



# The Assessment of and Treatment for Social Anxiety Disorder in Children

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May 24, 2022

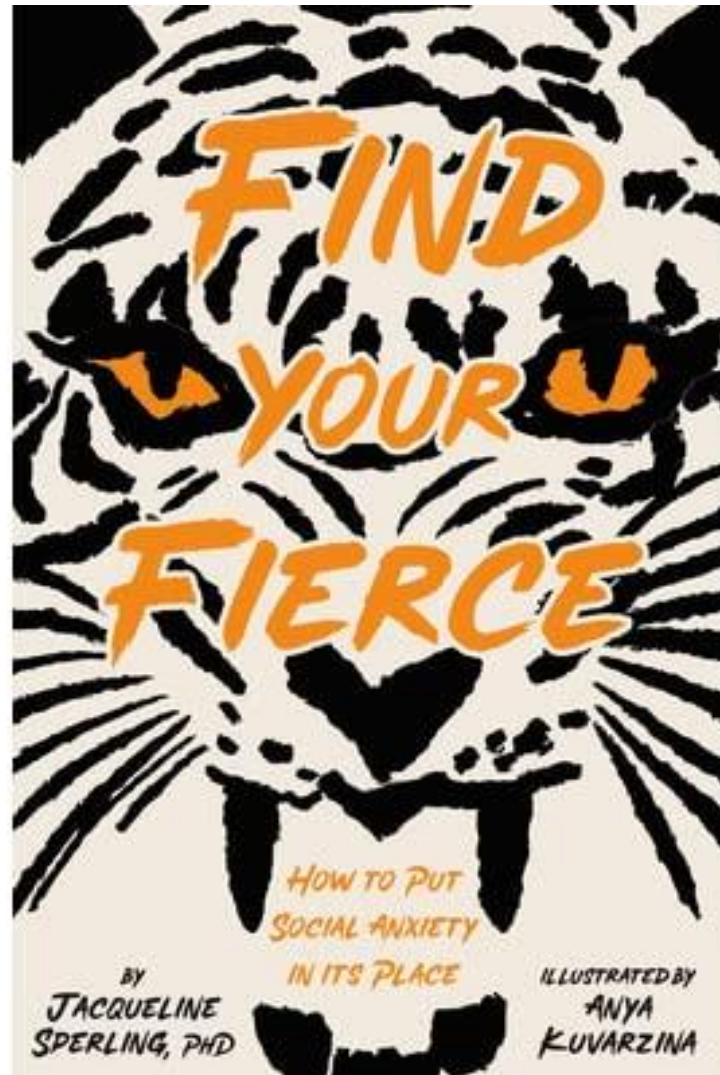


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# Disclosures



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# Agenda



1. Social anxiety disorder overview
2. Predisposing factors for social anxiety
3. Manifestations of social anxiety
4. Treatment for social anxiety
5. The role of parents
6. Questions/Discussion
7. Resources

# Social Anxiety Disorder

- Fear of being judged or embarrassed (must be at least with peers for children)
- Interferes with daily functioning
  - May be mistakenly diagnosed as ODD
- Persists for at least six months
- Performance sub-type
- Assess using the Screen for Child



[www.devinrose.heroicvirtuecreations.com](http://www.devinrose.heroicvirtuecreations.com)

## Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED):

- <https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-06/SCARED-form-Parent-and-Child-version.pdf>

# Social Anxiety Disorder

- Second most common anxiety disorder (adaa.org, 2018)
- Average age of onset: 13 (adaa.org, 2018)
- Prevalence: 3.6% (Costello et al., 2011)
  - Often has a chronic, unremitting course if untreated (Beidel et al., 1996)



# Predisposing Factors



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- 3x's more likely to develop social anxiety disorder if have a parent with the disorder (Ollendick & Hirshfeld-Becker, 2000)



# Predisposing Factors

- Behavioral inhibition (BI) (Hirshfeld-Becker et al., 2007)
  - Fearfulness or reticence of new situations or people (not just social experiences)
  - Followed children for five years (baseline 21 months-6 years)



# Predisposing Factors



- Behavioral inhibition (BI) (Hirshfeld-Becker et al., 2007)
  - Rate of lifetime social anxiety
    - 28% for BI vs. 14% for non-BI
  - New onset of social anxiety disorder
    - 22.2% for BI vs. 8% for non-BI
  - Did not predict other anxiety disorders



<https://www.livescience.com/55970-how-to-help-shy-kids-without-harming-them.html>



# Predisposing Factors

- **Insecure attachment** (Ollendick & Benoit, 2012)
  - Expect others to be unreliable, unavailable, untrustworthy, and uncommunicative based on experiences with a caregiver.
  - Engage in maladaptive interpersonal behaviors that push people away
    - Avoid
    - Overly seek contact and reassurance



# Predisposing Factors

- Parenting Style x Child BI (Williams et al., 2009)
  - Permissive + BI → increases in internalizing sx
  - Authoritative + BI → decreases in internalizing sx
  - Overly controlling, critical, or protective + BI → continued BI and emergence of social anxiety sx (Rubin et al., 2002)



Baumrind's Parenting Styles

<https://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/>

# Predisposing Factors

- Information biases x parenting (Ollendick & Benoit, 2012)
  - Parents with anxiety tend to perceive ambiguous situations as more threatening for both themselves and their children → more likely to avoid them
  - Parents model fearful reactions
    - Mothers who were more anxious around strangers and provided less encouragement to speak had children who were more likely to show fearful responses to and avoidance of strangers (Murray et al., 2008)



# Manifestations Examples

- Difficulty with
  - Eating in front of others
  - Using public restrooms
  - Ordering at restaurants
  - Participating in class
  - Participating in extracurricular activities
  - Speaking in front of groups
  - Attending large gatherings, such as birthday parties
  - Exercising in front of others
  - Showing any signs of physiological symptoms (e.g., blushing or sweating)



<https://www.scarymommy.com/kid-barely-eats-lunch-at-school/>

# Treatment

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) with exposure and response prevention (ERP) is “well established” (Higa-McMillan et al, 2016)
  - ERP: gradually approach feared situations without using usual avoidance/safety behaviors
- Involving parents in treatment can reduce BI (Hirshfeld-Becker et al., 2010)



# Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS)

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### Feelings Thermometer

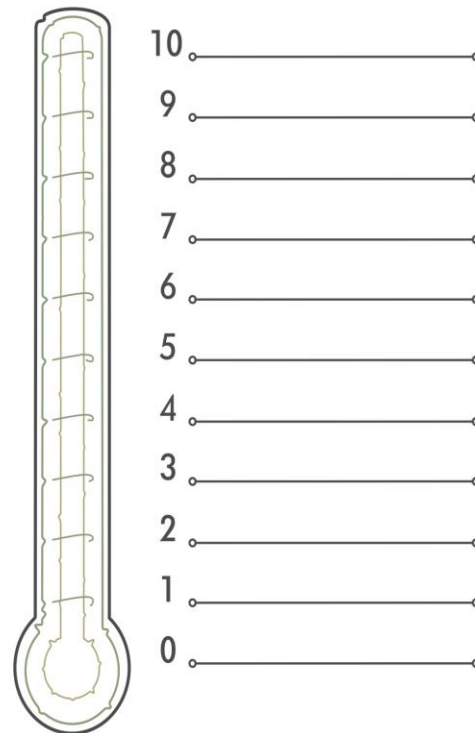


Illustration by Nicholas Taylor, Ph.D. from the MAMP Treatment Manual .

# ERP Models

- Exposure Models
  - Habituation model
  - Inhibitory learning model

# Habituation Model

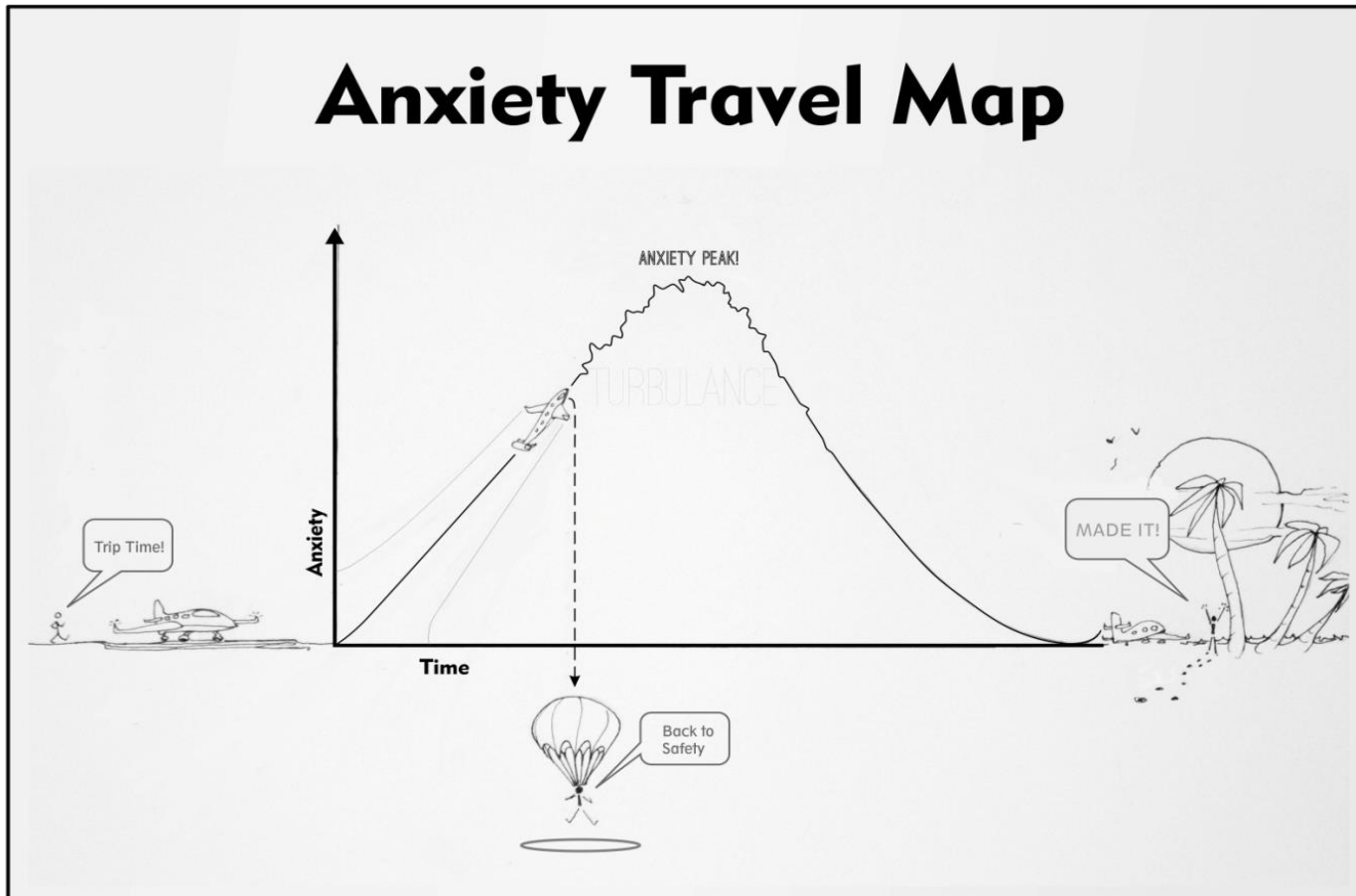


Illustration by Nicholas Taylor, Ph.D.  
from the MAMP Treatment Manual .



# Inhibitory Learning Model

- Expectancy violation
- Learn can tolerate the outcome



<https://www.seton.com/do-not-enter-traffic-signs-sp319.html>



<http://www.safetysign.com/road-construction-signs>

# Types of Exposures

## In Vivo



<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/skills-kids-need-going-into-sixth-grade>

## Imaginal



## Interoceptive

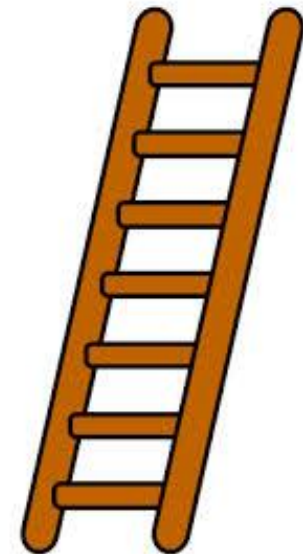


<https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles?name=teaching-through-thought-bubbles-speech-bubbles>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jumping\\_jack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jumping_jack)

# Fear and Avoidance Hierarchy (FAH)

- Ladder analogy
- Brainstorm anxiety-provoking situations
- Write exposures on ladder rungs (each rung is a SUDS level)
- Overlearning



# ERP Example

- Sara Bareillis’ “[Brave](#)” video

# The Role of Parents



- Treatment components for caregivers
  - Behavioral parent training (BPT)
  - Fostering independence
  - Reducing accommodation
  - Self-Care
  - Validation

- Attention principle
- Garden analogy



# Foster Independence

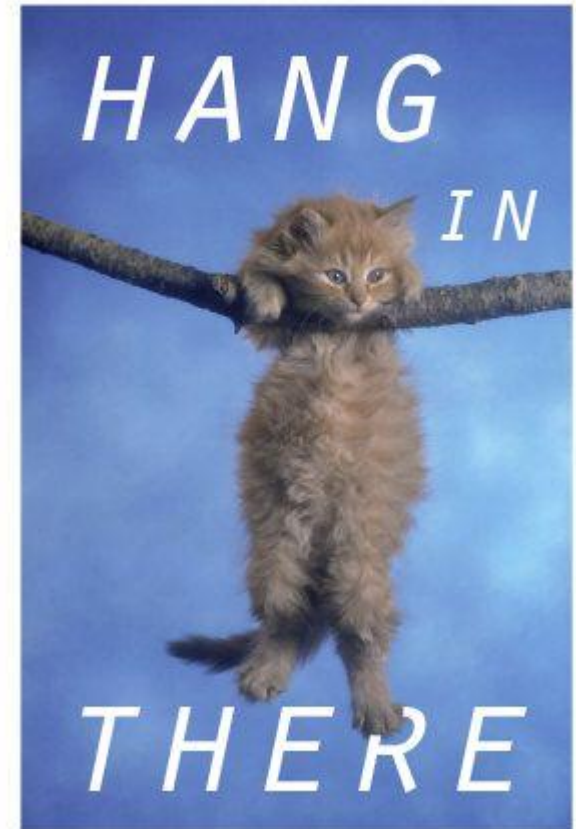
- ["Ray" video clip](#)
- Model and encourage bravery
- Reduce accommodation
  - Case example: a request for a letter to excuse the child from an activity



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxE1b21NcPg>

# Reminders for Parents

- This treatment goes against parental instincts
- When you feel like you're being the worst parent, you're likely being the best parent
- It will get worse before it gets better



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/438608451188796757/>



# Questions?/Discussion



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# Resources

- Online Resources for Professionals and the General Community
  - <https://adaa.org/>
  - <https://www.spacetreatment.net/>
- Local Treatment Programs
  - The McLean Anxiety Mastery Program  
(<https://www.mcleanhospital.org/treatment/mamp>)
  - The Center for Child Therapy (formerly known as The Center for Effective Child Therapy):  
<https://www.bakercenter.org/cet>

- Books

- *You and Your Anxious Child: Free Your Child from Fears and Worries and Create a Joyful Life* by Anne Marie Albano, Ph.D. and Leslie Pepper
- *Helping Your Anxious Child: A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents* by Ronald Rapee, Ph.D.
- *Find Your Fierce: How to Put Social Anxiety in Its Place* by Jacqueline Sperling, Ph.D.