

## **Countering Stage Fright**

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Hello students, I am here once again, Professor Smita Jha, talking about types of stage fright. In the previous lecture of mine, I discussed various types of stage fright, the major five ones. And while discussing this, I also discussed GAD, that is Generalized Anxiety Disorder, under which I was discussing panic attacks. It is very important to know about panic attacks, what are the symptoms, the causes, because it is very important to neutralize it, as I said again and again. Panic attacks have many variations, but symptoms usually peak within minutes. You may feel fatigued and worn out after a panic attack subsides.

Panic attacks typically include some of the signs or symptoms like sense of impending doom or danger, like "I am finished"; very dark future; fear of loss of control or death; rapid pounding heart rate; sweating; trembling or shaking- see out of nervousness, when you start shaking, trembling; shortness of breath or tightening in your throat. When you are depressed, the flow of oxygen is less, even the blood circulation- naturally the shortness of breath due to the shortness of oxygen. Feeling cold, chill; hot flashes also, out of fear; unnecessary excitement. And due to all, you can have nausea, like fainting.

Abdominal cramping, pain in the stomach, lower part of abdomen; chest pain; headache, dizziness and light headache, or you know, faintness- tendency to faint; inactivity or numbness, or tingling sensation; feeling of unreality or detachment that, "Well I am gone, I am nothing." So one of the worst things about panic attacks is the intense fear that one will have another one. Well, you may fear having panic attacks so much that you avoid certain situations where they may occur. That is the fear of that situation that forced you to think. So if you have panic attack symptoms, see medical help as soon as possible.

In the previous lecture I discussed that you may go to psychiatrists, psychologists, some doctors, to neutralize the effect, minimize the effect. Panic attacks while intensely uncomfortable, are not dangerous. But panic attacks are hard to manage on your own and they may get worse without treatment. Panic attack symptoms can also resemble

symptoms of other serious health problems such as heart attacks. So it is important to get evaluated by your primary care provider.

If you are not sure what is causing your symptoms, if you can locate, if you can check, you can treat yourself. Because you are the fighter, you should have the fighting spirit. "Okay, I have this kind of flaw, limitations. Let me check it, let me come over this." So, it is not well known as I said earlier also, what causes panic attacks or panic disorder.

But some factors are important to create this kind of situation, and the first is genetics, which I discussed earlier also. Genetics- major stress. Temperament- that is more sensitive to stress or prone to negative emotions. Certain changes in the way parts of one's brain function, and these factors play a vital role in creating this kind of situation. Panic attacks may come on suddenly and without warning at first, but over time they are usually triggered by certain situations.

Some research suggests that man's body's natural fight or flight response to danger is involved in panic attacks. For example, if a grizzly bear came after you, your body would react instinctively. Your heart rate and breathing would speed up as your body prepares for a life-threatening situation. And many of the same reactions occur in a panic attack. But it is unknown why a panic attack occurs when there is no obvious danger present.

And this was also discussed under the heading called phobia. What are the risk factors if we talk of panic attacks? Symptoms of panic disorder often start in the late teens or early adulthood and affect more women than men. Factors that may increase the risk of developing panic attacks or panic disorder include family history of panic attacks or panic disorder. Major life stress such as death, or serious illness of loved one. A traumatic event such as sexual assault or serious accident.

Major changes in your life such as the personal loss, divorce and addition of a baby. Smoking excessive caffeine intake. History of childhood physical or sexual abuse that is the past, bad past, ugly past, unhealthy past. What are the complications when we talk of? Left untreated, panic attacks and panic disorder can affect almost every area of your life, whether it is your professional life or your personal life. We are not much different in our personal life than our professional life.

Even personal life needs some kind of care and dealing. So, if you are successful in professional life, maybe you will try to balance even in your personal life. So, if you leave this panic disorder, panic attack unaddressed, it may create some major problems. You may be so afraid of having more panic attacks that you live in a constant state of fear, ruining your quality of life. So, there are complications of panic attacks like

complications that: panic attacks may cause or be linked to include development of a specific phobia, such as fear of driving or leaving your home.

Frequent medical care for health concerns and other medical conditions. Avoidance of social situations. Problems at work or school. Depression, anxiety disorders and other psychiatric disorders. Increased risk of suicide or suicidal thoughts.

That is also very much prevalent- suicidal tendency among today's youth. Because too much of ambition, high ambition and under the idea that "we are not going to get it," this kind of feeling comes. Alcohol or other substance misuse. Financial problem- this is the biggest problem of India because I always say that if we talk of caste, then it is rich and poor. So, yes, financial problem is a major problem because financial support is needed for mental comfort also.

For some people, panic disorder may include agoraphobia. I discussed this earlier also, but again I am telling you. Agoraphobia- what is this? Avoiding places or situations that cause you anxiety because you fear being unable to escape or get help if you have a panic attack or you may become reliant on others to be with you in order to leave your home. Panic attacks typically begin suddenly, without warning. They can strike at any time- when you are driving a car, anywhere, even in your office.

It may be occasional, but it may be very frequent also. And it has many variations, full of symptoms that usually peak within minutes. And this will cause intense fatigue so much so that you are unable to walk, you are unable to speak, as if the entire strength of your body has been taken away. So, what are the preventions? Very important to know the preventions. How to prevent? There is no sure way to prevent panic attacks or panic disorder.

But there are certain recommendations like, get treatment for panic attacks as soon as possible to help stop them from getting worse or becoming more frequent. Stick with your treatment. Plan to help prevent relapses or worsening of panic attack symptoms. Get regular physical activity which may play a role in protecting against anxiety. So, this leads to a kind of phobia, a phobia- which is a type of anxiety disorder.

that causes an individual to experience extreme irrational fear about a situation, living creature, place or object. When a person has a phobia, they will often shape their lives to avoid what they consider to be dangerous. The imagined threat is greater than any actual threat posed by the cause of terror. Phobias are diagnosable mental disorder. The person will experience intense distress when faced with the source of their phobia.

This can prevent them from functioning normally and sometimes leads to panic attack. The term phobia is often used to refer to a fear of one particular trigger. However, there are three types of phobia recognized by the Psychiatric Association of the world. What are these types of specific phobia? You should know, because, to get success in life- first you know yourself, your physical qualities, your mental qualities, your chemistry- brain chemistry. What is a specific phobia? This is an intense, irrational fear of a specific trigger.

And this specific phobia leads to social phobia or social anxiety. This is a profound fear of public humiliation and being singled out or judged by others in a social situation. The idea of large social gathering is terrifying for someone with social anxiety. It is not the same as shyness and this is what we talk about agoraphobia. This is the fear of situations from which it would be difficult to escape if a person were to experience extreme panic such as being in a lift or being outside of the home.

So it is commonly misunderstood as a fear of open spaces but could also apply to being confined in a small space such as an elevator or being on public transport. People with agoraphobia have an increased risk of panic disorder. They may get this panic attack anywhere. That is why it is very important to know the term agoraphobia. It is not only the public transport and elevator, but any place from where you have experienced in the past, some kind of unpleasant situation.

Specific phobias are known as simple phobias as they can be linked to an identifiable cause that may not frequently occur in the everyday life of an individual, such as seeing a snake. These are therefore not likely to affect day to day living in a significant way. Social anxiety and agoraphobia are known as complex phobias as their triggers are less easily recognized. People with complex phobias can also find it harder to avoid triggers such as leaving the house or being in large crowd. This is called social anxiety and agoraphobia.

It is a mental health condition that causes excessive fear of certain situations. Some people may even avoid leaving their home. See, uncomfortable when you need to travel somewhere one night before you are feeling restless. You are feeling uncomfortable.

You feel to cry as to "why I am going." Homesickness. But when you come back, you feel very good. This is also a kind of agoraphobia or phobia. But then agoraphobia is manageable with treatment, which includes medication, cognitive behavior therapy, and lifestyle changes. Now the earlier you receive a diagnosis treatment, the more likely treatment will work.

So agoraphobia is an anxiety disorder that causes an intense fear of becoming overwhelmed or unable to escape or get help. Because of fear and anxiety, people with agoraphobia often avoid new places and unfamiliar situations. What are the situations? Large open areas or enclosed spaces, crowds, places outside of one's home, public transportation. This is also a pertinent question. How common is agoraphobia? Because we know the term.

What is required to pinpoint the situation? Is it agoraphobia? So how common this kind of phobia is? Researchers don't know the exact cause of agoraphobia, though it's often associated with an existing panic disorder. Panic disorder causes short, intense attacks of fear, for no particular reason. About a third of people who have panic disorder develop agoraphobia. But agoraphobia also can occur alone, sometimes without reason also. That is why you need to consult the doctor and need to know symptoms.

What are the symptoms? Everyone experiences anxiety, sometimes in life, but an anxiety disorder causes excessive worry that affects daily activities. Agoraphobia can make you feel extreme fear and distress, which may cause you to avoid situations. The signs of agoraphobia are similar to a panic attack. And you may experience some symptoms when you are in a situation or a space. As I discussed several times, repeating again, chest pain and heart palpitation- very high, rapid heart rate, trembling, fear of shaky feeling, hyperventilation or trouble breathing, lightheadedness or dizziness, sudden chill, flushing, excessive sweating, upset stomach.

So, in fact, there is no reason that why agoraphobia occurs. It is associated with the existing panic disorder, a kind of disorder that makes a person restless to perform, to think. And if you think you have agoraphobia and the anxiety is interfering with your daily life, you should talk to a primary care physician or a mental health care provider like psychologists and psychiatrists. If you are afraid to visit a medical office in person, you may be able to schedule a telephone or video appointment. And as I said that in maximum institutions, all good institutions, they have a very good team of psychiatrists.

We all know the feeling of being nervous or uncomfortable in a social situation. Maybe you have clammed up when meeting someone new or gotten sweaty palms before making a big presentation. Public speaking or walking into a room full of a strangers is not exactly thrilling for everybody. But most people can get through it. So if you have social anxiety disorder, which is also known as social phobia, the stress of the situation is too much to handle.

You might, for example, avoid all social contact because things that other people consider normal like making small talk and eye contact make you so uncomfortable. All

aspects of your life, not just the social, could start to fall apart. So social anxiety disorder affects about 5.3 million people in the world. The average age is between age 11 to 19, the teenage years.

It is one of the most common mental disorders. So if you have it, there is hope. The tough part is being able to ask for help. So it is very important to know if your social silence has gone beyond shyness to a point where you need to see a doctor. In some people with social anxiety disorder, the fear is limited to one or two particular situations like speaking in public ,or initiating a conversation. Others are very anxious and afraid of any social situation.

Anyone with social anxiety disorder can experience it in different ways, but there are common situations that people tend to have trouble with, talking to strangers- stammering, not getting proper sentences or words; speaking in public; dating- making eye contact; entering rooms; facing interviews; using public restrooms; going to parties- eating in front of other people; going to school or work; starting conversations. So some of these situations might not cause a problem for you, like giving a speech may be easy. But going to a party, a crowd might be a nightmare, or you could be great at one-on-one conversation but not at stepping into a crowded classroom. All socially anxious people have different reason for dreading certain situations, but in general it is an overwhelming fear of being judged or watched by others in social situations, being embarrassed or humiliated, and showing it by blushing, sweating or shaking, accidentally offending someone and also being the center of attention. So, what does it feel like? Again, the experience may be different for everyone.

But if you have social anxiety and you are in a stressful situation, you may feel very self-conscious in social situations. A persistent, intense and chronic fear of being judged by others. Shy and uncomfortable when being watched, giving a presentation, talking in a group. Hesitant to talk to others. The need to avoid eye contactm and this will be followed by the symptoms- rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, blushing, crying, sweating, and out of body sensation.

You may start having symptoms and get anxious immediately before an event, or you might spend weeks worrying about it. Afterwards, you could spend a lot of time and mental energy worrying about how you acted. So, there is no one thing that causes social anxiety disorder. Genetics likely has something to do with it. If you have a family member with social phobia, you are more at risk of having it too.

It could also be linked to having an overactive amygdala- the part of brain that controls your fear response. Social anxiety disorder usually comes on around 13 years of age or

maximum 11 to 19. It can be linked to history of abuse, teasing, bullying. Shy kids are also more likely to become socially anxious adults as are children with overbearing or controlling parents. If you develop a health condition that draws attention to your appearance or voice, that could trigger social anxiety too.

So, social anxiety disorder prevents you from living your life normally. You will avoid situations that most people consider normal. You might even have a hard time understanding how others can handle them so easily. So, when you avoid all or most social situations, it affects your personal relationships. Like low self-esteem, negative thought, depression, sensitivity to criticism, poor social skills that don't improve.

If your social anxiety keeps on from doing things you want or need to do or from making or keeping friends, you may need treatment. So talk about your fears and worries with a doctor or therapist who has experienced treating social anxiety disorder. They will be able to tell if you have normal social anxiety or if you need treatment. With this, I must give you my best wishes to think in a positive manner. We have still more points to discuss about the success of performance and a stage presentation, because it is you who have to dig out this fear, this fright, and this kind of anxiety.

And as I said, that some of the anxieties are very easy, simple, to be handled by you. Of course, there are some anxiety that need to be addressed, but with the help of the doctor. Let us hope for the best with the positive energy that "I can be the best." Seeing you in the next slide with more positive points. Till then, thank you and bye.