



Psychotherapy for Selective Mutism and Social Anxiety Disorder

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Social Anxiety Disorder

- Fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to scrutiny by others
- Individual fears that he or she will act in a way or show anxiety symptoms that will be negatively evaluated
- Social situations almost always provoke fear or anxiety
- Social situations are avoided or endured with intense fear or anxiety
- Fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the social situation
- Must occur for 6 months

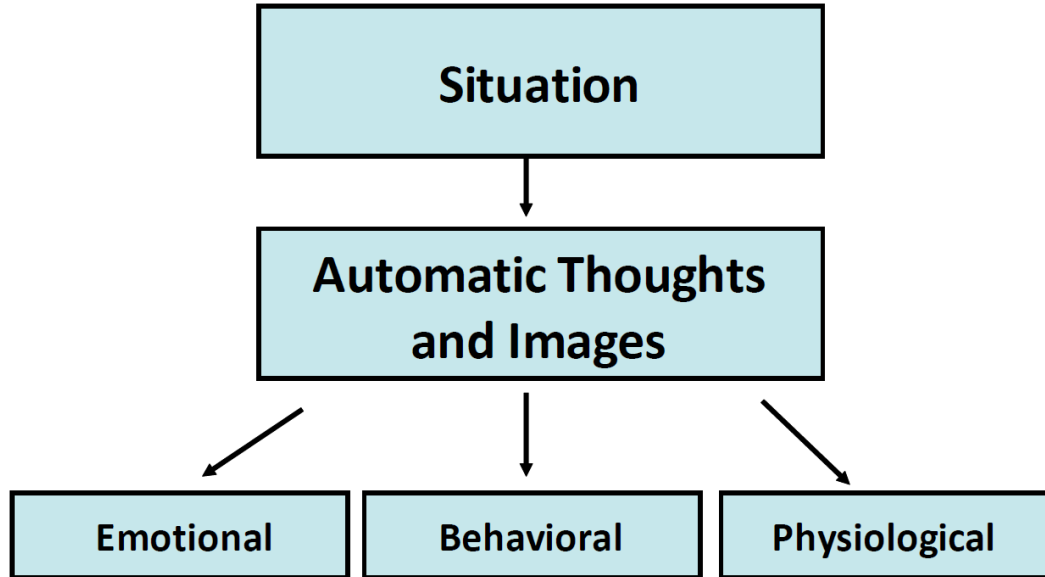


Treatment

- CBT has been found to reduce anxiety in those with social anxiety (Melfsen et al., 2015) ; Kendall and Southam-Gerow, 1996)
- Treatment effects maintained 12 months after treatment (Clark et al. 2003)



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



CBT for SA

- Teach emotional and thought identification
- Cognitive restructuring of anticipatory anxiety and other maladaptive thoughts
 - Tend to catastrophize and engage in fortune telling
- Audio and video feedback to challenge fears that they look or sound anxious
- Exposures
 - Have them do something embarrassing to test their cognitions



Mindfulness and SA

- Helps reduce social anxiety (Goldin et al., 2017)
- Norton et al. (2014) completed a systematic review of Mindfulness Treatment of SA
 - Improved symptoms, but benefits were equivalent or less than CBT
- Definition: Focusing on the present in a nonjudgmental manner



Selective Mutism

- Consistent failure to speak in specific social situations in which there is an expectation for speaking despite speaking in other situations
- The disturbance interfered with educational or occupational achievement or with social communication
- Duration of symptoms is at least 1 month
- Failure to speak is not due to a lack of knowledge of, or comfort with, the spoken language required in the social situation
- Not better explained by a communication disorder and not occur only during ASD, schizophrenia, or another psychotic disorder



Selective mutism

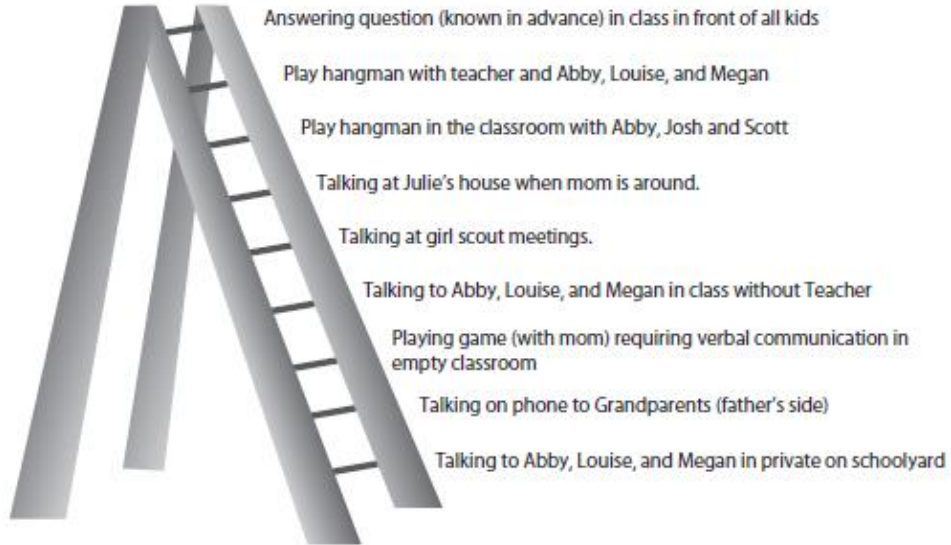
- Sparse research on SM
- Very few controlled trials
- CBT shows promising results
 - Oerbeck et al. (2014) did an RCT
 - CBT group showed significant improvement in speech; waitlist did not show significant improvement
 - Bergman et al (2013) found that after 12 weeks children showed drastically improvement in speech
- Behavioral therapy shown to effective
 - Wentzel-Larsen et al (2013) improved speaking in home and school; gains maintained 5 years after treatment



Selective Mutism

- Exposures
 - Start with initial approximations to communicative behavior (pointing and nodding)
 - Have the child speak to people in various settings
- Contingency Management
 - Rewards for engaging in and practicing therapy HW
- Parent interventions
 - Create opportunities for child to speak and encounter others (e.g., answering the phone, saying hello to someone in public)





Questions?

