



NAVIGATING SOCIAL ANXIETY

Marla W. Deibler, PsyD, ABPP

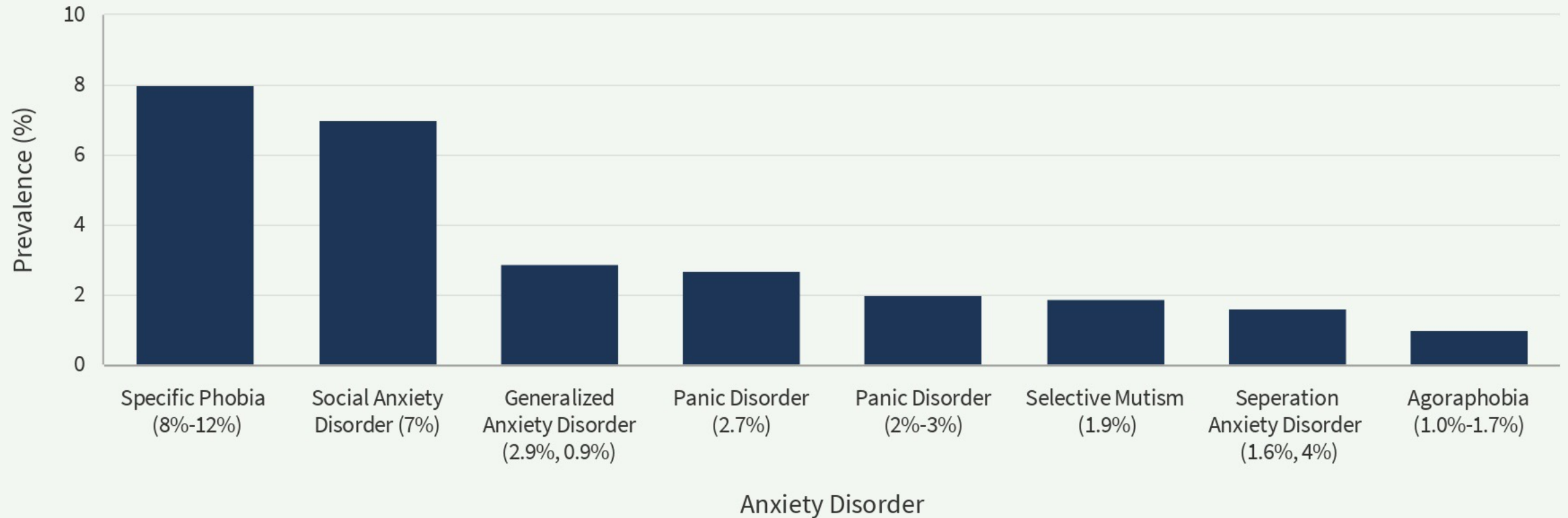
Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Executive Director



AGENDA

- 1 Review the prevalence of social anxiety
- 2 Describe the clinical signs and symptoms of social anxiety and related disorders
- 3 Identify commonly co-occurring difficulties and explore the relationship to Tourette Syndrome
- 4 Demonstrate Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions for reducing social anxiety
- 5 Q & A

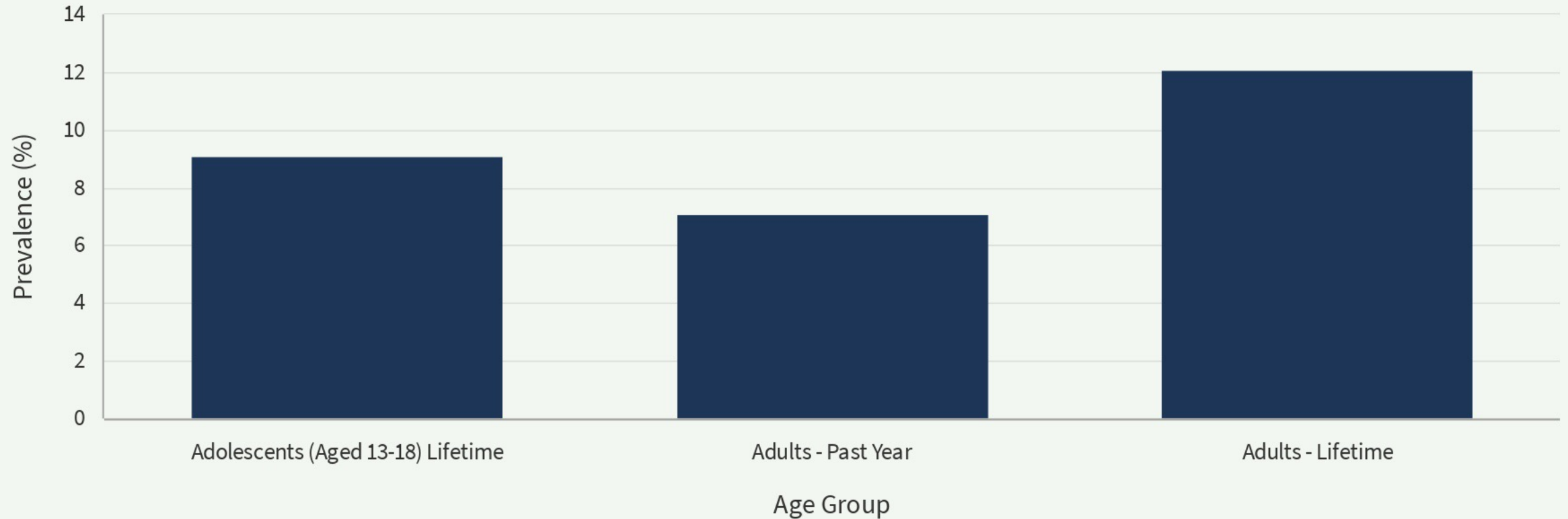
12-MONTH PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY DISORDERS



*Data from DSM5^{TR}, American Psychiatric Association

Social Anxiety Disorder is among the most common anxiety disorders.

PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER



*Data from National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

Social Anxiety Disorder is among the most common anxiety disorders.



WHAT IS SOCIAL ANXIETY?

Social anxiety is a feeling of fear or discomfort in social situations.

Everyone can relate to the experience of social anxiety.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

- Fear of appearing visibly nervous
- Fear of appearing foolish, incompetent, or otherwise being negatively judged by others
- Severe anticipatory anxiety regarding social or performance-related situations
- Avoidance of social interactions, eye contact, and other social contexts
- Use of substances, technology, or other means to escape social discomfort

IS IT "NORMAL" ANXIETY OR SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER?

1

Feeling nervous before a difficult conversation

2

Experiencing anxiety before a presentation, meeting, or a first date

3

Declining to attend an award ceremony at which you will be honored due to fears about publicly accepting the award

4

Feeling uncomfortable at a party when you only know the hosts

5

Spending extra time getting ready for an event, as you want to look your "best"

6

Dreading a work conference, staying in one's hotel room, when possible, and leaving as soon as obligations are done

SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER (DSM5-TR)

- A. Marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situation in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others.
- B. The individual fears that he or she will act in a way or show anxiety symptoms that will be negatively evaluated (i.e., will be humiliating or embarrassing, will lead to rejection, or offend others).
- C. The social situations almost always evoke fear or anxiety.
- D. The social situations are avoided or endured with intense fear or anxiety.
- E. The fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the social situation and to the sociocultural context.
- F. The fear, anxiety, or avoidance is persistent, lasting 6 months or more.
- G. It causes clinically significant distress or impairment.
- H. It cannot be attributed to the effects of a substance or medical condition; or (I.) other mental disorder; or, (J.) if another medical condition, it is unrelated or excessive. *Specify: Performance Only

THE CYCLE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY



SITUATIONAL TRIGGERS

- Public speaking
- Eating in public
- Writing in the presence of others
- Going to parties, play dates, group activities, on dates
- Using public restrooms
- Speaking to authority figures or other individuals
- Performing in the presence of others
- What else?



COMMON MALADAPTIVE THOUGHTS

- Everyone will notice that I'm anxious.
- If I make a mistake, I'll look foolish or incompetent.
- People will think I'm weird.
- People won't actually like me or want to be my friend.
- If I talk to someone, I'm not going to know what to say to continue the conversation.
- I won't be able to handle feeling anxious or uncomfortable.
- What else?

HEIGHTENED ANXIETY

- Heart palpitations
- Sweating
- Shaking, trembling
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Blushing
- Tightness in chest
- Lightheadedness, dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- What else do YOU experience?



MALADAPTIVE COPING

- Avoiding social situations
- Using public restrooms
- Avoid asking for help
- Avoid eye contact
- Avoid participation
- Divert attention to electronic device or other focus
- Text or email rather than communicate face-to-face
- Rely on others to compensate / accommodate
- What else might one do to escape or avoid social discomfort?

CONSEQUENCES OF MALADAPTIVE COPING

- Immediate relief from cognitive, emotional, and physiological distress
- The absence of a corrective learning experience
- Unintentional reinforcement of cognitive distortions
- Ruminative and emotional sequelae
- Missed opportunities to develop social skills
- Missed opportunities to get needs met
- Missed opportunities to foster meaningful relationships
- What else might be a consequence of this behavior pattern?

CO-OCCURRING & COMPLICATING DISORDERS

- Selective Mutism
- Communication Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Other Anxiety Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Tic Disorders and Tourette's Disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

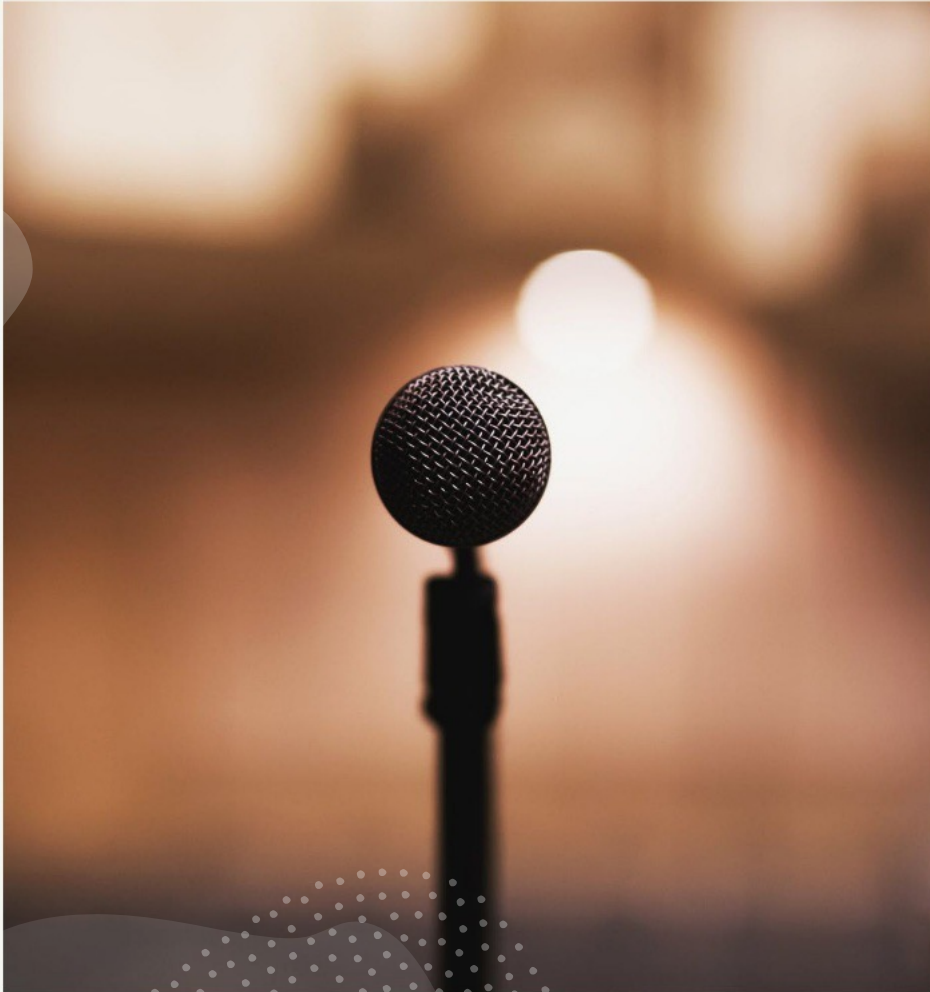
**WHAT ARE WAYS IN WHICH A CO-OCCURRING
DIFFICULTY IMPACTS YOUR SOCIAL FUNCTIONING?**



TREATMENT OF SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

- Psychoeducation
- Attention Training
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Exposure Experiments
- Reducing or Eliminating Safety Behaviors & Accommodations

WHY IS CBT IS EFFECTIVE?



- Exposure experiments facilitate new learning in which
 - Feared outcomes are disconfirmed
 - Distress tolerance is built
- Inhibitory learning is facilitated with repetition

In other words, the more you do the things that cause you distress, the easier it becomes to do those things

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING: EXAMPLE

- Identify the unhelpful thought and challenge it
 - Is this thought realistic?
 - How might this thought be unrealistic, distorted, or unhelpful?
 - Is what you fear possible or probable?
 - How likely is it that your feared outcome will happen?
 - What is the worst that could happen?
 - In the event that things don't go well, could you survive that?
 - What is the best that could happen?
 - What might you have to experience in order to achieve that "best" outcome?
 - Would you be willing to experience that?
 - How might you speak to yourself compassionately when this thought arises?
 - How might you think about this thought differently, in a way that is more helpful, more accurate, or more reasonable?
 - If I am willing to see what happens, how can I test what may happen?

EXPOSURE EXPERIMENTS: EXAMPLES

- Exposure experiments:

- Hierarchical or variable
- Specific to the person's feared social situation
- Emphasize repetition and expectancy violation
- Involve multiple fear cures (cognitive, emotional, physiological)
- Involve affect labeling
- Accompanied by removal safety signals/behaviors/accommodations

- Examples of experiments:

- Fear of not knowing what to say to a stranger:
asking for directions, asking where to find an item in a store, ordering of a menu at a restaurant, making a phone call to ask store hours
- Fear of appearing foolish:
telling a "dad joke" to others, playing a game of charades, singing karaoke, asking a barista at Starbucks if they sell tacos, going to a public place with messy hair or makeup

A WORD ABOUT SAFETY BEHAVIORS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

for those support persons in the life of an individual struggling with Social Anxiety Disorder

- Anxiety is provocative and can lure others into "helping"
 - This may include rituals of some kind, reassurance, advice, distraction, avoidance, etc.
 - Short-term benefit, but long-term cost
- It's understandable that others "take the bait" and accommodate
 - These behaviors are carried out to avoid distress/upset and maintain family functioning
- Eliminating these behaviors are essential to overcoming social anxiety disorder and optimizing daily functioning
- Effective support of a friend/family member best involves:
 - Empathy and confidence
 - "I know it's hard for you to ask your teacher for help, but I know you can do it and manage the anxiety you feel."



NAVIGATING SOCIAL ANXIETY

Marla W. Deibler, PsyD, ABPP

Tel: 856-220-9672

Website: thecenterforemotionalhealth.com

Twitter: [@DoctorDeibler](https://twitter.com/DoctorDeibler)

YouTube: youtube.com/user/DrDeibler

Facebook: facebook.com/thecenterforemotionalhealth

Instagram: instagram.com/ceh_philadelphia/