

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY (SOCIAL PHOBIA) AND WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM

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Abstract. *This article discusses the causes, symptoms, and ways to overcome social anxiety (social phobia) based on psychological approaches. Social phobia is characterized by feelings of discomfort in social situations, shyness, and fear of being criticized. The article highlights key psychologists' scientific views on the identification, understanding, and effective psychological correction methods for social anxiety.*

Keywords: *social anxiety, social phobia, cognitive therapy, symptoms, psychological correction.*

ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ФАКТОРЫ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ТРЕВОЖНОСТИ (СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ ФОБИИ) И СПОСОБЫ ИХ ПРЕОДОЛЕНИЯ

Аннотация. *В статье рассматриваются причины, симптомы и способы преодоления социальной тревожности (социальной фобии) на основе психологических подходов. Социальная фобия характеризуется чувством дискомфорта в социальных ситуациях, застенчивостью и страхом подвергнуться критике. В статье освещаются основные научные взгляды психологов на выявление, понимание и эффективные методы психологической коррекции социальной тревожности.*

Ключевые слова: *социальная тревожность, социальная фобия, когнитивная терапия, симптомы, психологическая коррекция.*

Introduction

The rapid pace of modern life, the increase in the volume of communication between people, as well as the need to perform in public to achieve personal success, have led to the rise of various psychological issues, including an increase in social anxiety levels. This condition is known in psychology as "social phobia." It hinders the full expression of an individual's potential and restricts their participation in society. This article analyzes this problem from a psychological perspective, addressing its causes, symptoms, and methods of treatment.

Main Section

Causes of Social Anxiety

Social anxiety (social phobia) is associated with difficulties in expressing oneself in society and interacting with others.

Psychologists describe this issue as the mental discomfort that arises when individuals attempt to accept social interactions. This condition is influenced by multiple factors, including biological, psychological, and social aspects.

1. Biological Factors

One theory that explains social anxiety biologically is the presence of genetic predispositions. Research suggests that there may be genes associated with social anxiety.

According to Wagner (2003), individuals suffering from social phobia often have family members who have experienced similar conditions.

2. Psychological Factors

Psychologically, low self-esteem and a tendency to be critical of oneself play a major role in the development of social anxiety. According to Beck, individuals with low self-confidence and internal negative dialogues experience heightened fear in social situations (Beck, 1976).

Additionally, past negative social experiences, such as bullying, criticism, or social isolation, can intensify the condition.

3. Social Factors

Changes in the social environment also contribute to the development of social anxiety.

Engaging with new social groups, being constantly exposed to novelties, or the influence of mass media and social perception can induce fear. Zimbardo (2007) emphasized that individuals who perceive social acceptance as a threat are more likely to experience social anxiety.

Symptoms and Types of Social Anxiety

The symptoms of social anxiety can vary individually, but several common signs appear in many patients:

Physical Symptoms: increased heart rate, sweating, blushing, trembling, difficulty breathing.

Emotional and Psychological Symptoms: intense fear in social situations, embarrassment, isolation, avoidance of eye contact.

One of the most common types of social anxiety is performance anxiety (fear of public speaking or performing) and fear of being evaluated by others. The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS) is an effective method for diagnosing social anxiety. This test measures how uncomfortable a person feels in certain situations and their tendency to avoid such situations (Liebowitz, 1987).

Modern Treatment Approaches

Modern psychotherapy methods play a crucial role in treating social anxiety. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is one of the most effective ways to treat social anxiety.

In CBT, patients learn to manage their fear by working on negative thoughts and behaviors. Hope and Heimberg (1995) found that CBT showed 60-80% effectiveness in overcoming social anxiety.

In addition, Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), developed by Albert Ellis, is also used to combat anxiety. This method focuses on replacing irrational, negative thoughts with rational, healthy thoughts (Ellis, 1962). REBT helps individuals analyze and challenge their negative internal dialogues, reducing their anxiety.

Furthermore, psychodynamic therapy, based on Freud's psychological models, focuses on exploring past experiences and their impact on current behavior. Negative past experiences and low self-esteem can intensify social anxiety, making psychodynamic approaches useful as well.

Conclusion

Social anxiety is one of the most common psychological issues in modern life. The primary causes of this condition include an individual's internal beliefs, past negative experiences, and the fear of social judgment. Modern psychotherapy approaches, especially CBT and REBT, can be effective tools for overcoming social phobia. Psychologists and professionals need to diagnose this issue early and take a systematic approach to its treatment.

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