

## **EN\_29794049 Discuss A Concept/Topic in Psychology from The Perspective of The Biopsychosocial Model**

I am very interested in social anxiety disorder, which is the fear of being negatively evaluated by others. This mental disorder can be viewed from many perspectives: biological, psychological, and social. Biological causes may include the brain structure of the amygdala, which is responsible for storing memories of emotional events. During a fearful experience, the amygdala prepares the body for a fight-or-flight reaction and sends out fear signals to the hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex.

A person with social anxiety disorder, who has to speak up in front of others, might get triggered by someone staring at them or whispering to their neighbor. The anxious person becomes overly stimulated, and their amygdala sends a threatening warning to the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, which interpret the situation as overwhelming. This warning is then sent to the body, resulting in sweating, heavy breathing, racing heart, dizziness or chills.

Another biological cause is genetics. Researchers have identified the serotonin transporter gene (5-HTTLPR) as a gene that predisposes people to anxiety. A mutation of that gene leads to a reduction in serotonin activity and an increase in anxiety-related personality traits (Munafò, Brown & Hariri, 2008). Psychological causes for social anxiety can include behavioral conditioning. Past experiences like discrimination or judgment can lead to classical conditioning, where a person associates a social setting with fear and discomfort. Avoidance behavior makes the cycle even worse because there is no chance to experience positive outcomes in social situations. For example, when a child develops social anxiety due to negative experiences at school and then avoids school because the fear is too strong, this is known as avoidance behavior.

Often cognitive distortion plays a psychological role, involving biased thoughts that distort perceptions of reality regarding oneself. An example is the bias called “mind-reading,” where a person believes others always think negatively about them. This can lead to mental illnesses like social anxiety.

Additionally, social anxiety is often rooted in low self-esteem and a negative self-image, often resulting from traumatic experiences in the past.

Viewing social anxiety from a social perspective, we can see that peer relationships are key factors in developing such a disorder. If a person has experienced discrimination or unhealthy friendships, they might tend to feel anxious in social settings. After experiencing rejection or unfair treatment, especially during adolescence, they become nervous about being laughed at again or excluded from a friend group in future social settings. (Chiu, Clark & Leigh, 2021)

The biopsychosocial model focuses on three important perspectives, which make it possible to give personalized support in therapy addressing different aspects of the disorder. My main interest is in the psychological perspective, as it covers different behaviors, personality traits, coping strategies, and many emotions. The cognitive behavioral therapy addresses and confronts fearful situations to patients and offers healthy coping strategies. Nevertheless it is essential to understand all perspectives to provide an effective solution for the client. In the future, I aim to help many clients, not only with social anxiety disorders, but with other mental health issues by using this model.