heart is frequent. As such, it is important the individual seeks treatment.

When one starts struggling in occupational functioning due to anxiety, then the individual should seek treatment. It is known that social anxiety makes one nervous in engaging with people, and some tasks at the workplace require teamwork or frequent interactions. Think of working on a project or managing change at the workplace. All these scenarios call for group work and frequent interactions. Individuals with anxiety struggle with routine social interactions and this may negatively affect their work output. Think of a colleague who cannot work across the hall to pick something or engage with another worker. Think of a colleague who looks for excuses not to work with others not because they have group issues but simply because he or she fears social interaction. In this case, it is vital that the affected person seeks treatment.

Additional, when social anxiety causes dizziness or faintness, then one should seek intervention. As indicated earlier, social anxiety can cause physiological symptoms and signs, such as faintness. Since social anxiety disorder may manifest several times in a day or week, individuals with social anxiety may frequently feel physically and mentally drained. With a feeling of disorientation, a person will not effectively work or engage with others, and this affects their productivity and social life. Dizziness can be caused by a chronic feeling of a racing heart when faced with a need to engage in social interaction. Think of having to lead a group in making a presentation, but you suddenly feel dizzy and cannot bring out the best even though you rehearsed. Now imagine that you frequently feel dizzy each time you have to engage in social interactions. A chronic feeling of faintness due to social anxiety calls for treatment.

It is necessary to scout for treatment when social anxiety causes gastrointestinal upset. Another physical manifestation of social anxiety is that it can trigger gastrointestinal upsets, which can worsen already existing

conditions. Let us assume that you have ulcers or acidity issue as well as social anxiety. When the symptoms of social anxiety activate, the ulcers and acidity intensity are going to worsen. On its account, a social anxiety disorder can make one feel diarrhea, heightened gastrointestinal turning, and urge to empty the bowel. Most individuals have an underlying gastrointestinal condition such as excess acidity, ulcers, and gas. Managing the underlying conditions and leaving social anxiety disorder is counterproductive, and this implies that when gets gastrointestinal upsets due to social anxiety, then prompt treatment is necessary.

If social anxiety causes emotional detachment, then one should seek treatment. Emotional detachment occurs where one feels disconnected from their emotions, and this can worsen their already affected social life due to social anxiety. Individuals with social anxiety may exhibit emotional detachment as a way of coping with isolated social life, which is also a coping mechanism for social anxiety. In details, social anxiety makes one have an irrational fear and irrational behaviors towards engaging in social interactions. However, as a human being, the person often feels the need to engage with others and feel admired, but all these are inhibited by a social anxiety disorder. As a way of navigating this dilemma, the person tries to numb his or her feelings, causing emotional detachment. Unfortunately, all these efforts worsen the already poor social life of the person. Against this background, treatment should be extended to a person showing emotional detachment.

When a person gets feelings of extreme fear inferiority feelings, then the individual should seek interventions. With time a person with extreme social anxiety condition will feel that he or she is not worthy of anything and the attention of any group. The feeling of unworthiness is another attempt to cope with the effects of social anxiety disorder. In details, when

one has social anxiety, then the person shuns social interactions at all costs to avoid embarrassments. Part of this behavior is due to childhood experiences that made the person believe that he or she is unworthy of anyone's attention. The second aspect of the feeling of inferiority is that the person is trying to cope with the pestering feeling of wanting company and admiration that tries to make the individual consider going out. By entertaining feelings of inferiority, the person emboldens the justification for not going out, and at this stage, treatment is necessary.

If social anxiety causes severe depression, then one should seek treatment. Expectedly, all the push and pull between the need to avoid social interactions and the inherent human feeling of wanting to be admired and loved makes the person battle frequent dilemmas. The person affected extreme social phobia often feels that he or she is at the mercy of what the mind wants and not necessarily what he or she needs. The difficulty in understanding and living a fulfilling life may push one into chronic stress and eventual depression. It might be challenging for other people to notice signs of depressions for an individual with a social phobia as other people assume that it is their nature to want to be alone at all times. For this reason, when slightest signs of chronic stress manifest in an individual with a social anxiety disorder, then treatment should be advanced.

Should social anxiety cause panic attacks, then they should be treated. Panic attacks can manifest in persons suffering from a social anxiety disorder. When a panic attack happens, an individual suddenly experiences sudden fear and physical reactions to the point that the person thinks that he or she is under heart attack or dying. In some cases, sufferers of anxiety disorder may have an extreme fear of particular social moments, and when suddenly exposed to these social contexts, they may develop panic attacks. Social anxiety disorder is characterized by a panic attack and should attract

immediate interventions such as psychotherapy and pharmacological interventions.

Additionally, dysregulation of emotions should warrant the treatment of social anxiety. Apart from being numb to individual emotions, dysregulation of emotions can also occur with social anxiety, and this will worsen the already poor social life of an individual. In detail, lack of expected management of emotions negatively affects the emotional intelligence levels of an individual, and this directly makes the person hard and difficult to interact with even in the absence of social anxiety disorder. Dysregulation of emotions may occur due to isolation and attempts to numb emotions to enhance navigating conflicting mental state on the need to interact and the need to isolate for a person with a social anxiety disorder. When an individual starts showing dysregulation of emotions, then it is vital that the person seeks treatment of social anxiety disorder.

In cases where one starts isolating from others due to extreme fear occasioned by a social anxiety disorder, then treatment should be sought. Continued isolation will create a multiplier effect that makes social anxiety disorder a burden to the individual and those around the person. For instance, isolating oneself from others will increase the risk of chronic stress and eventually, depression. When one isolates from others, then he or she will have to find ways of numbing emotions, and the feeling of wanting to be respected and admired as these feelings require going out and meeting people. The continued dilemma and battle with emotions will create emotional dysregulation and emotional detachment where one tries hard not to feel connected to others. It is then necessary to intervene when an individual starts isolating from others due to social anxiety.

At times familial or marital conflicts may persist due to low self-esteem occasioned by a social anxiety disorder, and this calls for intervention. As an effect, a social anxiety disorder may mediate or moderate low self-esteem in several ways. Firstly, one may purposely try to feel unworthy of anyone's attention as a way of not wanting to invite the feelings of having to meet and connect with others. Secondly, social anxiety denies one opportunity to showcase their products and talents, and this makes the person feel worthless. Thirdly, social anxiety may make others to wrongly misjudge the person who only heightens the feelings of the affected person of wanting to be alone and feeling truly worthless. All these developments eventually affect familial or marital relationships, and it is necessary to seek treatment when familial relationships start straining.

Additionally, individuals with a social anxiety disorder might start substance abuse and drink as a way of compensating for isolation. In some cases, they might engage in other forms of addictions, such as excessive eating, fasting, porn, and gambling to compensate for the lack of human social life. Think of an affected person that drinks alcohol just before going to work as a way of lessening anxiety or think of an individual that engages in heavy drinking to cope up with loneliness. Unfortunately, these actions will only compound social anxiety disorder symptoms. Any slight indication of addictive behaviors should attract immediate treatment.

Lastly, one may also seek treatment for social anxiety out of own volition. When one feels that he or she needs to find a remedy to the condition, then the person should seek treatment. Like all mental health conditions, greater impact in treating social anxiety disorder will be realized where the individual affected takes the first step to seek treatment. A common mistake made when treating people with mental conditions is where they are forced into treatment plans and therapies. The person affected should be the one

who desperately wants to halt and reverse social anxiety disorder effects.
Think of a person affected with social anxiety disorder but whose treatment was sought and initiated by the family without adequate involvement of the person.

Chapter 4: What are the Symptoms of Social Anxiety Disorder?

Behavioral symptoms

Excessive fear of situations in which one may be judged is a symptom of social anxiety disorder. In this case, a person will avoid meetings, sports events, or grapevine talk with friends and colleagues due to the high sensitivity of being judged. A person with social anxiety has a preformed fear that people are judgmental and that the person is not worthy of the attention and respect of others. In a way, an individual with a social anxiety disorder is showing a very mild form of feeling dehumanized and finds comfort in being away from people.

Continued worrying about humiliating or embarrassing oneself is common for individuals with extreme social uneasiness consistently worry that they will embarrass themselves. The worry is contributed in part by limited interactions with people, which make the person feel they lack the requisite social skills and social norms required when interacting with others. In a way, a person with social anxiety feels that he or she has little dismissible social interactions exposure. Low self-esteem also makes such people feel that they will not meet the threshold expectations from the audience they are interacting with.

Having an intense fear of interacting with a stranger is a symptom of social anxiety disorder. Each one of us will show uneasiness when meeting or speaking to a stranger due to the fear of the unknown, and it is a welcome gesture that enhances our safety as human beings. Unfortunately for sufferers of extreme social anxiety, the fear of strangers is extreme to the level of inhibiting interactions or making the person with social anxiety

disorder shun the interaction altogether. Attempts to ease tensions and strike a rapport will not work for a person with a social anxiety disorder.

The fear that one will notice that you look anxious is another clinical presentation of social phobia. Sufferers of social anxiety harbor the feeling that people will notice that they are uneasy, and this will imply that they become a center of attraction which is a nightmare for persons suffering from a social anxiety disorder. The heightened self-consciousness increases the intensity of self-judgment and inability to process negative emotions. A person with social anxiety disorder has already a preformed negative opinion about their character, behavior, and competencies and any well-intentioned negative feedback from other people is taken as an affirmation of the self-criticism.

Partly due to heightened self-consciousness, and unfounded fear of being center of attention to people with social anxiety disorder nurse the fear that they will become an object of attention and shame. They worry that their reactions such as blushing and a shaking voice will make others notice them and judge them.

Due to the fear of being embarrassed, avoiding speaking to people, or doing things is also a symptom of social anxiety disorder. When unable to navigate all of the mentioned fears, a sufferer of the extreme social phobia will resort to avoidance of social situations. The justification for avoidance arises from the fact that an individual with social anxiety cannot overcome and navigate the social phobia, and avoidance is the only effective strategy.

Intentionally avoiding situations where you might be the object of attention. As indicated, a person manifesting social anxiety disorder will go to great lengths to shun events that make them a center of attention, which includes avoiding promotions at work and avoiding taking credit where they deserve

it. Expectedly, people with a social anxiety disorder will avoid joining friends to watch or participate in match, movie, or grapevine talk. The avoidance of social moments is not necessarily because the individual lacks social skills but due to the inability to overcome and navigate the social phobia.

Anticipating worst case scenario or outcomes from a negative encounter during a social situation is a symptom of social anxiety disorder. Mainly due to feeling inferior and unworthy of anything and attention from people, individuals with a social anxiety disorder will seek to lessen the cost of social anxiety disorder by preparing for the worst possible outcomes. The tendency to make the mind oriented towards negative outcomes is a way of enhancing coping mechanisms due to poor social life.

Physical symptoms

Firstly, trembling, as a physical symptom of social anxiety disorder occurs due to multiple factors. One, the body heightens its activities in preparation for a fight or flight mode when social anxiety disorder sets in, and this can make a person unable to coordinate their body limbs. Secondly, the shaking is due to the unconscious part of the mind that thinks that the person is facing real danger and trembling is a way of navigating danger by creating the impression that the person is harmless to the offending entity to make the offender walk away.

Secondly, blushing as a symptom of social anxiety disorder arises due to the need for the body to balance itself against largely negative emotion. The blushing of the individual with a social anxiety disorder is thought to be a reaction of the body to make the person adjust in good time rather than process the entire spectrum of negative emotions that drain the mind and the body of energy. The blushing is also a way of the unconscious mind to

help project the true status of the body to others to help them understand the affected person.

Thirdly, sweating as a physical symptom of social anxiety disorder happens due to several factors. One, sweating happens due to heightened activities in the body that burns immense energy within a short period of time. When under intense pressure such as during social anxiety disorder, the body yields a lot of energy to prepare itself for a flight or fight mode. Secondly, the intense conscious and unconscious body movements when one is under anxiety will make the person sweat. The third cause of sweating is when one is conscious that he or she is sweating and cannot manage the situation will increase the sweating.

Fourthly, there is fast heartbeat as clinical presentation of social anxiety disorder, and this occurs due to the increased energy consumption, need for blood flow and sudden movements. The onset of fast breathing and need to make sudden movements makes the heart to beat faster to sustain the adjusted high demand for blood in the body. According to the heart, the body is under attack and needs to work fast and efficient.

Fifthly, there is muscle tension, which is connected to the flight and fight mode because the body is under tension. The actions of hormones, intense blood flow, and fast breathing will contribute to muscle tension where the body burns a lot of energy anaerobically causing accumulation of acid that causes muscle tension. The intense movement of muscles without allowing the individual to adjust to the un-stressful position may also contribute to muscle tension.

Sixthly, stomach upset manifests due to social anxiety disorder because of several reasons. One, any underlying gastrointestinal issue will worsen with the onset of social anxiety disorder symptoms as social anxiety disorder

independently increases the spasms of muscles. Secondly, a social anxiety disorder may make one heave, and breath fast as well as excessively worry, all of which are capable of interfering with normal gastrointestinal functions by triggering frequent bowel movements and acidity.

Expectedly, faintness as a symptom will manifest as the body is under intense pressure to burn calories and make sudden movements which a normal person cannot effortlessly cope with. The body intense use of energy will leave one feeling exhausted after the episode of social anxiety disorder. The intense functioning of muscles, heart, and the gastrointestinal tract will also make one feel lightheaded.

Social-Related Symptoms

Notably, avoiding making eye contact is a symptom and a way of coping with a social anxiety disorder. Persons with extreme social anxiety feel that other people will judge them and find them wanting, and for this reason, they will shun social interactions. However, where they cannot completely avoid social interactions such as during a meeting, the person will avoid making eye contact because it makes the individual feel as though he or she is the center of attraction. Avoiding eye contact also makes the person feel unwatched and thus not judged by the audience.

Similarly, avoiding going to school or work is a symptom and coping mechanism for a person suffering from a social anxiety disorder. It is part of isolation only that it is targeted isolation. School and work contexts are the most demanding for a person with a social anxiety disorder as they invite judgment to character and productivity, which is something people with social anxiety disorder seek to avoid at all costs. For instance, the school may require participating in teamwork and taking exams or answering

questions. All these activities heighten social anxiety disorder in affected individuals.

Equally important is that avoiding as many social gatherings as you can constitute both symptoms and coping mechanism for persons with a social anxiety disorder. Persons with a social anxiety disorder will engage in avoidance of as many social situations as they can, and these include avoiding social moments. For instance, sufferers of social anxiety will avoid attending birthday parties, having a meal with neighbors, and attending a rally near their neighborhood. Isolation helps such a person avoid facing their fears.

By the same measure, avoiding dating is another symptom and coping mechanism. Dating is an intensely social activity that demands the application of all aspects of emotional intelligence and social skills. For instance, dating requires repeating oneself, holding hands in front of people, meeting friends and family of the other person as well as walking in public spaces. For a person with social anxiety disorder, all these present a dreaded nightmare. Just imagining all these activities will make a person with social anxiety disorder simply opt out of such an endeavor.

While for most people, eating in front of others is a routine activity it is not the same for a person with a social anxiety disorder as they avoid eating in front of others. A person suffering from social anxiety disorder has heightened self-consciousness and continuously thinks that he is embarrassing himself or about to embarrass himself. The person unjustifiably assumes that other people are noticing that he is embarrassing himself or that he is showing social anxiety. Due to these feelings and fears, people with social anxiety will shun eating in public.

Chapter 5: Therapy of Social Anxiety Disorder

Cognitive-behavioral therapy for anxiety

Notably, cognitive-behavioral therapy refers to more than one technique that relies on the disorder being treated. The treatment approach will differ for each mental disorder. For the same mental health condition, the treatment will vary according to the case at hand. It is critical that the therapist commands a knowledge of the particular cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques effective against social anxiety disorder.

Objectives for cognitive behavioral therapy anxiety

The objectives of this therapy are to have the patient working on several areas that are related to building the social confidence and social skills of an individual.

- How to become more assertive. Becoming assertive is important as it helps define the limits that one can take.
- Misperceptions that one may have concerning their abilities and self-worth
- Embarrassment, guilt, or anger over past situations
- Being more realistic and tackling perfectionism
- Handling procrastination linked to social anxiety

As indicated, cognitive-behavioral therapy entails a number of methods, most of which focus on problematic thinking. In interpersonal relationships and groups, cognitive methods lessen anxiety and make the person feel that they have regained control over their anxiety in social situations. The primary objective of cognitive therapy is to change the underlying core

beliefs that influence how one interprets their surroundings and context. Sufferers of social anxiety are routinely forced to confront their fears, whether real or imaginary, and asking them to toughen up is counterproductive. Such people should be slowly introduced to mild forms of their worst fears until they become completely desensitized to the phobias. Moving exposure train fast will backfire as the mind does not adjust instantly to trained phobias.

There is also interceptive exposure, which is a therapy helps neutralize as opposed to controlling internal sensations as the patient is systematically exposed to internal sensations in a manner similar to cognitive-behavioral therapy for those with panic disorder.

Limitations

There are a significant number of patients with cognitive-behavioral therapy that do not positively respond to cognitive-behavioral therapy akin to pharmacological treatments. Additionally, patients that respond to cognitive-behavioral therapy occasionally show residual symptoms. Even though cognitive-behavioral therapy is not a limitation on its account alone, but the failure of broader dissemination inhibits the success and usefulness of the technique. Most individuals with social anxiety disorder complain of receiving unstudied psychotherapies that include supportive therapy compared to cognitive-behavioral therapy. There is a need for improvement.

Interpersonal therapy

Notably, interpersonal therapy takes into consideration the social factors that contribute to disorders. The therapy takes into view the personal relationships and their impact on social phobia. The therapist determines the social areas that need improvement. The therapy also focuses on helping one improve the relationship with other people. Having social anxiety

implies having difficulties and extreme fears when in social circles and interpersonal therapy targets ways of relating in social settings.

Four areas are usually eligible for treatment in the interpersonal therapy model. These areas include role transitions, interpersonal disputes, interpersonal deficits, and grief. The therapist will assist the patient to figure out how individual misconceptions are playing an impact on his or her relationships. Sometimes the patient might not have an objective examination of the situation, and the therapist helps the individual navigate this shortcoming. The patient and the therapist will take role-playing in interpersonal situations to enable them to view the contexts differently. An example is where when you attempt to make a conversation with a stranger. In this manner, role-playing can help act as an unstructured mild form of exposure.

Additionally, the therapist will assist the patient to express and manage their emotions to make changes in their life. Encouragement is important as most patients may show low self-esteem or lack clarification. The current research on interpersonal therapy for treating social phobia indicates that its efficacy is at 78% with some patients reporting positive changes such as finding a new job, dating or returning to school. In some studies, interpersonal therapy was shown to post better outcomes for social anxiety disorder compared to psychodynamic psychotherapy but lesser outcomes when compared to cognitive-behavioral treatment.

Acceptance and commitment therapy treatment

This can be used to treat social anxiety disorder and was based on the relational frame theory. The acceptance and commitment therapy shares many of the values of the Buddhist philosophy. The overall goal of acceptance and commitment therapy is to encourage the processing of

negative thoughts instead of the elimination or reduction of them. Since not everyone responds to cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy could be a critical alternative therapy to treating social anxiety disorder. The acceptance and commitment therapy argues that one's normal routine thoughts can become damaging. The acceptance and commitment treatment assumes that language is the cause of human suffering as it is the basis for negative thoughts and emotions such as obsession, prejudice, self-criticism, and fear.

Correspondingly, the goal of acceptance and commitment therapy is not to eliminate social anxiety symptoms as trying to directly control or lessen the symptoms will actually make them worse. Through this acceptance and commitment therapy, one will be encouraged to enjoy a meaningful life, accept that there will always be pain and suffering and that one should detach from it and take action based on the values. In overall, the acceptance and commitment therapy will make the social and anxiety symptoms become less.

Relatedly, acceptance, and commitment therapy builds on six principles. Firstly, there is cognitive diffusion which entails detaching oneself from unpleasant private experiences like feelings, thoughts, memories, images, sensations and urges. A person will always have experiences, but the intent of acceptance and commitment therapy is to lessen the influence that the experiences have on the person. The inherent reaction is to struggle against unpleasant experiences, but doing so will only worsen them. The therapist may point out how struggling against negative feelings is akin to trying to climb out of quicksand. Acceptance and commitment use of metaphors to explain experiences. The other principles include acceptance, contact with the present moment, observing self, values, and committed action.

Chapter 6: Alternative Interventions for Social Anxiety Disorder

There are alternative interventions which include pharmacological treatment plans or a combination of therapy and medication to treat anxiety disorder. The treatment of social anxiety disorder depends on the physical and emotional symptoms as well as how well one functions daily. The duration of treatment also varies. Some individuals may react well to initial treatment and not require anything further, but some will require some form of support throughout their lives. In treating social anxiety disorder, both therapy and medication have been shown to be effective.

Medications

There are medicines prescribed to treat social anxiety disorder, and each has its advantages and disadvantages depending on the merit of each case.

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors are a choice first intervention pharmacological treatment for social anxiety disorder because the side effects are tolerable and administration of the medication is easier.

Unfortunately, due to potential withdrawal effects, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors should always be tapered when terminating treatment. The options include Zoloft, Prozac, Paxil CR, and Luvox CR. Paroxetine with brand name Paxil was found to be the second most effective form of pharmacological treatment for social anxiety disorder in a 2014 meta-analysis.

These drugs are originally meant to act as antidepressants but are effective to some extent against social anxiety disorder. By stopping nerve cells in the brain from reabsorbing serotonin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors

work by preventing nerve cells in the brain from reabsorbing serotonin that is a chemical that acts as a vital role in regulating mood. These types of pharmacological intervention take effect within two to six weeks, but they do not work for everyone. Patients usually take selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors for up to twelve months to treat anxiety then slowly gradually reduce the dosage. For emphasis, these drugs are not habit-forming and will not cause dependence.

Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors

Serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors are a class of antidepressants that are used to treat anxiety and act on norepinephrine and neurotransmitters serotonin. Examples of serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors include venlafaxine, duloxetine, and desvenlafaxine. In a 2014 meta-analysis, venlafaxine extended-release was found to be the third most effective form of pharmacological treatment for social anxiety disorder.

Monoamine oxidase inhibitors

Monoamine oxidase inhibitors were initially considered as the most potent treatment for social anxiety disorder, but these medicines carry with them the risk of serious side effects of medication and dietary guidelines are not followed. The available monoamine oxidase inhibitors include phenelzine, isocarboxazid, and tranylcypromine. Monoamine oxidase inhibitors are not widely used due to the serious side effects when treating social anxiety disorder and phenelzine was found among the most effective form of pharmacotherapy for social anxiety according to a 2014 meta-analysis.

Beta-blockers

Normally, beta blockers are taken orally before an anxiety-inducing event such as public speaking to lower the symptoms of anxiety such as hand

tremors, rapid heart rate, and feeling of a stomach upset. The available beta blockers include atenolol and propranolol. The use of beta blockers is favored in situations that need mental sharpness as they do not have adverse effects on cognitive ability.

Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines refer to mild tranquilizers that ease the symptoms of anxiety by slowing down the central nervous system. Even though fast-acting and well-tolerated ones have the potential to be habit-forming and should not be given to someone with a substance abuse disorder. The available benzodiazepines include diazepam, lorazepam, alprazolam, and clonazepam. As expected, benzodiazepines are not favored as the first-line of treating social anxiety disorder. Notably, benzodiazepines should not be prescribed for more than one month due to the risks associated with this class of drugs. The unwanted effects of benzodiazepines are that they tend to become less effective and addictive over time.

Known side effects of select medicines used to treat social anxiety disorder

Some selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors may cause headaches and dizziness. The other side effects include dry mouth, fatigue, nausea, gaining weight, erectile dysfunction, restlessness, blurry vision, sleep problems, and feeling agitated.

For selective serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors, the side effects include constipation, dry mouth, dizziness, and fatigue, loss of appetite, increased blood pressure, sleep problems, sexual problems, sweating more than usual and nausea.

Regarding tricyclic antidepressants side effects, they include dry mouth, hazy vision, constipation, drowsiness, difficulty urinating, lightheadedness, increase in appetite, tremors, low blood pressure after standing up, weight loss, sweating more than usual, and sexual problems.

For side effects of benzodiazepines, they include confusion, blurry vision, an upset stomach, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, drowsiness, loss of memory, and problems with speech, balance or coordination. Additionally, benzodiazepines can also cause sleep problems, depression, seizures, anxiety and restlessness, seizures, and sweating. Some of the severe effects of benzodiazepines include cognitive decline, addiction, hip fractures, and disorientation.

Regarding side effects of beta-blockers include depression, cold feet and hands, extreme tiredness, low blood pressure, weight gain, sleep problems, low blood pressure, and sleep problems. For this reason, individuals with asthma should shun beta-blockers as well as people with diabetes.

Correspondingly, the side effects of buspirone include diarrhea, blurry vision, nausea, drowsiness, fatigue, poor concentration, sleep problems, nervousness, and dry mouth. On the other hand, the potential side effects of monoamine oxidase inhibitors include sexual dysfunction, low blood pressure, headaches, difficulty urinating, diarrhea, blurry vision, nausea, drowsiness, fatigue, poor concentration, sleep problems, nervousness, and dry mouth. Monoamine oxidase inhibitors interact with most medications, and one should consult extensively with a doctor on medicines, drinks, and food to avoid.

Aromatherapy

Another approach to managing social anxiety disorder is aromatherapy and is part of herbal medicine that uses essential oils extracted in plants for their

medicinal or healing properties. Essential oils are intended to be absorbed into the body through massage, inhalation, and the lungs. Aromatherapy is widely applied in reducing stress, detoxification, and rejuvenating the body as well as treating specific conditions. It is believed that aromatherapy rejuvenates both the body and the mind. Aromatherapist sessions may last for an hour and a half and usually starts with an interview. The therapist will select a blend of oils and mix them in a neutral carrier, especially a vegetable oil after the aromatherapist gains an understanding of the concerns of the patient.

Correspondingly, the patient will then undress and lie on a massage table covered by a towel as the therapist begins the message. In most cases, the massage lasts an hour and is usually gentle and relaxing. When aromatherapy and psychotherapy are blended to combat social anxiety disorder, it tends to work. However, it is important to consider adverse skin reactions, allergy, and people with breathing difficulties when using aromatherapy.

Chapter 7: What are the Types of Social Anxiety Disorders?

All of us face some forms of anxiety, and it is part of routine life. When waiting for an event with significant to your life, you are likely to feel uneasy, especially where the outcomes are binary, implying that one can only attract one outcome. However, anxiety disorders are more than just occasional worry or fear. The anxiety in anxiety disorders does not ease and tends to worsen with time. Anxiety disorder affects the work, school, and relationships of an individual. The types of anxiety include generalized anxiety disorder, phobia-related disorders, and panic disorder.

Generalized anxiety disorder

A display of excessive anxiety is known as a generalized anxiety disorder and manifests for most days and months. The anxiety manifest as feeling easily fatigued, and irritable, concentration difficulties, and tensions of the muscles, sleep problems, and difficulty controlling feelings of worry.

Panic disorder

Having recurrent unexpected panic attacks constitutes a panic disorder. The sudden periods of intense fear that occur suddenly and attain peak levels within minutes are known as panic attacks. The attacks happen randomly and with no justified cause. The individual suffering from the mental health condition may show the perception of being overwhelmed, and sensations of breath shortness. Additionally, people with this disorder will worry about when the next episode of an attack will occur. Since each attack is seen as life-threatening, the sufferer of this condition spends significant time worrying that he or she may one day succumb to the attack. Against this

worry, each panic reinforces the next panic attack as the individual becomes even more worried about experiencing the attack

Phobia-related disorders

Phobias manifest as intense fears that one feels overwhelmed. Even though it is justified to be disturbed and bother by the imagined threat. Individuals with phobias have a magnified view of fears and imaginary fears, forcing them to show extreme reactions. Most people show some intense fear for something even though they have no known history of an anxiety attack. Having phobias is within normal behavior as long as the reaction does not become unrealistic.

Simple phobias

Simple phobias or specific phobias in which people that have this phobia show intense fear to a specific situation or object such as flying, heights, blood, receiving injections, and specific animals. Most of these simple phobias are accepted fears that each one of us shows. For instance, your friend may have a fear of heights, while another has a fear of spiders.

Social anxiety disorder

It is a mental health condition in which people with this disorder show general intense fear of social or performance situations. People with social anxiety worry that their behaviors or actions linked to their uneasiness will be adversely scored by friends and society. As a way of coping with the unfounded worries, sufferers of social anxiety are likely to retreat to their world and isolate from social activities.

Agoraphobia as a disorder

Individuals with agoraphobia show an intense worry of at least two of the following symptoms, and these are fear of being in open spaces. Individuals

with agoraphobia tend to avoid these situations partly due to the unfounded fear that escaping from such places when panic-like reactions set in will be difficult.

For a normal person, being in an enclosed space elicits some minimal level of worry, but it is not that significant to make them overwhelmed by the worry. For an individual with agoraphobia, being in any closed space triggers unfounded fear that the person might be in danger and may not manage to escape in such a setting. The thoughts of the person are in the worst case scenarios such as a fire outbreak, collapsing building, a terrorist attack, and a shooter situation. As such, people with agoraphobia have a morbid fear of any enclosed space and may scream, refuse to enter, or almost faint when placed in an enclosed space.

Separation anxiety disorder

Even though separation anxiety is associated largely with children, adults can also suffer from it. Persons with this disorder hold unfounded fear that being away from their figures of affection will either cause harm to the figure or to the individual. Due to this unfounded extreme worry, the person's behavior and action may appear weird as the individual tries to prevent the separation because the individual is seeing only the worst happening. For children, they will cling on the dress or bag of the figure of attachment due to worry that something will happen to them or they may never show up.

Each person may show limited levels of separation anxiety disorder due to the emotional attachment that we have for those close to us. Think of how you feel when you have to travel far away from home for years. Think of how you feel when your child is going back to college. All these are mild forms of separation anxiety but highly manageable for individuals without

anxiety. For persons with separation anxiety disorder, all these normal events would cause intense worry manifesting as an anxiety

Selective mutism

It is a rare disorder that is linked to anxiety and happens when people fail to speak in specific social situations despite commanding the requisite language skills. Selective mutism usually manifests at the age of five years and is associated with fear of social embarrassment, extreme shyness, withdrawal, compulsive traits, temper tantrums, and clinging behavior. People that have selective mutism tend to also have other anxiety disorders.

Chapter 8: What is Social Anxiety Attack?

An anxiety attack happens when an individual gets an episode of intense fear or panic. Expectedly, anxiety attacks happen fast and without warning. In some cases, there is a known trigger, such as getting stuck in an elevator or thinking about making a speech to a large audience, but in other cases, the attacks happen with little anticipation. The anxiety attacks tend to peak within ten minutes and rarely last for more than thirty minutes. During this period of an anxiety attack, the victim will experience terror and feel overwhelmed or feel as if they are about to die. Relatedly, the clinical manifestation of anxiety attacks is highly frightening that most people think that they have a heart attack. When the anxiety attack is over, the affected person may worry about getting another one, especially in a public place where help is not easily available or where one cannot escape easily.

Correspondingly, the symptoms of an anxiety attack include feeling a surge of overwhelming panic, hyperventilation, feeling of losing control, feeling like you are passing out, nausea, feeling detached, shaking, or chills. One should seek intervention if you start avoiding certain situations due to being afraid of having a panic attack. Fortunately, panic attacks are highly manageable. In most cases, most people are free of panic attacks within just five to eight treatment sessions.

Furthermore, people with social anxiety attack display fear and avoidance as a way of coping with future attacks. All these developments relate to a panic disorder that can happen with or without agoraphobia. People that have experienced anxiety attacks will show fear of experiencing panic attack symptoms in contexts that feels either emotionally embarrassing or physically difficult to escape from. Most people with anxiety attacks fear

the physical symptoms of panic attacks due to the belief that they may have an underlying medical issue which aggravates the worry. Such people may feel at ease from these attacks by remaining within certain areas or a premeditated safe zone without experiencing intense fear. When the person can no longer leave the defined physical safe zone without showing intense fear, then the person is considered as having agoraphobia.

Additionally, anxiety attacks are recurrent, implying that they will happen multiple times without warning. The physical symptoms of an anxiety attack, such as difficulty breathing, shaking, and heart palpitations can make the individual feel that they are in grave danger. Some people with anxiety attacks feel as if they are going insane. Some of the physical symptoms of panic attacks are akin to those of social anxiety disorder such as excessive sweating and shaking.

Unlike social anxiety disorder, individuals may experience anxiety attacks may seem comfortable engaging in social interactions. Like those with social anxiety disorder, people with anxiety attacks feel embarrassed about having others see them have a panic attack. For this reason, a trusted family member or friend can help support a loved one with an anxiety attack. Most people with panic disorders enjoy social interactions and can benefit from social support but the attempt to keep the panic a secret makes such people suffer loneliness. Similarly, individuals with social anxiety disorder experience high levels of loneliness even though such people may want to socialize with others; the anxiety is highly overwhelming.

Causes of anxiety attacks

Even though the specific causes of anxiety attacks are relatively known, the disorder tends to run in families. Major life transitions are known to trigger anxiety attacks, and they include graduating from college and joining the

workplace or getting married. Death of a loved one cause severe stress, and so makes the loss of a job or divorce, which can trigger panic attacks. Additionally, such attacks can also be a manifestation of underlying medical conditions as well as other physical causes such as mitral valve prolapse which is a minor cardiac problem that occurs when one of the valves of the heart does not close correctly. An overactive thyroid gland known as hyperthyroidism can also trigger anxiety attacks symptoms. The other conditions include hypoglycemia, stimulant use, and medication withdrawal.

In overall, women are at more risk of developing anxiety attack compared to men. Anxiety commonly manifests when one feels overwhelmed, and some of the triggers include financial pressure, work pressure, family problems, separation, concerns about parenthood, challenges with coping with administrative issues, changing life situations, reduced mobility, loss of mental function and having a diagnosis of a chronic condition.

Additionally, an anxiety attack can be caused by several phobias other than a social phobia, genetic factors, changes in the brain, major stress, excessive stimulant use, use of certain medication, a history of substance use, the use of some medications, and a post-traumatic experience. As indicated anxiety is triggered by exposure to the feared situation or object that includes public speaking, exposure to a phobia, and a fear of having a panic attack.

Pathophysiology of anxiety attacks

Responses to anxiety are an adaptive response and prepare an individual for vigorous defensive action when there is a proximal predatory threat. When an anxiety attack happens, intense fear is aroused by sympathetic activity even when there is no actual danger. Most neuroendocrinological studies implicate dysfunction of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis even

though this disturbance happens later in the progression of the disorder after anticipatory anxiety development and associated distress. Issues with the normal functioning of the amygdala of the brain, hypothalamus, thalamus, and brain stem regions impact the development and progression of anxiety attacks.

Theories of anxiety attacks

Anxiety attacks due to the biological theory

Neurotransmitters send signals between various sites in the brain and tend to impact the mood and anxiety levels of a person. The imbalance of one or more neurotransmitters is thought to trigger anxiety, and this is the biological theory of anxiety. Anxiety in these cases happens due to erratic processing of normal fear as intense fear making the individual feel that they are in grave danger. The Gamma-aminobutyric acid reinforces the assumptions of the biological theory on what causes anxiety in human beings. As a brain in the brain, the gamma-aminobutyric acid modulates anxiety. The chemical, gamma-aminobutyric acid balances excitement in the human brain by mediating relaxation and depressing anxiety levels and recent studies suggest that gamma-aminobutyric acid may have an impact in most mental disorders such as mood disorders and anxiety. Most of the anti-anxiety medications target gamma-aminobutyric acid receptors in the brain, leading to a more composed and relaxed person. In some studies, the levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid in persons with anxiety attacks were significantly lower compared to individuals with no history of anxiety attacks.

Anxiety form a metabolic theory viewpoint

Most individuals with anxiety attacks show high sensitivity to certain substances compared to those without a history of anxiety attacks. For

instance, some people experience anxiety attacks by receiving an injection of lactic acid that the body generates naturally during muscular activity. Some people will experience anxiety attacks by breathing air with elevated levels of carbon dioxide. For some people taking any stimulant such as caffeine will trigger anxiety. However, there is no consensus on causatives of anxiety as brain chemical messengers are interactive and complex. In overall, most people agree that anxiety attacks are caused by a variety of factors, including genetic and environmental influences.

What anxiety attacks are not

It is necessary to define the scope of anxiety attacks to avoid the unwarranted assumption that any form of anxiety episode is an anxiety attack. Such an attack is not necessarily a heart attack even though most clinical presentations may appear like those of a heart attack. Most people suffering from an anxiety attack make trips to the doctor, thinking that it is a life-threatening medical issue. Even though it is important to rule out any potential medical issue when chest pain, difficulty breathing, and elevated heart rate manifest, in some cases, it is just an anxiety attack.

Diagnosing an anxiety attack

A mental health professional can accurately determine the presence of an anxiety attack by diagnosing social anxiety disorder or a panic disorder. However, mental health professionals cannot directly diagnose an anxiety attack as it is not clinically specified in the DSM-5, which is a scientifically developed premise for defining and diagnosing mental health conditions. However, these health professionals can recognize anxiety attacks and the underlying mental health condition. Sometimes it might be necessary to rule out physiological conditions that show similar signs and symptoms.

Treating anxiety attacks

Just like the underlying mental health conditions, anxiety attacks are treated through therapy but can also be treated using pharmacological interventions. Through cognitive behavioral therapy, the focus is given to learning approaches and activities that fuel the anxiety attacks and helps the patient to examine their fears in a more pragmatic manner.

Additionally, there is exposure therapy for managing anxiety attacks by allowing the patient to navigate the physical sensations of panic in a safe and managed environment. All these developments give the individual an opportunity to create healthier ways of coping. One might be asked to hyperventilate, hold their breath, or shake their head from the side from to side. With each exposure, the patient will become less afraid of these internal bodily sensations and feel a greater sense of control over the panic.

Pharmacological interventions for anxiety attacks

As indicated, medications can be used to manage anxiety attacks for a short-term. These medicines do not resolve the underlying condition, and they should not be the only form of treatment available for the patient with anxiety attacks. For instance, the medication should be combined with lifestyle changes and therapy to help address the underlying problem. Some of these medications include antidepressants, and they may take weeks to start working and have to be taken continuously even when there is no anxiety attack happening. The other class of medication for anxiety attacks is benzodiazepines, which are anti-anxiety attacks drugs and act very quickly, usually within thirty minutes to an hour. Taking benzodiazepines during an anxiety attack can give fast relief of symptoms. Unfortunately, benzodiazepines are highly addictive and present serious withdrawal symptoms so they should be used cautiously

Helping someone with an anxiety attack

It is frightening to see a friend or someone close to you suffering from an anxiety attack. Usually, the breathing of such an individual becomes abnormally shallow and fast that the person becomes dizzy, trembles, sweats, feel nauseous, or thinks that they have a heart attack. Even though the individual response may seem irrational, it is important to view the world from the victim's eyes. A person suffering from anxiety attack thinks that the danger is real, and simply asking them to calm down helps a lot. Helping the affected person to navigate the panic attack is important to manage future attacks.

Additionally, act calm as being composed and understanding, as well as non-judgmental, will help the affected person's anxiety to subside normally. There are situations where a person close to the victim of anxiety attacks also panics, which tend to worsen the anxiety or post-anxiety recovery of the victim. Think of a friend of a person suffering from an anxiety attack, and the friend starts screaming that the person has a heart attack which only reinforces the anxiety of the victim.

Furthermore, learn about panic and anxiety if you have a friend with anxiety attacks. By knowing about anxiety, you will assist the friend with anxiety attacks to understand them and think of overcoming them. As with any other mental condition, there are higher chances of making the treatment effect if the patient is the one who asked for the treatment. Close friends are important in providing an understanding and supportive environment for the patient. In most cases, we assume knowledge of mental health aspects when, in reality, we know not. For instance, most people assume they understand what emotions are, but the reality is that they do not.

It is also important for the person with an anxiety attack to shun alcohol, caffeine, and smoking as all these provoke anxiety attacks in vulnerable people. Unfortunately, quitting usage of some of these stimulants and drinks require an independent therapy, but they are manageable. Another common mistake that individuals with anxiety attacks make is that they might resort to drinking or smoking to escape from the fear of anxiety attacks or to lessen anticipated anxiety attack.

Additionally, one should learn to manage their breathing as hyperventilation brings on many sensations, including feeling chest tightness and lightheadedness that manifest during anxiety attacks. Fortunately, deep breathing can relieve most of these symptoms. When one learns to control their breathing, then they will manage to calm themselves down when they begin to feel anxious.

Correspondingly, practice relaxation techniques such as yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, and medication will strengthen the relaxation response of the body. The opposite of stress response involved in panic and anxiety is calming down of the body and feeling in control of everything. All these relaxation practices promote relaxation and also increase feelings of joy and equanimity. Anxiety makes the muscles and the entire body tense making the person feel like he or she does not exist. By learning to relax the mind and the body, the person with anxiety attacks may start to feel complete and in charge.

It is also important that one avoids isolation. Interacting with friends, face-to-face interaction will increase the emotional stamina and processing of fear for the affected individual. Interacting with friends physically may also serve as a limited form of exposure where the person gets to face their

worst fears in small and mild forms. It might also become easier for the individual to recover from an anxiety attack when surrounded by friends.

Equally important is that one should get enough and quality sleep.

Inadequate amount of sleep or poor quality of sleep will only worsen anxiety. Try getting at least six hours of uninterrupted sleep. While it might appear an easy exercise and process, most people have difficulties getting continuous quality sleep. Fortunately, there are several tips that can be found online on how to achieve quality uninterrupted sleep.

Tips for managing anxiety

Know the signs of anxiety. Unlike panic disorder and panic attacks, most anxiety attacks have a fairly predictable cause. When one knows the signs of anxiety, then he or she is likely to take action when the first few signs start manifesting. Some of the signs of anxiety attack may include overeating and inability to sleep.

Understand your triggers. The triggers of an anxiety attack vary from person to person, and one must learn to recognize what makes them feel anxious. For instance, taking significant workload or asking someone for help may be part of the triggers that activate your anxiety. Once you identify the triggers, consider managing them.

It is also important to take diet into consideration as a busy lifestyle can lead to much fast food or limited exercise. Create time for getting a healthful meal or pack a home-made healthy meal to the office.

Learn to exercise as sitting for lengthy periods of time will worsen latent anxiety. Learn to take a 30-minute break and walk to enhance your well-being. The other advantage of exercising is that it helps convert emotional energy into physical energy, which relaxes the mind.

Commit to being social by spending time with friends and family. One can also look for another group other than family to interact with. By joining an emotional support group, one will learn to ease the mind off social anxieties.

It is also necessary that one sets goals. When feeling overwhelmed with administrative or financial problems, try to sit down and plan. Define targets and priorities and evaluate them off as you sort them out. Having a plan will help determine how much workload one can take.

Illustration of an anxiety attack

Richard is a 35-year old male, enters the emergency room after getting an episode of extreme chest pain, numbness in the arms, and difficulty breathing. Richard states the following to the physician:

“I was taking a walk with my pet dog when I began sweating. Since it was not hot outside, I could not understand why. Then I began having trouble breathing and really felt scared. I thought my heart would explode as it was pounding so hard. When my knees felt weak, it seemed like my entire body was trembling, and then my arms went numb. I realized later that the whole episode lasted a few minutes, but it felt like each second was an hour. Am I going insane? Did I have a heart attack? I felt like I was going to die.”

When Richard was given an electrocardiogram, the test comes back in the normal range, showing that he did not have a heart attack. The physician believes that Richard may have had a panic attack and referred him to a clinical psychologist.

After four weeks, Richard saw the psychologist and reported that he experienced over two-dozen anxiety attacks with similar symptoms since being taken to the emergency room. At this juncture, the daily productivity

and social life of Richard were negatively impacted as he avoided going to work, having time with friends and family, and walking with his dog as he thinks that it might precipitate another attack. A deeper analysis shows that Richard has a social anxiety disorder as diagnosed by the psychologist.

Relatedly, the therapist gave Richard a biofeedback monitor that tracks his pulse and teaches him to breathe slowly and deeply to lower the heart rate. When Richard experiences an anxiety attack, he uses the machine to adjust his breathing until the machine light turns green which is an indicator that the heart rate of Richard is no longer dangerously elevated and signals the end of the anxiety attack. The therapist recommended this biofeedback monitor as it gives consistent, accurate information about heart rate over time.

Chapter 9: What Causes Social Anxiety?

Issues with brain signaling

Some studies argue that brain scans of individuals with social phobia show hyperactivity in the amygdala region of the brain. The amygdala region of the brain handles most of the physiological changes linked to the reaction. For instance, cognitive-behavioral therapy can help individuals with social anxiety adjust their brain processing of real and imagined fears.

Additionally, researchers may look at the blood flow differences in specific areas of the brain for individuals struggling with extreme social phobia. The sites in the brain involved in anxiety are known. Extreme social anxiety happens when some of these sites in the brain continuously process fear and magnify the fear that is nonexistent, making the entire body captive of its thoughts. Using neuroimaging one study of blood flow in the brain determined the differences in the brains of individuals with a social anxiety disorder when speaking in public. It emerged that individuals with a social anxiety disorder had enhanced blood flow in their amygdala that is integral to the limbic system associated with fear. On the other hand, the neuroimaging of the brain of people with social anxiety indicated an enhanced flow of blood to the cerebral cortex, which is an area linked to thinking and evaluation. It appears that people with social anxiety condition have their brain reacting to social situations differently than people without the condition.

An individual with an anxiety condition is likely to have imbalances of certain chemicals in the brain known as neurotransmitters. The role of neurotransmitters is to signal one cell to the other cell. The neurotransmitters involved in anxiety include serotonin, norepinephrine,

dopamine, and gamma-aminobutyric acid. Individuals with social anxiety disorder display some of the same issues of these neurotransmitters as individuals suffering from agoraphobia and panic disorder. The exact manner in which these chemicals influence social anxiety disorder is still under study.

Impact of parenting styles on social anxiety

The approach to parenting has a lasting impact on different aspects of a child's life, and these include psychological stability and well-being. Authoritative parents and perfectionist parents are likely to create an anxiety problem in their children in later life. Children that grew up under perfectionist parents may suffer self-esteem issues because the normal levels of accomplishment are regarded as average or failure, making one feels inadequate, and this can affect their social life.

Against this backdrop, one might feel not competent to contribute to groups, and this may make the individual fear facing people. People that had perfectionist and authoritative parents may feel that they are not just ready to engage in group work, or they might feel inadequate and fear meeting people and to display their weakness. While this may also manifest in individuals without a history of anxiety attacks, for sufferers of anxiety, this feeling is intense and makes the person feels powerless.

Environmental factors that contribute to social anxiety disorder

Indeed the environment that one grows in affects their psychosocial competencies. For this reason, if any of your parents had social phobia, then chances are that you are likely to manifest it. Psychologists have created models that see to determine how children develop social anxiety through

learning. Some of the assumed ways that children develop social anxiety include direct conditioning by subjecting the child to an early terror event that may have a lasting effect on the manifestation of social phobia later in the life of the child. For instance, if other kids made fun of the child or if the child was constantly bullied are some of the experiences that precipitate social anxiety later in the life of that child.

Additionally, observing learning may contribute to a child developing a social anxiety disorder. For instance, the child may have observed a family member or a friend go through a traumatic social event, and this may have had some negative impact on the child. There is also information transfer where socially anxious and fearful parents unknowingly transfer verbal and non-verbal information to their children about the dangers of social situations. If the mother worries a lot about what other people think of her, then the child is likely to develop the same type of anxiety due to information transfer. In overall, the way a child is brought up can also affect the chances that the child will acquire a social anxiety disorder. Where one or both parents were rejecting, critical, controlling, and were not allowed developing appropriate social skills, then their child is at risk of developing a social anxiety disorder in later life.

Childhood behavioral inhibition causes of social anxiety disorder

At one point, you have met a child that easily upset. Such a child is likely to withdraw, cry, or seek the comfort of a parent when faced with these types of situations. Children that exhibit this type of behavior are showing behavioral inhibition. The persistent inability to process temper, negative emotions, and comprehend disappointment may signal a mental health issue.

According to this view, people with anxiety could have developed during childhood. The implication of this finding is that early interventions are likely to enhance the positive outlook for individuals with a social anxiety condition. It appears that social phobia builds over childhood and manifests significantly when one is a young adult indicating that most parents tend to dismiss signs of anxiety in their children.

Some parents are likely to dismiss children as being clingy or feeling temperamental when separated briefly from caregivers. However, in line with this view, parents should watch out for children that overreact when separated from their caregivers.

Genetic causes of social anxiety disorder

There is new thinking that social phobia could be caused by a particular genetic composition that made the person prone to developing the disorder. People with a family member with a social anxiety disorder are two to six times more likely to develop the disorder. It is estimated that around 30% to 40% of social anxiety disorder sufferers also have it in their families, suggesting that it is the heritable condition. The remaining variation is thought to be caused by environmental factors. However, researchers have not established a specific genetic makeup linked to social anxiety disorder but have determined specific chromosomes associated with anxiety issues and disorders such as panic disorder and agoraphobia.

Societal causes of social anxiety disorder

Some cultures precipitate social phobias. Think of a culture that requires one to join and fit into society perfectly. Such a culture is likely to push one into uneasiness and extreme worry on whether he or she is up to the task. Some cultures demand collectiveness, which implies that one must fit and

function well within groups. A child or a young adult in such a culture will be under intense pressure to fit into this preset societal structures.

Technological factors that cause extreme social anxiety

The Internet of Things has made the world to be one big virtual community, and we spend a significant portion of time interacting with us online but not physically. Social media, texting, and a library of applications allow us to communicate without physically meeting. There is an increasing amount of online content, video games, and shows that we consume instead of interacting with each other physically. Some therapists argue that spending a significant amount of time online rather than in physical world interactions precipitates one to anxiety when meeting real people because online provides the allure of anonymity making it easier for one to initiate a communication.

Correspondingly, there is clinical evidence indicating that there is a link between online communications and social anxiety. When more people switch to online communication, they are likely to miss out on frequent exposure to physical, social situations and associated learning of how to navigate them. Online space can be highly controllable and make an individual accustomed to positive communication, but real life is different as communication and feedback is dynamic. In one study by the University of California, it emerged that adolescents are comfortable with online communication and communication but anxious regarding in-person physical, social interaction.

Physical causes of anxiety condition

People that have social anxiety will have their anxiety triggered by physical events that include shortness of breath and these include leaving home, large crowds, interacting with others, moving, catching a judgmental look

from someone, or situations where people might assess you. You will notice that the causes of social anxiety condition and social anxiety are the same as the social anxiety being the most severe, and as such, the causes are more intense and multi-layered. Think of someone that grew up in a mentally healthy environment and has a secure temperament. Such a person could have inherited some social anxiety from her mother, but the individual did not have any traumatic experiences that worsen it. Such an individual is likely not to develop a social anxiety condition. On the other hand, think of someone that has had an insecure attachment as a child and suffered abuse as well as bullying during teenage years. Additionally, the parents of the person have social anxiety and raised him in a manner that encourages socially anxious behavior. The person is likely to show social anxiety as opposed to social anxiety. For this reason, social anxiety condition causes significant distress and can stop an individual from having a normal life. As expected, social anxiety is easier to manage, and everyone processes a little social anxiety as they meet new people and make changes in their lives.

In overall environmental and genetic factors contribute significantly to the development of a social phobia. The environmental factors make one learn to think that people and social interactions are a danger to the person. In reaction, the individual spends significant time avoiding people or limiting the interaction. For some sufferers of anxiety, being in a social gathering may trigger an anxiety attack and make the person think that he or she will die. On the other hand, genetic makeup may make one susceptible to anxiety attacks even though the exact genetic role in mediating and moderating anxiety is under study.

Chapter 10: What Natural Remedies are Used for Social Anxiety?

Manage your breathing

Notably, anxiety causes changes in the body that can make one uncomfortable. For instance, anxiety can make your breathing fast and shallow, and this will make one more anxious. Individuals with anxiety may feel dizzy, tense, or suffocated. However, certain breathing techniques can help one slow the breathing and handle other anxiety symptoms. The benefit of the breathing exercise is that it can be done anywhere as well as during and after an episode of anxiety.

The justification for controlling breathing is that it can mediate and moderate anxiety. Breathing fast can trigger uneasiness and invite an anxiety attack. By managing to breathe through taking deep breaths, one learns to influence the body and the mind, and these are vital developments in managing social phobia. Think of how fast you breathe when feeling angry or anxious. Fortunately, breathing can be controlled easily, but it requires intense practice.

Progressive muscle relaxation

Studies indicate that certain physical activities, such as jogging can help lower anxiety levels. Progressive muscle relaxation can help. Flexing and releasing groups of muscles in the body and maintaining your attention on the feeling of the release. Additionally, yoga can assist one to calm the muscles down. As indicated, certain types of breathing can help lower blood pressure and heart rate. Doing yoga for a few months can help ease overall anxiety.

Plan ahead for social situations

Planning ahead for social situations that make you nervous can enable you to feel more confident. If certain situations make you anxious, then you might feel the urge to shun such situations. However, by preparing for what you are anticipating can help improve your reaction to such events. For instance, try reading newspapers and magazines before going on a first date as it might make you scared, and with that preparation, you will get a few topics to talk about. Do some relaxation or breathing exercise if going to a party triggers symptoms to help you calm before you leave the house.

Start gradually

Avoid starting bug but start with small social situations. For instance, schedule restaurant meals with family or friends so you can get used to eating in public. Try to make eye contact with people on the street and greet them. If an individual starts a conversation with you ask them questions about their hobbies or favorite places to travel. With time you can navigate big social activities as you get more comfortable. Additionally, try to be patient with yourself as it takes time and practice to face social anxiety. It is not advisable to confront your biggest fears right away as taking up large challenges within a short period can trigger more anxiety.

Shift the focus from yourself

Start by shifting the attention from yourself to what is happening around you. Let go of the focus on what is in your head to what is happening around you. One way to attain this is to remain in the moment by listening to the current conversation rather than reflecting. Additionally, assure yourself that other people cannot tell how anxious you are by just taking a look at you. People appreciate when others act genuine and interested, and it helps to focus on the present and be a good listener.

Talk back to negative feelings

Negative thoughts may be about situations or people and may even occur automatically. In most cases, the thoughts that are negative are not justified, but they can make you misread things such as facial expressions. All these developments can make you think that people are talking about you. Using a pen and a piece of paper think of all the negative thoughts you have in specific situations. Then noted them and wrote down positive thoughts that challenge negative thoughts. For instance, a negative thought could be ‘I am feeling anxious, and I will not manage to handle it’. Then the challenge could be “I have felt anxious before, but I have always navigated through successfully, which means I will do my best to focus on the positive parts of the experience.”

Listen to your senses

The senses of smell, taste, sight, touch, and sound can help calm you at the moment when you are feeling anxious. For some individuals, looking at a favorite photograph or smelling a particular scent can enable you to overcome the anxiety. The next moment you begin to feel anxious about a social situation, try to listen to your choice songs, snuggle with a pet, or chew a favorable piece of gum. Our senses are part of the emotional system as we sense and exhibit our feelings through the senses.

For instance, when angry or restless and you touch a smooth, natural fur, there are chances that one will feel a calming effect. Additionally being in an environment with bright lights or flickering lights may aggravate anxious feelings. However, being in a room with a moderate amount of light can enhance the feeling of calmness. Avoid areas full of noise or loud music as these can worsen the anxiety.

Take meals

Most people with anxiety disorders also skip meals, especially breakfast. Taking breakfast and other meals are necessary to sustain the energy levels throughout the day. Skipping a meal tends to create a spike in blood sugar and blood flow after the meal is taken, and this can heighten effects such as sweating and tiredness, which can trigger social anxiety. People with social anxiety fear to embarrass themselves or attracting attention, and sweating will make them think other people are noticing the uneasiness they are displaying. The meals taken should not trigger or worsen inflammation, as this would only make anxiety symptoms intense.

As expected, few people take the implication of proper meals seriously. Having the right meal at the right time helps ensure that the body is uniformly powered and experiences fewer diet-related inflammation. At one point, you might have felt awkward due to flatulence occasioned by the meal you took last night. Investing in a proper diet is important if one wants to lessen triggers of anxiety at a personal level.

Meditation

Notably, there is mindfulness meditation as a technique of mindfulness and relaxation. In this method, one sits comfortably and concentrates on breathing as well as inviting your attention to the mind to the current moment. The mind tends to wander into the past or future to help create continuity. Mindfulness meditation is likely to help individuals with depression, anxiety, and pain. The goal of this technique is to slow down the mind from being preoccupied with the future or the past. The mind controls us, but in mindfulness and relaxation techniques, we are trying to control it. Like any other form of meditation, one requires a calm place that

is free from physical and electronic forms of distractions to successfully engage in mindfulness meditation.

Relaxation exercises

For instance, yoga is increasingly being used as a mindfulness and relaxation technique. Yoga entails a series of flowing movements where the physical aspects are expected to align with mental focus and distract the individual from continued thoughts. When feeling disturbed, it is a combination of emotional energy and physical energy that reinforce each other or rival each other, which wears us out. Through yoga, we harness both the physical and mental energy to calm the entire body. The other benefit of yoga is that it can improve flexibility and balance. In this way, yoga not only calms you but also exercise you. However, due to its physical cost to the body, yoga might be unfit for persons with certain health conditions. Therefore, yoga might be unreasonable to persons with pain or health problems that inhibit movements.

Writing

Find a way of expressing anxiety in a manageable manner. Some studies indicate that journaling and other forms of writing can help one cope better with anxiety. Journaling helps document the type of anxiety that you are experiencing, which can help you activate the necessary coping mechanism. For instance, you might label your anxiety the “big boy” and feel that you can tame the “big boy” because you know how the “big boy” behaves.

Through writing down your feelings, you are practicing exerting control on these feelings. When you label anxiety, you are exerting authority on the phobia. Additionally, each person with social phobia may have different triggers and different reactions. When one takes note of the anxiety and how it manifests, then the individual is readying himself or herself for

management of the condition. It also becomes easier to share your anxiety when you have been taking notes for months or weeks.

Time management strategies

Some individuals feel unease if they have several commitments at once. Such commitments may include work, family, and health-linked activities. By having a plan in place for the next necessary action can aid in keeping this anxiety at bay. Through effective time management strategies, one can focus on one task at a time and not feel overwhelmed. There are numerous open source online apps for managing workload and planning. For most people, breaking major projects into manageable modules makes it easy to manage and accomplish them effortlessly.

Even though it appears an easy undertaking, most individuals are poor time managers. Poor time management also implies interference with sleep duration and quality of sleep. Think of an individual who manages time poorly and takes supper at midnight. Due to late meals, the individual increases the risk of indigestion and acidity, and this makes the person struggle with getting quality and timely sleep. The individual then wakes up the following day, feeling not well rested and easily irritable. Additionally, the person does not feel highly confident, and this worsens the social phobia of the person.

Aromatherapy

Stress and anxiety can be eased through smelling soothing plant oils. As expected, different people prefer different scents, and experimenting is encouraged. However, it is important to take into consideration those with breathing difficulties and allergies when experimenting with scents as part of aromatherapy. Several studies suggest that aromatherapy may be helpful in easing anxiety.

While aromatherapy is great, some individuals react adversely to certain scents. For this reason, the source of the scent and the scent should be of right concentration and fresh to evoke the right smell. It is also necessary to ensure that the duration of the scent is within the usual range to elicit the right response.

Spend time with animals

Studies indicate that pets can be beneficial to people with a variety of mental health issues such as anxiety. Pets offer love, companionship, and support. Most people prefer dogs, cats, and other small mammals as pets; people with allergies can find pets that do not have fur. In one study, caring for crickets was shown to enhance psychological health in older people. Investing time with animals can also lower anxiety and stress linked to trauma. In another study, grooming and spending time with horses can alleviate some of these effects.

For emphasis, it is important to acknowledge that animals reciprocate human actions and feelings. The implication of this fact is that one should engage animals when feeling calm and not under attack. If one holds or tries to stroke pet animals when agitated or uneasy then the individual is likely to provoke the animal leading to an adverse reaction. When done in a normal state, one will find animal evoke a calming and responsive effect.

Adequate sleep

Lack of good quality and adequate sleep causes inflammation and irritability. Several studies on the impact of sleep loss suggest that mediators of inflammation are altered by loss of sleep. For this reason, sleep loss will induce systemic and low-grade inflammation as well as irritability marked by the release of several molecules that include acute-phase proteins and cytokines.

Additionally, blood sugar imbalances are also caused by sleep deficiencies and enhanced cortisol secretion that aggravates inflammation increases with sleep deficiencies. These compounds are responsible for several health conditions, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. Having ideal adequate amounts of sleep lowers inflammation and restores the brain by taking out toxins. Beta-amyloid, which is a toxic protein accumulates in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease. Having adequate and quality sleep allows the neurological system to regulate appropriate neurotransmitters and replenish myelin sheaths that safeguard and shield nerve fibers.

Notably, magnesium is important and plays a crucial role in sleep and stress. Brain calm magnesium and other magnesium can help the brain signal the body for sleep. Getting sunlight during the day and avoiding artificial light, using blackout curtains to black out your room, forming healthy sleep habits, and using a sleep mask are some of the other ways to improve the quality and duration of your sleep.

Avoid caffeine and alcohol

Caffeine is a mild stimulant that acts as an energy boost. Most energy drinks contain caffeine. Alcohol, on the other hand, acts as a mild depressant before slowing down your cognitive abilities. The effects of alcohol and caffeine are that they temporarily mask social anxiety condition but cause dependencies where one lacks the confidence to go out or face people unless they engage in a caffeine drink or a lot of alcohol. When the effects of caffeine or alcohol wear off, then the individual will lose the pseudo-confidence and face more severe social anxiety.

Herbal extracts or herbal teas

Valerian

As indicated, some herbal supplements lower anxiety without making one sleep while others act as sedatives. Valerian acts as a sedative and may cause sleep for individuals with insomnia. It is used as a sleep aid. Its smell is unpleasant, and most people take it as a capsule rather than a tea. For this reason, valerian should be taken in the evening and not before starting the day. Valerian can be combined hops, lemon balm, and chamomile, all of which are sedative herbs.

Lemon balm

Lemon balm has been used to lower stress and anxiety and aid one to get sleep for centuries. Some studies indicate that taking lemon balm extracts may make one more calm and alert. Caution should be exercised as taking more lemon balm than specified can make one more anxious. Lemon balm can be combined with other herbs to enhance the desired effects.

Passionflower

Passionflower acts as a sedative and can help lower nervousness. Some studies indicate that passionflower can lower anxiety levels as effectively as prescription drugs, and it is often used for insomnia. Akin to other sedatives, passionflower can trigger sleepiness and drowsiness and should not be taken with valerian, kava hops, and lemon balm or any other sedative herbs when one is also taking a prescription sedative. Passionflower should not be taken for more than one month at a time and should not be combined with any other sedative herb.

Chapter 11: Improve Social Skills to Stop Social Anxiety

In particular, social skills refer to an element of emotional intelligence that entails interacting with other people. Social skills require one to remain considerate of other people's emotions in addition to the individual's emotions and using the understanding to communicate and relate with others daily. There are different social skills that include being an active listener, building rapport, verbal communication skills, employing non-verbal communication skills, and leadership. The social skills concern the skills required to manage and impact the emotions of other people effectively. Even though this sounds like manipulation, it is essentially initiating a positive emotion and getting others to manifest their emotions positively.

In this way, emotional skills can be taken as the ultimate piece of emotional jigsaw. A review of emotional intelligence indicates that it starts with understanding your emotions, which is self-awareness competence. Once one has understood your emotions, the next step is to handle them in what is known as the self-regulation. With controlled emotions, you can use them to accomplish your goals in what is known as self-motivation. If one understands and handles oneself, then he or she will begin to comprehend the feelings of others in what is regarded as empathy, and eventually, you will influence them in what is regarded as social skills.

Correspondingly, social skills will include the ability to persuade and impact skills in others. Social skills will also include communication skills and conflict management skills. If you possess social skills with respect to emotional intelligence, then you will also possess leadership skills. Change

management skills are part of social skills, and building rapport is another social skill applied in emotional intelligence. One must also possess collaboration and cooperation competencies to become socially skilled within the context of emotional intelligence. Against this backdrop, the following is a detailed discussion of requisite competencies to build your social skills within the context of emotional intelligence.

Persuasion and influencing skills

Through persuasion and influencing skills, one will find public social space not only approachable but fulfilling. The art of showing enthusiasm in other individuals and convincing them to buy into your ideas is known as persuasion. Persuasive or influential people will read the emotional currents in a situation and perfect what they are saying to appeal to spur involved. Persuasion is a function of communication and personality, and this demands that you become an effective communicator who is empathetic to others. Winning over people requires trying to convince them to join your course. One must learn to sell your views as a salesperson would do.

Communication skills

For one to venture into public social space and participate in satisfactorily, it requires an effective exchange of the verbal and nonverbal message. Additionally, good emotional intelligence requires good communication skills. One should learn to listen to others and channel your thoughts and your feelings. Make the individuals around you understand what is you are communicating and look for the full and open sharing of information. Part of communication skills will require that you become prepared to learn about challenges and not just wanting to process positive news. If one is a good communicator, then he or she will handle challenging issues directly as opposed to letting problems build up. Ensure that the message that you

are packaging is appropriate and then register and act on emotional cues when communicating.

Notably, effective communication is about ensuring that the intended message is passed. Communication should use easy to understand language and minimize ambiguity. For instance, incorporate transition phrases to mark the shifting from one idea to another. An example of transition phrases include notably, secondly, and furthermore. While some people are born gifted communicators, most people need to learn communication. Fortunately, the best practices in communication have remained unchanged in terms of fundamentals.

Conflict management skills

Even for individuals not suffering from anxiety disorders, conflicts are difficult to handle, but fortunately, all you need is emotional intelligence, leadership, and communication competencies to navigate them. Conflicts are unavoidable and sometimes not predictable. Both at home and at work, the art of handling and resolving conflict is important. Conflict management skills begin with becoming aware of the critical tact and diplomacy and how these competencies can be applied to defuse emotive situations. If one is a good conflict manager, then he or she will manage to expose disagreements and help resolve them. Most important is that conflict resolution does not involve you dictating the solution rather helping the affected parties identify the different opinions, the fears, and shared understanding to craft a solution. The competence of conflict resolution entails deploying sharing of emotions to motivate debate and open discussion as well as lessening the underlying problems. When resolving conflict focus more on the logical position as this is often the shared understanding among the conflicting parties.

Leadership skills

As indicated, leadership is critical in all aspects of social interactions and in resolving conflicts. Against this backdrop, emotional intelligence and leadership skills are connected in multiple ways. The ability to influence requires that you tune your emotions and those of others to win them over. Influence is a critical attribute of good leadership. It is sometimes called charisma, but though leadership skills involving influence goes beyond charisma to align with good emotional intelligence. The competencies of good leadership require you to articulate a vision and those other people with it. One does not have to be in a formal leadership position to exhibit leadership. While holding your colleagues accountable, support, and direct their performance. Aspire to learn to lead by example.

Change management skills

Life and social interactions frequently involve changes. Change catalysts can be effective members and individuals that make a change to materialize while involving everyone. For all people involved, change tends to create pressure partly because of the fear of unknown. Good change management skills require one to make it an interesting opportunity rather than a threat. Change catalysts will acknowledge the criticality of change and eliminate barriers. Change catalysts disrupt the status quo and call for change. Leading by example is a common attribute of change catalysts to trigger desired adjustments.

As indicated, most people have difficulties adjusting to any change. Part of the fear is caused by fear of the unknown. The fear of change is also linked to attachment disorder. Most people without anxiety disorder will still struggle with change, but for individuals with social phobia, the anticipation of change heralds feeling of anxiety and uneasiness. Fortunately, one can be

trained to embrace change, and this includes making one build self-esteem and social confidence. For instance, learning to focus at the moment is important to lessen the tendency to become preoccupied with what is yet to happen.

Strike a rapport

Though it appears easy and direct, most people struggle with the inherent formula to initiate communication and angle of understanding with an audience, rapport. It is critical to create and maintain constructive relationships with other people. Mastering this skill will lead to improved relationships and increased the ability to work and succeed in life. People that are good with building bonds are great networkers, create and sustain a robust network of connections and contacts. Building a rapport involves establishing relationships to maintain it healthy. If one exhibits good rapport as a competence, then he or she is likely to have many friends. The essence of building bonds is to value others and being interested in their lives.

Team-working

Within most social interactions, one has to pair up with like-minded members to optimize their interest. Individuals with good collaboration skills will build good and useful productive working as well as other relationships, and there are people who function well with others. All these attributes are vital when building social skills in emotional intelligence. People with collaborative skills will see relationships as critical as the pending task and will value people as much as they consider the activity at hand. If you have collaboration skill, then you will actively cooperate, share ideas and plans, and work with others to create an improved whole. The conducive environment will attract other people to contribute. Individuals that possess collaboration and cooperative competence are likely to actively

look out for opportunities for cooperative working. A team will perform better when good team-workers are present in the group, and this tends to attract other members to join the team. Good team-workers help the team build an identity and foster commitment.

Concentrate more on communication skills within social skills

Communication among the entire set of social skills remains highly valued and with a high impact in one's social life. Building meaningful relationships can reduce stress and anxiety in your life. Having good social support is linked to improved mental health as having reliable friends can function as a safety net for low mood and anxiety. There are people whose anxiety leads them to avoid social situations and hold them from building relationships such as social anxiety. If you are socially anxious and desperately want to create friends, but you are reluctant, then you are likely to seclude yourself from social situations. One of the adverse outcomes of social seclusion is that you will miss out on building up your confidence in interacting with others. Build robust communication skills that would enhance the likelihood of successful relationships.

Relatedly, the pillar to cultivating and maintain friendships is communication skills. These skills are critical when developing a robust social support network. Having communication skills will help you satisfy their individual needs while remaining respectful of the needs of others. Persons are not born with good communication skills like all the other skills. You learn communication skills through experimentation and consistent practice. The three significant areas for communication are assertiveness, conversation skills, and non-verbal communication. Communication has several aspects besides the one stated above, such as presentation skills, giving feedback, and managing conflicts.

Additionally, nonverbal communication constitutes a significant component of what we communicate. In practice, what your eyes and body language speak are more potent than what you verbalize. If one feels anxious, then he or she will act in ways that are intended to avoid communicating with others. An example is when you avoid eye contact or speak softly to mask anxiety. In this instance, you are trying not to communicate and possibly avoid being judged adversely by others. Nevertheless, the tone of voice and body language communicate effective messages to others, such as your emotional state, the attitude displayed towards the listener and comprehension of the topic. In particular, if you avoid eye contact and standing far from others as well as speaking quietly, then you are communicating that the person should stay away from you or the individual should not converse with you. There are chances that this was not your intentioned message.

Assertiveness

Concerning communication, assertive communication concerns an honest expression of your individual needs, feelings, and wants while respecting those of the other person. If you are an assertive communicator, then your mien is non-threatening and non-judgmental as well as you take accountability for your individual actions. When you are anxious, you will experience some difficulty in sharing your thoughts and feelings. Even though assertiveness can be a challenge to master as being assertive can hold you back from the way you operate, it can be acquired with commitment. An illustration is when you are afraid of conflict and chose to tag along with the opinion of the masses instead of giving your opinions. In this sense, you are becoming a passive communicator. You may target to manage and dominate others, and this is a sign of aggressive communication style. Fortunately, assertive communication approach has

many benefits. Assertive communication can help you relate to others in a more genuine manner and lessen hopelessness.

Myths or misconceptions associated with assertiveness

Notably, one of the myths about assertiveness is that it implies loading your opinions on others, but this is not true. If one is assertive, it implies that he or she is voicing viewpoints and communicating honestly with others. In some instances, you might win your way by assertively voicing your opinion. Informing other people on your feelings and attempting to strike a middle ground denotes respect for yourself and others.

Another misconception is that being assertive creates selfishness, but this is not true. It does not mean that you do not consider others when expressing your preferences and opinions as you are not forcing them to agree with your views. Assertiveness is not aggressiveness as asserting your position will still leave room for others to agree or disagree with your views. It is also possible to be assertive on behalf of someone else.

Relatedly there is a false belief that you can only be loved when you are passive. It is counterproductive to be passive as it suggests the tendency to always agree with other persons and always allowing them to triumph. Passivity entails giving in to their requests and making no requests of your own. Being passive does not guarantee that you will be admired by other persons. If you are passive, other persons might consider you dull and disinterested in what they are transacting.

Focus more on body language

In this aspect, body language is nonverbal cues of communication. Beginning with facial expressions the human face is highly expressive and conveys countless emotions even without verbalizing anything. Fortunately,

nonverbal communications are standard as the facial expressions for happiness, anger, sadness, and fear are the same across cultures. Like most aspects of nonverbal communication, one has little control on the source and manifestation of facial expression making it a critical aspect of evaluating the honesty of communication. From facial expressions, we can determine how one is feeling. In subsequent chapters, we will detail how one can read facial expressions and other body languages.

Additionally, there is body movement and posture. How one stands, sits, holds their head or walks affects how one is perceived by others. For example, our posture communicates much about our attentiveness and eagerness when listening to a speech. Our posture also communicates our emotional status. If one is angry then they are unlikely to appear composed and they are likely to stand upright for long or slouch for long. When one is excited, he or she is likely to change posture and movements frequently than when one feels sad. Recall when you felt highly excited, you probably walked fast, jumped, sat and stood up frequently than usual.

Relatedly, another form of nonverbal communication is gestures. Hand gestures are used to beckon, wave, point or direct. In most cases, hand gestures happen without much intervention from the conscious mind. The meaning of most hand gestures varies across cultures. An innocent message created by a hand gesture in one country may be offensive in another country. We can read the emotional status of an individual from their hand gestures even if they speak contrary. For instance, when one is angry he or she is likely to throw their hands in the air in an uncoordinated manner. In most instances, hand gestures contradict verbal communication, especially where one is feeling emotional and tries to mask it.

Furthermore, there is eye contact which is a critical component of body language. The way one looks at another person during communication indicates hostility, affection, interest, and confidence. Individuals that have difficulties initiating and sustaining eye contact are largely considered as shy. When one feels embarrassed, he or she is likely not to make and sustain eye contact. Prolonged eye contact at a particular person or groups of people is a stare and indicates judgment. Think of how your teacher looked at you when you were talking while others were writing. Prolonged eye contact is used to judge and intimidate. In the subsequent chapters, we will explore eye contact in detail.

Similarly another critical aspect of body language is touch. A lot of meaning is attached to touch and in some cases, touch impacts the development of a person. In the formative years, children need touch, reassuring fondle to feel secure and loved. In fact, psychologists can determine bonding issues where one of the parents shows reluctance to touch and fondle their kid. For adults, touch manifests commonly as a handshake and a hug. A firm handshake denotes confidence and familiarity while a weak handshake suggests a lack of confidence and unfamiliarity. A hug serves the same role as a handshake but hugs for individuals in love may be prolonged.

Additionally, there is space as part of nonverbal communication. Getting too close to the person you are having communication with will make them uncomfortable unless it is in exceptional situations. For lovers trying to connect more with each other, getting closer to each other may sound romantic. In teaching, there is what they call the professional distance which is the standard distance allowable between a teacher and the student when communicating. When someone gets too close then the other person may feel suffocated, trapped, and intimidated. Getting too far is also

counterproductive as it makes the other person strain to participate in the communication.

For a voice as part of nonverbal communication. How loud we speak denotes emphasis. The pace of our speaking captures our emotional status. Speaking fast may indicate that one has panicked or one is feeling insecure and wants to get through with speaking as fast as they can. The tone and inflection of the voice tell more about the attitude of the speaker and the nature of the message. For instance, the message may sound standard and devoid of emotions but the tone and pitch of the speaker may bring out excitement or temper. The tone of the speaker may indicate anger or sarcasm.

While nonverbal communication can be manipulated or faked, it is difficult to manipulate all forms of nonverbal communication in one episode. It is not possible to fake tone, gestures, touch, distance and facial expressions to align with verbal communication. For this reason, body language remains a strong source of reading and ascertaining the emotional status of an individual. Nevertheless, it is possible to learn and exert control over your body language to enhance particular outcomes. Just like we learn to guide our emotions and subsequent reactions, we can exert more control over body language. There is also a possibility of receiving confusing nonverbal communication which is unintentionally sent by the source. In most cases, a confusing nonverbal communication harms relationships. At one point you might have smile unintentionally only for your friend to think you are celebrating their losses.

Chapter 12: Improve your Social Confidence

In the previous chapter, we have explored what are social skills and their importance, but it is important that we now guide you on how to move from your current level of social skills to requisite levels as a way of enhancing social confidence. Additionally, the reader will be walked. The absence of requisite social skills hurts the social confidence levels in an individual, and it makes sense to focus more on enhancing social skills with a view with enhancing the confidence levels of an individual in social interactions. At one point, you wanted to talk to a dream girl, boy, or figure of authority but could not manage despite having numerous opportunities and social skills could have made you make a constructive social interaction move.

Firstly, enhance the ability to remain calm in social situations. Most people, even those without a history of social anxiety disorder, struggle to remain composed in social situations. You must have watched or witnessed a politician that appeared calm, lose temper, and walk out of the studio or shout at the opponent or the interview. You might have witnessed a friend lose temper and walk away or attempt to fight the colleague during a heated argument. People that are anxious do not trust that they will remain composed throughout a social interaction.

Against this backdrop, build your composure by focusing on the economic value of words rather than the emotional value. The economic value of words in this context implies focusing more on the outcomes from an independent viewpoint, while the emotional value of words implies personalizing the words spoken to you. For instance, if a friend indicates that the situation may turn ugly while you are with others in the stadium make your mind focus on the fact that the police and stewards are on

standby to ensure that the outcome will be positive and there will be no violence. It is also important to avoid wanting to take the blame for everything as this triggers uneasiness should there be a sign of something going wrong.

Start to ignore the brain communication that you are anxious and that other people have noticed your anxiety. For people with social anxiety condition, they frequently get the urge to believe that they are panicky and other people have noticed the uneasiness. Learn to ignore the urge and thought that you are anxious by assuring yourself that everyone is calm so I must be, and I will not listen to you this time. You can go ahead and label your brain as Richard and tell “Richard” that this time I have chosen to ignore you until I get home. It takes days to months to learn to ignore the brain, but the most significant step is to christen the brain or thoughts with a human name and proceed to disagree with that “person.”

Notably, the justification for wanting to ignore the brain is premised on the assumption that a human brain can be trained and retrained. Most of the social anxiety happens due to the erratic processing of threats and magnitude of imagined threats by the brain. As indicated earlier, the brain assumes imaginary threats and also makes the imaginary threats appear potent and gets stuck, signaling the body to avoid these potent imaginary threats. While there is little that can be done to remedy the physiological functioning of the brain, the brain can be guided to process things normally, and one of the ways is to make the body ignore the brain current signaling.

Relatedly, listen to what others are communicating and stay in the moment. When one forces the mind to remain in the moment, then he or she is avoiding letting the brain to start reflecting and risk triggering anxiety. The anxiety faced by people with social anxiety condition occurs due to build up

past real and imaginary experiences with the dreaded object or situation. For this reason, inhibiting reflection may help the individual to process the situation or interaction as it is happening rather than viewing it from a premeditated position. The ability to stay in the current moment will also make others find you as actively listening and fun to interact with.

For people with social phobia, the normal status of their mind is when it views every social moment as a form of danger to the body. Naturally, the mind wants to signal the body that it is in danger and to accomplish that the mind needs to invoke stored information. However, by staying in the moment, the person tends to avoid the danger of allowing the mind to make the person feel unease. When one remains in the moment, he or her mind is likely to be preoccupied with current happenings and thus have little to no room for stored thoughts.

It is also important to show empathy and interest in situations of others. People find those that listen and respect their feelings as caring and supportive as well as respectable. The ability to show empathy is important in emotional intelligence and social intelligence. A person with anxiety condition has a preformed opinion that others have a low opinion of them and that they might embarrass themselves during social interaction. Having empathy and interest in communication will make other people find such an individual sociable. Additionally, showing empathy will make such an individual appear normal or within the expected interaction spectrum, and this will ease the pressure that he or she is now a person of interest for the audience.

In detail, the lack of empathy and interest will make other people notice that something is amiss with you. Think of a colleague or friend that talks less or is difficult to engage. The chances are that everyone notices their

presence and absence as well as an attempt to make a conversation. However, if you can make such people show expected social skills such as showing empathy and interest in social interaction, then their profile as extreme persons will fall to normal ranges. In this manner, empathy can move the person away from the extreme end of social interactions and take the pressure of attention from the individual.

Equally important, strike a rapport with the people you are interacting with. One can strike a rapport by starting with a greeting or complementing the person. Complements can be about their dressing, grooming, and qualifications. Where possible, recognize any recent awards, they have bagged. A rapport can be struck by recognizing the current happenings affecting the audience, such as religious celebrations or challenges facing the audience collectively. Striking a rapport is akin to creating an entry point in an enclosed space. In this manner, view an audience or people that you are interacting with as an enclosed tent where one has a general picture of what they are but needs an entry point.

For this reason, striking a rapport is important as it defines the nature of interaction and perception from the audience. The audience is likely to listen actively and relate with the speaker if he or she has found an entry point in the minds and lives of the audience. Think of speaking to students about to sit for an examination, striking a rapport implies that one makes the students aware that he or she truly understands how anxious they are feeling and appreciates their eagerness to benefit from what he or she is about to share. In other words, the entry point of the speaker to this audience is by portraying himself or herself as one of them.

Additionally, determine and implement self-disclosure. When interacting with other people, it is important to share some aspects of your life to make

others process you as a human being with weakness, struggles, and challenges. Disclosing some aspects of your life makes you become more relatable and believable than opposed to masking your entire life. However, disclosing more than necessary can make the audience lose touch or focus on your past life rather than listen to you. For instance, when disclosing that you once abused drugs, it might not be necessary to describe in detail how you procured drugs and the extreme things you did when abusing drugs.

In particular, the disclosure should be limited and sensitive to the audience at hand. For instance, if you abused drugs and at one point walked half-naked, it might distract the audience if the audience is largely high school students. On the other hand, disclosing that you once walked half-naked after abusing drugs to adults may make you believable and earn respect as someone who has walked far to overcome addiction. Disclosing that sometimes you are nervous in public may make you feel more confident and find it easier to make a speech. The overall conclusion is that self-disclosure should be limited and sensitive to the audience.

Another step in building social confidence is to improve eye contact by looking in the eyes of the audience and smile. Making and sustaining eye contact is difficult for most people and not just those with a social anxiety disorder. One way of starting to make eye contact is to look slightly above the heads of the audience when speaking and with a time lock your eyes temporarily to two people in the audience. Learning to make eye contact requires frequent exposure to public speaking, and with practice, one will muster the art of making eye contact. When making eye contact, ensure that you do not stare at the people by taking your eyes across the audience in a zigzag manner.

Notably, eye contact is a critical part of nonverbal communication for both the speaker and the audience. Through eye contact, the audience gets an opportunity to read the right mood of the speaker and the message. On the other hand, the speaker gets the opportunity to correctly determine the status of the audience and adjust the communication. Think of a speaker that notices that the audience is not looking at the speaker only for the speaker to realize that his shirt is unbuttoned when reading notes to the audience. On the other hand, the audience may read the eye contact of the speaker as a soft stare and relate to the message of encouraging each other.

Understand the role of eye contact more

Having effective eye contact is critical when communicating with a person. Eye contact implies that one looks but does not stare. Persistent eye contact will make the recipient feel intimidated or judged. In Western cultures, regular eye contact is desired but it should not be overly persistent. If one offers constant eye contact then it is seen as an attempt to intimidate or judge which makes the recipient of the eye contact uncomfortable. There are studies that suggest that most children fall victims to attacks by pet dogs if their eye contact is constantly regular that causes them to feel threatened and defensive. Initiating an overly persistent eye contact is a sign of an individual's over-awareness of the messages they are emitting. Lying can be detected by the individual avoiding eye contact.

Firstly, having evasive eye contact is a mark of discomfort. We avoid looking at a person if we feel ashamed to be communicating at them. When we feel dishonest about trying to deceive people, we avoid looking at them. While it is okay to blink or drop eye contact temporarily, people that consistently shun making eye contact are likely to be feeling uneasy with the message or the person they are communicating with. For emphasis,

staring at someone will make them drop eye contact due to feeling intimidated. Evasive eye contact happens where one deliberately avoids making eye contact.

Secondly, people cry due to feeling uncontrollable pain or in an attempt to attract sympathy from others. Crying is considered as an intense emotion associated with grief or sadness though it can also denote extreme happiness known as tears of joy. When an individual forces tears to deceive others then it is known as crocodile tears which imply faking tears to deceive others. If one cries then the individual is likely experiencing intense negative emotion.

Thirdly, in most cases, blinking is instinctive and our emotions and feelings directed towards the person we are speaking to can cause us to subconsciously alter our rate of blinking. If the average rate of blinking is 6 to 10 times per minute then it is a strong indicator that an individual is drawn to the person they are speaking to and it is indicative of flirting. In normal contexts, men and women blink at the same rate as each other.

For Western culture, winking is considered as a form of flirting which should be done to people we are in good terms with. There are cross-cultural variations on the issue of winking with Asian cultures frowning on winking as a form of facial expressions.

Concerning the direction of the eyes, it tells us about how an individual is feeling. When someone is thinking they tend to look to their left when they are recalling or reminiscing. An individual that is thinking tends to look to their right when eliciting creative thoughts and it can be interpreted as an indicative sign of someone trying to be deceitful in some situations such as creating a version of events. For left-handed people, the eye directions will be reversed.

As such, when one is interested in what you are speaking, he or she will make eye contact often. Some studies found that when people are engaged in an interesting conversation then their eyes remain focused on the face of their partner about 80% of the time but not wholly on the eyes. Rather the eye contact on the eyes of the other person is for the duration of 2-3 minutes then move down to the lips or nose then back up to the eyes. For a brief moment, the person initiating eye contact will look down then back up to the eyes. Looking up and to the right demonstrates dismissal and boredom. Dilation of the pupil may indicate that someone is interested or that the room is brighter.

Relatedly, sustained eye contact may be a signal that you want to speak to the person or that you are interested in the person sexually. At one point you have noticed a hard stare from a man towards a particular woman to the point the woman notices and asks the man what is all that for. In this case, eye contact is not being used to intimidate but to single out the target person. You probably have seen a woman ask why is that man staring at me then she proceeds to mind her business but on taking another look at the direction of the man the stare is still there. In this manner, eye contact is used to single out an individual and make them aware that one is having sexual feelings towards the person.

Build self-esteem

A very critical component of social confidence is self-esteem, and it manifests at a personal level. Self-esteem is the inherent individual belief of your worth and status in society. Self-esteem is important in helping one define their assertiveness, ethics, and personal principles. Low self-esteem is associated with shyness, irritability, and avoidance. Individuals with high

self-esteem are likely to be willing to take up challenges and meet new people. Self-esteem can be built by mental programming. Think of a colleague who is ever in high spirits and is not afraid to take up new challenges. The chances are that such an individual has high levels of self-esteem.

Notably, building self-esteem starts with self-evaluation. Like any other psychological issue, the affected person should be the one demanding intervention to have the treatment work. Counseling and therapy sessions can help improve the self-esteem levels of a person. Exposure therapy is important for one seeking to build their confidence levels. For instance, the person may be asked to try and lead teammates to muster courage and expose oneself to challenges. It is also important to revisit emotional intelligence as showing high self-esteem should not come at the cost of the feelings of others.

Theories of self-confidence

Maslow hierarchy of needs theory

In this theory, self-esteem naturally happens after an individual attains the satisfaction of fundamental and other needs. In other words, an individual has to satisfy all of the basic needs, get work or income, make family, and feel contented to elicit self-esteem. According to this theory, self-esteem is largely due to external factors, and there are people who may never exhibit self-esteem at all if they never satisfy their basic needs.

Terror management theory

According to this theory, people develop self-esteem as a defensive buffer to shield themselves against anxiety, and they will react negatively to anyone that seeks to undermine their beliefs in their comforting world perspective. In detail, the terror management theory argues that self-

confidence is an adjustment of beliefs, status, and ideas that make one feel shielded from negative reaction or fears.

Sociometer theory

In this theory, self-esteem is understood as an internal calibration of the extent to which one is included versus excluded by others. The sociometer theory suggests that self-esteem is an internal perception of social rejection and acceptance. Some people find this theory highly accurate and applicable.

Chapter 13: Self-help Strategy for Social Anxiety Disorder

The following are some of the self-help strategies for anxiety conditions. One will not always be at the therapist's chair or be on medication always when faced with anxiety, and it is important that at the individual level, one manages to combat social anxiety disorder.

Breathing deeply

As soon as you feel your body is calmed, you can begin breathing exercises and ensure both of your eyes are shut. Start by drawing in long and deep inhalations. Now breathe out gradually and feel the air as it gets out of your lungs. Again focus on your chest and the manner the breath leaves your body. Make your mind to focus fully on the breath as the air enters and leaves your body. Then open your mouth and calmly relax the jaw muscles. You should not force breathing but instead, allow the breathing to continue easily and comfortably. Ensure that you feel the body calm into the mattress as the air gets in and out with each breath taken. The effect of this exercise should be akin to deep meditation, which seeks to extract you from the physical body, distort time, and create an overwhelming euphoria feeling.

Picture a serene site

It is important to let go of anxious thoughts, and this may require visualizing an ideal place. After visualizing a relaxing place, and after relaxing the body, you should now begin the fantasy stage of sleep. You should now think of the most pleasing and peaceful place that you can ever recall or imagine. Then immerse your mind in that relaxing place such as a private beach or a hammock and concentrate all your energy to it. Trigger yourself to recall what it sounds, smells, or feels like. The more complete

the visualization is, the calmer you will become. Go further and make scenarios of that place such how you might dine and sounds that you might hear. The justification for this step is that focusing on an image in the brain lowers beta waves and enhances alpha and theta waves leading to feelings of drowsiness and relaxation.

Develop a mantra

Assuming you find it difficult to picture a certain place, then you should create an inner mantra to aid you to feel calm. For instance, you can create soothing phrases such as “easy,” calm,” or “in control.” Voice the mantra on each breathing out and focus your attention on the meaning of the words. In highly localized sites of the brain, relaxation and suggestion have been proved to manage activity and enabling you to rewire thought patterns. Through this step, one can lessen stressful thoughts, and at the same time, enhance relaxing anxious thoughts.

Another way of creating a personal mantra is to pick it from movies or favorite novel. There are numerous movie characters that inspire calmness and composure that one can emulate. Using the movie characters or novel characters, one can label the anxiety with a character that is restless and associate himself or herself with a character that maintains composure even when under extreme pressure.

Create a Hypnosis Recording

In case all of the above options fail to work, then you should try creating a hypnosis tape. Indeed it can be a difficult task to recall all of these phases for someone starting manage anxiety. At the same time pausing to scout for a step you missed can disrupt the relaxing moment. For this reason, make a recording of yourself speaking the guided meditation above. You can go ahead and experiment with various suggestions and images as well as

different meditation recordings capturing different mantras and scenarios. Now listen to your tape recordings as you try to feel calm.

Divert the mind from anxious thoughts

Through meditation to relieve anxiety, we endeavor to find the quietness of the mind. Through this quietness, we target to achieve regeneration of the mind and the body. The quietness is meant to help accept answers rather than imposing them to come.

I. Visualize a path through a green, peaceful forest or along with aesthetic beauty. Now allow your mind to guide you to the answers. Visualization allows one to let the mind wander from the current thoughts and task to go in the space of infinite possibilities.

II. For most individuals, as earlier argued, it is difficult to attain quietness, but with practice, you will improve. The composure of the mind and the body takes time to accomplish, and one should practice. By not focusing on disturbing issues or negative thoughts, the mind is freed to evoke beneficial thoughts.

III. Now practice dropping thoughts as they stream in and revert to focusing on meditation through breathing or a flame or a mantra. Letting of thoughts is important to calm the mind, but it is not that easy for most people. The mind is wired in such a manner that it tends to persist on pending issues to enable the person to resolve them. Unfortunately, some of the persistent thoughts drain the energy of the body and mind, and for the case of anxiety, the entire body is held captive to disabling effects of anxiety.

The goal of engaging in meditation is to harness the energy of the mind to cause healthy changes in the body. Through meditation, one can attain

relaxation and comfort. Anxiety occurs mainly when we force life to occur against the natural pace of things. The more we strain ourselves, the more hard life appears and the higher the panic and anxiety. It is important to learn to allow things to occur naturally.

Anticipating anxiety attack

Rather than seek to shun social interactions, use the color spectrum to calm your mind. In this technique, an individual will move through the color spectrum, starting from red to violet. The colors in progression are red-orange-yellow-green-blue-violet. The following are the steps for attaining relaxation of the mind using the color spectrum. It might help to eliminate distractions such as music, TV, and social media use during their undertaking.

- Start by lying in a comfortable position that you can fall asleep and try to relax. Being in a comfortable position allows the body to dissipate negative energy and invite anticipation of positive feelings.
- Then allow more progressive relaxation, and this includes allowing any other technique of self-hypnosis at this stage to aid in relaxation. Introducing abrupt changes to the body will be counterproductive. Hypnosis of the mind is important as it allows the individual to temporarily delink from current happenings that cost emotionally and physically to an imaginary space that only allows beneficial happenings.
- Then with both of your eyes closed console yourself that by the instance you reach violet color/the last color you will feel calm. The gradual navigation through the colors helps gradually ease the mind still remains in the present moment. The overall goal is to suspend negative feeling and invite current positive events.

- While in that position visualizes the red color as the inside of a watermelon, a red rose flower, the inner side of a watermelon or a red sports car. Allow yourself to picture anything that has color red and hold that object in your mind for a few seconds. Then tell yourself that I will walk through to color orange, and by the time I reach the violet color, I will be ripe for deep relaxation.
- Then visualize orange color by bringing to your mind an orange, the inside of a pumpkin, the inside of a ripe mango. Again assure yourself by saying, “I am now going to yellow, and by the period I reach the violet color I will be ripe for relaxation of the mind.” Each time you navigate a colored step, your mind is trying to focus on the present as the stored history is what largely evokes anxiety.
- It is now time to visualize the yellow color by bringing your mind to a ripe lemon, ripe yellow banana, or any other object that helps visualize the color yellow. Again repeat the assurance that “Now you are moving to color green and by the time I reach the violet color, I will be ripe for healthy sleep.”
- Go ahead and picture color green by inviting images of green grasslands, rows of spinach or anything that helps visualize color green. Again whisper to yourself that “I am now moving to the color blue and by the time I reach color violet, I will be ripe for a healthy relaxed mind.”
- Now visualize color blue by recalling how a blue sky looks like, a swimming pool, or blue lights including any other object that makes it easy to picture color blue. Again assure yourself by whispering, “I am now moving to violet color, and when I see the violet color I will feel relaxed and composed.”

- Lastly, picture violet color by inviting the images of bush lilacs or anything that enlivens violet color. Have a peaceful mind!

One should invoke the general power technique of the mind by understanding the first, and the last color as the ones in between will form a natural progression via the spectrum of colors. When done correctly, you will fall asleep even before completing the color spectrum, which is the goal of this sleep hypnosis. It is important to remember not to train your mind to complete the spectrum of color exercise because the objective is to trigger sleep and not do the exercise in the whole.

Managing anxious feelings

- Cease concentrating your energy on attaining something and instead try to create a vision of what you need then concentrate on what you meditate.
- Then imagine viewing your goal and patiently waiting for it to materialize as opposed to thinking about what you ought to do to make it happen.
- Qualify yourself to permit anxious feelings and problems to ebb away on their account by looking at them with indifference. Then harness your mental energy on the positive rather than the entire picture.
- Assure yourself that doing less is also acceptable. The less you have on your mind, the less your worries become. It is not easy to simplify all your thoughts to let go of pending ideas and issues. However, by focusing on the simplicity one learns to let go of anxious feelings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the book assumed an informative and understanding approach to the issue of social anxiety. Through an informative position, the book presented theories, models, and assumptions of what causes social anxiety and how to remedy it. For instance, cognitive behavioral theory and psychoanalytic theory were advanced to explain the justification for therapy in managing anxiety condition. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and the sociometer theory were advanced as best explanations of self-confidence and lack of self-confidence. The book also contains a simple test of assessing the presence of social anxiety that should attract intervention. In overall, the book defined social anxiety and how to manage it.

By being able to define and give definitive information on social anxiety, anyone who may be burdened with it or someone who knows someone who may be suffering from it is given a chance to really look at what social anxiety is and how it affects an individual. This would open doors to a world of understanding, a fighting chance to overcome, and the key knowledge on how to live with social anxiety. While it varies for each person, this book contains a wealth of information and other alternative means to combat and cope with social anxiety.

Through an understanding viewpoint, the book viewed social anxiety as occurring from parental, genetic, environmental, and biological developments, therefore, making the sufferer merely a victim. The book encourages others to understand and respect as well as support individuals with an anxiety condition as they are merely victims of a condition they had

little participation in its creation. Sadly, someone who does not experience an episode of social anxiety would be quick to dismiss how it is a debilitating occurrence for someone who suffers from social anxiety. This book aims to remedy that.

The book also cautions against seeking instant results by subjecting the sufferer to workloads of treatments and workouts. Like all mental health issues, the need to treat social anxiety disorder should emanate from the sufferer rather than forcing the person into a treatment plan. The book hints that a blended treatment approach of therapies, pharmacological interventions, and self-care are critical for long-term and high impact on positive treatment outcomes for sexual anxiety.