

## **Countering Stage Fright**

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**Lecture-10**

Hello students, let us continue the previous lecture which is on the symptoms of performance anxiety and I narrated some of the mental issues, health issues in which one of the very important issue is panic. Panic is a type of anxiety that involves sudden and intense feeling of fear. So, when a person experiences a panic attack, they may experience racing heartbeat, chest pain, trembling, sweating, sense of impending doom, feeling out of control or feeling as if they are dying. So panic attacks are a symptom of anxiety disorder, known as panic disorder. These are the symptoms because we are discussing the symptoms of stage fear or performance anxiety. People with this condition worry that they will have a panic attack in the future.

So, they often avoid places or situations where they think they might experience feelings of panic. Common symptoms of performance anxiety include trembling, stomach upset, nausea, shortness of breath, and an increased number of mistakes while performing, like stammering and uttering; escape behavior, such as finding an excuse to avoid the task of performance, may also occur. Sometimes, various types of anxiety include musical performance anxiety, personal or sexual performance anxiety, speech anxiety, and test anxiety. What does performance anxiety feel like? So, if you experience this fear the following statements I am going to read out that is most probably sound very familiar.

Questionnaires with statements similar to these have been used by researchers to examine the thoughts and feelings experienced by people with musical performance anxiety. "The harder I work to prepare for a concert or for a performance the more likely it seems that I will make a mistake." This is the general perception and these are the questions here. I worry about a negative reaction from the audience. That is the kind of fear or obsession.

I have a sense of dread before performances. I worry about performing weeks or months in advance. I never know the night of the performance whether or not I will do well. There are times during performances when I wonder if I will make it through. So

problematic thinking is often at the root of musical or stage performance anxiety.

Thoughts such as, "my performance needs to be perfect." You know, I have an obsession with perfection, or I am a complete failure, or I had a good performance tonight, but I must have just been lucky to create and maintain anxiety. So, there are certain, you know, spaces where you feel very blurry or very confused, like black or white thinking. If my performance is not perfect, I am a failure. Overgeneralization: I had a bad performance tonight; I have always been a bad performer and always will be.

This means you are cursing yourself; you are negative about yourself. Others are not saying, but you are saying you are cursing yourself, you are underestimating yourself. Like a mental filter, "Everyone must have noticed how I messed up in the middle." It does not matter that the rest was ok. My mistake ruined the performance.

Suppose thirty minutes you have to perform, or you performed and suppose two minutes it was wrong, but the rest of the 28 minutes, you will think that all went bad. Disqualifying the positive, I had a good performance tonight, but I must have just been lucky. Jumping to conclusions, "The audience was really quiet tonight. They must not have liked my performance." So why does our heartbeat rate rise when we get frightened? Our body responds to stress, worry, anxiety, fear, and excitement by activating the fight or flight system.

At the chemical level, our body releases a series of hormones that make us hyper-alert, focused, and energized. This chemical cascade causes increased heart rate, respiratory rate, and perspiration. So, from an evolutionary standpoint, this is a system we needed in place for survival. When a danger is encountered, our brain just sends signals to our entire body warning us that we need to leave the life-threatening situation. The hormones then create adrenaline that will keep us awake and alive while we are fighting or fleeing.

Our cells, too, contribute by keeping everything working and pumping so that adrenaline can pump through our blood. While the adrenaline is pumping through our blood, so are the fat and sugar. That fat and sugar make our bronchi open wider causing heartbeat and breathing rate to accelerate. That is why our heart beats faster when we get frightened. Normally, heart rate control is balanced when the two circuits of the autonomic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system and the sympathetic nervous system.

The sympathetic nervous system, which is SNS, is often referred to as our fight or flight system. The parasympathetic nervous system PSNS is its counterpart and can be termed as the rest and digest system. Together, the PSNS and SNS work in all areas of the body to help us act, react, recover, and survive. So, see, these are the peculiar situations of

physical and mental fatigue, but these two are different again, but they often occur together. Repeated physical exhaustion can lead to mental fatigue over time, and poor sleep, particularly when it occurs for a long time, can also lead to fatigue.

An official recommends that adults get 7 to 8 hours of trusted source of sleep each night. According to some research, however, around 1 in 3 people trusted sources in the United States say that they do not get enough sleep. So, eating a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity can help to reduce fatigue for many people. Treating the underlying cause of fatigue, whether this is poor sleep or a health condition, also helps. So, there are two main types of fatigue physical and mental.

A person with physical fatigue may find it physically hard to do the things they usually do, such as climbing the stairs. Symptoms include muscle weakness, and diagnosis may involve completing a strength test. With mental fatigue, a person may find it harder to concentrate on things and stay focused. They may feel sleepy or have difficulty staying awake while working. So, some chronic medical conditions can cause the muscles to wear out more quickly or cause a person to feel fatigued.

In other cases, an infection may cause the muscle to falter. So, if a person has a sudden severe onset of muscle weakness they should talk to a doctor. And some examples are that this occurs when a person's adrenal glands do not produce enough of the hormones cortisol and aldosterone. In addition to muscle weakness, other common symptoms of such kind of disease include chronic fatigue, weight loss, loss of appetite, stomach pain all the time, anxiety that will force you not to eat, fatigue, less sleep, and therefore, weight loss. Anemia is also one of the regions, especially in India, to be fatigued and get nervous, and as I said, we have students people from various strata of society.

Well, this may be one of the reasons. Anemia occurs when a person's hemoglobin levels are low, often due to iron deficiency, and this leads to symptoms like dizziness and shortness of breath, headache, cold hands and feet that are also a symptom of nervousness, and irregular heartbeat. Now, this diagnosis refers to unexplained fatigue, there is no explanation for the fatigue or fatigue that a doctor cannot relate to a medical condition. Another name for it is myalgic encephalomyelitis; this is the medical name. People with chronic fatigue syndrome experience severe tiredness and sleep problems.

Other symptoms include muscle weakness, pain, dizziness, and problems concentrating. Now there is a very important fluid called electrolyte. It happens or it takes place in our body the lack of it due to loose motions and excessive sweating. So, electrolytes help ensure that the muscles, nerves, heart, and brain all function correctly. Having altered levels of electrolytes such as calcium, potassium, sodium and magnesium can cause

muscle weakness.

So examples of electrolyte disorders include hypokalemia or hyperkalemic periodic paralysis. As we call a panic attack on the stage, this may create paralysis. also, if it is a very high order, risk factors for an electrolyte imbalance can be loss of fluids through sweating, vomiting, loose motion, chemotherapy, a poor diet, taking antibodies unnecessarily, and fibromyalgia. What is fibromyalgia? Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that causes muscle pain and weakness in addition to other symptoms. See, health is the most important aspect when you take exams, when you perform constantly.

Fatigue- always fatigued, and that affects your memory and also creates mood changes. Hypothyroidism, hypothyroidism, or an underactive thyroid can cause muscle weakness and cramping. And these symptoms may get worse with exercise and physical activity. So, when you need to give a stage performance, you should take care of all these things- your health issues, your food level, the quality of food, your rest, everything. Now, this thyroidism can cause weight gain, feeling cold, dry skin and hair, fatigue, irregular or heavy menstrual periods, a slow heart rate, joint and muscle pain, depression or mood disorder, also fertility problems.

And a doctor can often diagnose this and other thyroid conditions with a blood test. Sleep disorders, even before exams, are also a kind of performance in which a student gets disturbed. Sleep disorders such as narcolepsy and insomnia can result in daytime muscle weakness and fatigue. A person who needs to stay in bed due to a medical condition may also experience muscle weakness. This results from not using the muscle as regularly as usual.

A person may also be at risk of sleep problems. That is why it is always advisable for students to go for yoga, go for walks, and go for sports that also support mental health. And when we talk of all these things, you know, neurological conditions are also very important to discuss. Some conditions that affect the nervous system can cause muscle weakness. These conditions are often chronic and affect the way that a person's nerves transmit messages to their muscles.

One example is cervical spondylolysis. Yes, if you have pain in your body and you are feeling uneasy, you cannot give The best performance. Cervical spondylosis is related to changes to the cushioning; a spinal disc in the neck can cause cervical spondylolysis. And this puts extra pressure on nerve, resulting in muscle weakness. So, neurological conditions are often progressive.

That is to say, with age, with the passage of time, it goes up and up, which means that

they get worse over time. And some of these conditions also go through stages of remission when symptoms lessen or even disappear before flaring up again. So, some people experience muscle weakness as a result of the medicine they take. So, you need to look out, search where you are lacking. If you have you know a spine problem or a spondylosis you cannot speak with loud sound because it will create or cause pain in your muscle.

Anyone experiencing muscle weakness as a side effect should speak to a doctor before stopping their medication. So, several things are there, you know, types of medication that can help a person to overcome such a problem. So, stage fright can be devastating both professionally and personally, but it is not considered. And I would again say whether you ruin your life or recover your life. However, an extreme fear of public speaking is a phobia called glossophobia.

Glossophobia, I discussed, remember, with the phobia. Glossophobia is a subset of social phobia or the fear of social situations where one is being watched or judged by other, you know, followed by sweating. It happens for pretty much everyone. It may not always feel all that pleasant, but it is a natural response to rising body temperature. It also happens either at the rising temperature or cool.

When the weather heats up, or when you exert yourself during physical activity, your body produces sweat to help you stay cool. So, in short, sweat serves, you know, a pretty important purpose when you talk of anxiety. Sometimes, though, you might find yourself sweating when your body does not need to cool off. Sweating commonly happens as a response to fear or stress, which is why you might notice increased sweating as a physical symptom of anxiety. And like typical sweat, anxiety can appear all over your body, but mostly it is on your face and your palm, you know, the soles of your feet and armpit.

And, of course, worrying about sweating too much can also contribute to feelings of anxiety, not to mention a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you sweat a lot when facing stress, you might begin to worry about sweating in front of other people, but that very concern might lead you to break out in a sweat. So, a sweaty face and palms can feel pretty uncomfortable. But anxiety sweating can also contribute to emotional distress. Not only can frequent sweating complicate your daily routine, but it can also diminish your confidence.

You might begin to avoid social situations or anything that might prompt a sweat response. And in time, anxiety sweating could trigger feelings of loneliness and even depression. So, you need to keep yourself updated. Keep reading to learn more about why anxiety sweating happens. Plus, get a few tips to manage, try to prevent it, and you talk to

those who are having the same symptom.

Headache is also one of the symptoms of anxiety. Headache happens along with the feeling of anxiety. Having a headache may make you anxious, or a headache can be a physical symptom of your anxiety. Doctors believe the two can be linked, but they do not understand exactly how. It may have to do with how the brain works amygdala. The cells in your brain that control mood, sleep, and pain use a chemical called serotonin to send messages to each other.

When people get migraines, these cells get much more active than normal. That changes your serotonin level which may lead to anxiety. That is why I said that health issues are also very important to being a perfect stage performer. And as doctors learn more about how headaches and anxiety affect each other, they can offer better treatments for both. So, make sure to tell your doctor, or psychotherapist, or any medical practitioner about both conditions, so you can get the care you need.

Now, the question is, does anxiety cause headaches, or is it the other way around? So, headaches are a common symptom of different types of anxiety, like the generalized anxiety disorder I discussed earlier, which is in short called GAD. That is a condition where you constantly worry and find it really hard to control your anxiety. So, headaches are one of the signs that medical practitioners look for when they check for GAD. Often, though, it is not clear how to tease apart cause and effect when it comes to anxiety and headaches. It may be that if you are someone who is more likely to get one of those problems your chances go up that you will get the other.

Like, some folks have a history of, you know, migraines before they have GAD or other anxiety. Others have anxiety first and develop migraine later. People with migraines are more likely to have anxiety and depression. When you have all three, it usually starts with anxiety, then migraine kicks in, and then depression shows up. So people who do not typically get as many headaches, anxiety increases the odds of getting them more often.

Things that may contribute to anxiety headaches can be tension headaches. Doctors do not have a separate name for a stress or anxiety headache, but the most common type of headaches you know all have a link to anxiety. So, tension headache almost everyone gets one at some point. When you hear people say they have a headache, it is usually this kind.

Typically, they are not too painful. Tension does not mean stress in this case, but it refers to how the headache feels, which may be like a tight band around your head, and it can be triggered by anxiety, but it is not clear why this happens. Migraines are more severe

headaches that can cause painful pounding or throbbing. They can last for hours or even days. So, besides pain, migraines can also make you vomit, be very uncomfortable, and feel sensitive to light and noise.

They are very common in people who have anxiety disorders. Cluster headaches- these are called cluster headaches because of how they happen. You might get them a few times a day for a few weeks or months, and then they just go away. They may not come back for months or years. So, people with cluster headaches are more likely to have anxiety typically in the months of downtime between bouts of headaches. Doctors aren't sure how cluster headaches and anxiety are connected or which one causes the other.

Now in such cases, anxiety headache pain and other signs may differ depending on which type of anxiety headache you have. Tension headache- mild or moderate pain on either side of the head. Pain can last hours or days; headache does not get worse with physical activity. So, migraine headaches, sharp and intense throbbing pain, often happen with nausea and sensitivity to light. Pain may be just on one side and may be focused on the eye, the back of the head, and other areas.

A headache can last a day or longer. These are very extremely painful, with watery eyes, runny nose, and sweaty face. So, it is a chronic disease that occurs with varying frequency and results in varying levels of disability. So, reliance on a purely biomedical model of headache does not account for all aspects of headache and associated disability. Because, as I said, it differs from person to person. Now, with this, I would like to conclude my discussion, which enlightens the symptoms of anxiety, performance anxiety.

And why did I elaborate on all these points in detail, some of the medical issues also, that you know yourself? Try to know the health issue that is already there with you even before the stage of anxiety, and when you come to the stage for performance, it aggravates more. So, take care of this, know more about it, and talk to people about this consulting doctor to be a perfect performer. With this, I conclude my discussion. Let us meet in other lectures with other vibrant, useful topics related to countering stage fright. Thank you very much.