

Social anxiety



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Social Anxiety Running head: SOCIAL ANXIETY Social Anxiety in APA Style of Social Anxiety 2

Social anxiety is fear, uneasiness, and worry regarding social situations where one will be evaluated by others. This can be experienced at public places such as parties, or speaking in front of people. (Wikipedia, 2006.)

Social anxiety is also known as "social phobia" or "social anxiety disorder (SAD)". It can be a fear that only involves a single situation such as being in crowds or it can be broad and cause one to be fearful in any situation that involves being around other people.

Richards (1999-2005) reports that "Social anxiety is the third largest psychological problem in the world today." Yet it is not very well understood. SAD is a psychiatric anxiety disorder with an extreme and excessive anxiety over everyday situation. It is a chronic feeling of devastation and fear of being watched and judged by others.

Society anxiety causes physical symptoms which include stuttering, sweating, shaking and trembling, choking, chills, blushing, sweating, muscle tension, a fear of dying, losing control, or insanity. Some people may face such severe social anxiety that they experience panic attacks. A panic attack comes on suddenly and the fear is very intense. The physical symptoms of a panic attack include shallow breathing, difficulty in breathing, rapid heart beat, lightheadedness, and feeling as if one will faint. A person may feel that he/she will die during a panic attack but it will usually subside within 20-30 minutes.

There are many contributing factors that lead to social anxiety. There are lifestyle and psychological factors that increase the risk of social anxiety. (Repich, 2002; Deas and Thomas, 2002; and Wardy, 2002.) These include

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the following:

Lifestyle Contributing Factors

no time for relaxation, no down time, lack of sleep, lack of physical activity and exercise,

poor dietary intake/lack of nutrition, alcohol consumption, caffeine consumption, smoking,

prescription medications, illegal drug use, illness, lack of time for recreation and hobbies

Psychological Contributing Factors

family history of anxiety, history of past social anxiety attacks, no support systems/friends/mentors/those who face the same problem, low self esteem telling oneself lies and negative thought patterns, stress in past and current situations,

inability to solve problems, inability to reason and think logically, poor time management

lack of goals and objectives, avoiding situations

The diagnosis of social anxiety involves a medical practitioner reviewing one's background, medical history, symptoms, lifestyle, and dietary intake.

The health care provider may conduct a psychological assessment. Other medical disorders with similar symptoms will need to be considered and ruled out before diagnosis. This will involve revealing one's use of substances, supplements, medications, etc. One may be examined and evaluated for other psychiatric disorders such as depression and abuse of substances. These can lead to anxiety disorder which can cause social anxiety.

Social anxiety falls under the DSM-IV category after Specific Phobia.

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Treatment includes psychological treatments such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Cognitive Group Behavioral Therapy. general" or "supportive" psychotherapy may be used. Medical treatments may include antidepressant (SSRI, Effexor, MAOI, etc.); Benzodiazepine (Klonopin, Xanax); various antidepressants and stimulants may be used. The health care practitioner shall customize the treatment program after diagnosis.

References

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