

## **Countering Stage Fright**

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Hello friends, I am here once again to discuss countering stage fright- definition with symptoms. So, in my last lecture, I tried to define the very meaning of stage fear, and in that context, I discussed nervousness and anxiety disorder with phobia. We have seen how a person gets affected by these things, and it entirely depends on a person's psyche, psychology and how to counter it. So, the very essence of this lecture is how to be a good stage performer or public speaker. So last time I discussed phobia while discussing nervousness and anxiety and glossophobia, agoraphobia, acrophobia, and claustrophobia, I discussed it all just to say that they are all part of anxiety disorder. And very clearly, I have demarcated between nervousness and anxiety disorder.

So let us discuss now about risk factors when a person is having all these symptoms, phobia, anxiety disorder. People with a genetic predisposition to anxiety may be at high risk of developing a phobia. Age, socio-economic status, and gender seem to be risk factors only for certain phobias. For example, women are more likely to have an animal phobia, darkness phobia, or something like that.

Children or people with low socioeconomic status are more likely to have social phobias, while men make up the majority of those with dentist and doctor phobias. Of course, visiting a dentist is a great phobia and fear. So, risk factors can be found genetically also, and remember, in my previous lecture, I told you that you must introspect what level of anxiety you have. So, it is important to discuss what is social anxiety, social phobia, and social anxiety. So, social anxiety is when you feel nervous, tense, or uncomfortable in social situations because you are worried other people are judging you- self-conscious.

Almost everyone has experienced social anxiety at one point or another; life is, you know, rife with moments of self-consciousness from job interviews to the first dates. All occasionally feel nervous around other people. It hardly matters what their age is, but every time they are in front of the interview board, people get nervous. This is part of social anxiety, but social anxiety becomes a problem when it is so frequent or intense that

it gets in the way of important things in one's life. You might not apply for a dream job because it requires an interview.

Or you might find it hard to be around even family and friends because you are so worried about what they think of you. Again, self-consciousness, self-obsessedness, and social anxiety are some of the most common mental health conditions in the world. This is very important to recognize if you have social anxiety. Social anxiety involves a fear of being judged negatively and, again, self-obsessed. Negatively, the actual situation that causes it can vary greatly from person to person, it varies, it can vary greatly from person to person.

Many people with social anxiety feel nervous in most situations that involve interacting with or performing in front of other people. However, some people only experience social anxiety in particular situations, such as speaking in front of others or hosting an event. For example, a person who is typically very outgoing and comfortable talking to a stranger at parties might only have social anxiety when giving presentations. Again it varies. In fact, public speaking is one of the most common specific causes of social anxiety.

So, common situations in which people experience social anxieties can be speaking in front of a group, talking to a stranger or strangers, being the center of attention such as when you are hosting a dinner, or speaking to authority figures such as your boss or director. Answering the phone and eating or drinking in front of others, talking to someone you find attractive. So, my question is to you: did you experience a mental blackout following a fast heartbeat? And also, did you feel your blood rushing to your head and to your cheeks? These are the signs and symptoms of phobia, social anxiety, and nervousness at the time of stage performance. People often think social anxiety is just a feeling, but it actually has four components: thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and behaviors. Most people might begin, you know, recognizing their social anxiety when they notice nervousness, which is also accompanied by physical symptoms such as trembling and crying.

When you are anxious, the four components you know are thoughts, thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and behavior. They interact and build upon each other causing a cycle of anxiety. What is thought? Often, your anxiety will begin with a negative thought, which is the thought process in your brain, such as "I am going to screw up and people will think I am stupid,"- negative thinking. You are more conscious of the audience, the people who are going to look at you rather than your real caliber. You are underestimating yourself and feeling these thoughts cause you to feel negative emotions such as stress or worry.

Physical response: your body reacts to your negative thoughts and feelings with a physical response such as blushing, sweating, or shaking. You try reducing your anxiety with conscious or unconscious actions such as averting your gaze or hiding behind the podium to prevent people from seeing you shaking. Acting this way makes you think everyone else notices you look stiff and anxious thought, which then can cause you to feel even more stress and anxious feeling, and it reflects from your behavior. This is not normal behavior. You are self-conscious because of others.

So, people with social anxiety often do not realize when their behavior is being driven by anxiety. People with social anxiety tend to exhibit, you know, three types of behavior: avoidance behavior- when you stay away from situations that make you anxious. For example, you might turn down opportunities to give presentations at work out of fear. You are ready to lose something, but you do not have the guts to appear. Escape behavior: when you leave a situation that makes you anxious, such as leaving a concert or party after just a few minutes.

Because of your anxiety, you are uncomfortable; you are restless. Safety behaviors are actions you take to reduce your anxiety in social situations, such as drinking to feel more comfortable or playing a game on your phone at lunch. Now, in such a situation, averting your gaze or hiding behind the podium during the presentation are safety behaviors. See, but these are abnormal behavior. So, what to do if you have social anxiety? If you think you have social anxiety, the most important question to ask yourself is whether it prevents you from achieving your goals.

For example, we mentioned earlier that a large majority of people report a fear of public speaking you might be one of them. So, you may have heard the joke that some people would prefer to be in their own coffin than give eulogy at a funeral. While this may be an exaggeration, many would agree. Most of us feel a degree of nervous apprehension when preparing to speak up or perform in front of a group, but for those who are filled with feelings of fear, dread, and panic in such a situation or anywhere, the person might be the center of attention. They may be suffering from a form of social anxiety disorder, also known as social phobia.

The fear of public speaking that is stage performance is often called stage fright. It takes a huge toll on self-confidence and self-esteem and causes some people to leave school or a job or pass up a promotion. Many, including seasoned professional performers, suffer in silent terror, and because they feel embarrassed, people try to keep their fear a secret, even from a spouse or other close family member or friends. So, learning to improve your speaking or performance skills is good, but it is generally not enough to substantially

reduce your fear. You must address and revise any negative you know perceptions, beliefs, thoughts, images, or predictions related to public speaking or performing.

It is often helpful to uncover the deeper fear related to being seen and heard by others, showing vulnerability, and being considered less than perfect. So, learning to accept yourself and not feeling that you have to prove yourself to others is at the root of healing. It is recommended that you learn skills to reduce and manage your fear and anxiety and not resort to using medication or natural products alone. It is also critical to learn cognitive behavior methods to stop the cycle of avoiding fearful situations. Avoidance gives you immediate relief, but it reinforces your fear in the long run.

Some people also choose medication or natural remedies to help reduce their symptoms or performance anxiety, but this is a temporary arrangement. If you are willing to stop avoiding your fears and learn new skills to reduce and manage them, all those you know fear and phobias, you will develop an empowering belief and trust in yourself. You need to empower yourself. So, in facing your fear, it becomes possible to overcome performance anxiety and find comfort and ease in expressing yourself in front of others. So, while everyone experiences anxiety differently, common stage fright symptoms include excessive dread or worry about the event, feeling distant or withdrawn from others, experiencing a sense of numbness, numbness inactiveness, and dry mouth.

Throat tightness, which can make talking painful, choking the sound, raising heartbeat, perspiration, nausea or vomiting, stomach pain, excessive blushing, desire to escape and leave the scene, and intense paranoia about rejection or judgment. So, what are the causes of stage fright? Stage fright is extremely common, I am repeating it, and some experts believe that it is a subset of social anxiety disorder, a condition rooted in fear of judgment and rejection. Someone may also have a severe fear of failure or embarrassment. Similarly, neuroscientists suggest because see why I have spoken neuroscience is related to your brain. Neuroscientists suggest that it simply might represent the fight or flight response, the phenomenon where our body reacts to how it perceives certain dangers.

During the fight or flight response, the amygdala- a kind of organ in the brain that experiences emotion, sends the stress response throughout the body, which stimulates epinephrine, a kind of hormone which is known as adrenaline hormone. This adrenaline accounts for the physiological symptoms experienced during a stage fright. The patterns happen so quickly that we do not recognize when it is happening until we are in the middle of it. Now, one very prominent question is if stage fright is genetic. Research shows that genetic factors can play a prominent role in anxiety disorder.

While there are not many studies examining the origin of stage fright, up to 30% of

generalized anxiety disorder cases appear to be genetic, meaning anxiety runs in families. Is stage fright a form of anxiety? Yes, even the Anxiety and Depression Association of America classifies stage fright as the fear of public speaking or performance anxiety. Stage fright shares many similar symptoms with other phobias and anxiety disorders. So, stage fright is a common type of anxiety that refers to feeling anxious when presenting before an audience. These anxiety symptoms may be either physical or emotional.

In severe situations that are in a very critical situation, they can feel incredibly, you know, debilitating. Stage fright can affect anyone; it may even impact people who seemingly appear comfortable in front of the crowd. So, stage fear is a type of anxiety that describes feeling anxious when speaking or performing in front of a group of people. It is not just limited to little stages. In general, stage fright is a colloquial term used to describe performance anxiety, presentation anxiety, or the fear of public speaking.

So, stage fright or performance anxiety is a state of anxiety or fear that occurs when an individual is faced with the requirement of performing in front of an audience either directly or through a screen that is in front of a camera. It affects all kinds of people who have to appear in front of an audience, even when they are not necessarily speaking. For example, it can affect, you know, even a musician, dancer, politician, or athlete. Performance anxiety can happen to anyone, even people who regularly speak or perform in front of a crowd. Many professional athletes, actors, and magicians report instances of feeling insecure or anxious.

While some people can avoid public speaking or performance and subsequently know to avoid dealing with the fear, others face it on a routine basis. So, performance anxiety can happen in any setting where you feel worried about being judged for your performance. This fear can happen even if you identify as being gifted with public speaking or whatever you may be performing, and it may emerge in front of a large audience and in front of smaller, intimate groups or one-on-one settings. So, a person may experience stage fright during the following events: a job interview or a fearful class presentation. I have seen this in many students, even in tutorial class presentations, exercise classes, work meetings, speaking to customer service representatives, and making small talk with a stranger.

So, symptoms what are the symptoms that we are dealing with? Stage fright symptoms may emerge, you know, long before your presentation or performance. So, you might start feeling nervous in the days or hours leading up to the event. So, as the actual time gets closer, the symptoms tend to become more and more pervasive and noticeable. So, what are the symptoms? It is physiological, cognitive, and behavioral. So, the physiological component means changes in our nervous system and hormonal system,

which, amongst other things, might lead to an increased heart rate or pulse, dry mouth, sweaty, trembling hands, nausea, shortness of breath, blurry eyes, you know, or eyesight.

Physical excitement is a natural response to the situation and is related to the flight or fight response with which people react to frightening situations as of old. So, often, stage fright is associated with social phobia, which is characterized by the following cognitive error. Unrealistic assessment of what is expected of you, unestimated of your capabilities, overestimation of the opinion of others, unrealistic expectation of others' responses to anxiety, overestimation of the idea of rejection. So, cognitive communication abilities are those thought processes that allow humans to function successfully and interact meaningfully with each other. So, many processes make up cognitive-communication, and one example of these is orientation, which refers to awareness of person, place, time, and circumstance.

Attention refers to the ability to concentrate, often broken down into 4 types: focused attention, sustained attention, alternative attention, and divided attention, which means the ability to respond simultaneously to multiple task demands like multitasking. You know, like memory that refers to the ability to remember. Sensory memory is the ability to remember information related to any of the 5 senses: smell, taste, touch, vision, and audition. Short-term memory is the ability to remember information for up to a few minutes, long term for a longer time; procedural memory is the ability to physically remember how to do an action, movements, and prospective memory, and the ability to remember what needs to be remembered. For example, meeting friends at a certain place in 2 hours, taking medication, or going somewhere to deliver a lecture.

So, friends, I have elaborated on the very meaning of stage fright and its various symptoms in detail because it is very important to know while reducing or countering stage fright. You should know every aspect; you cannot judge yourself at a similar scale to others are judging themselves. As I said, there is individual variation. So, knowing all these kinds of reactions and responses to you know a particular situation that is called stage fright may help you to counter stage fright. In the next lecture, I will discuss the way to counter you know all such symptoms in detail. Thank you very much, have a happy day.