

Phobia

A type of anxiety disorder, usually defined as a persistent fear of an object or situation in which the sufferer commits to great lengths in avoiding, typically disproportional to the actual danger posed, often being recognized as irrational. In the event the phobia cannot be avoided entirely, the sufferer will endure the situation or object with marked distress and significant interference in social or occupational activities.

Causes

Researchers are uncertain exactly what causes phobias. However, it is commonly believed that certain factors may increase the likelihood that a phobia will develop. These factors include:

- **Genetics:** Research has shown that certain phobias may run in families. For example, twins who are raised separately, in different locations, may develop the same phobias. However, many people with phobias have no relatives with the condition.
- **Cultural Factors:** Some phobias occur only in certain cultural groups. An example is taijin kyofusho, a social phobia that appears almost exclusively in Japan. This is a fear of offending or harming others in social situations. It is markedly different from a traditional social phobia, in which the sufferer is afraid of being personally embarrassed or humiliated. It is therefore possible that culture plays some role in phobia development.
- **Life Experience:** Many phobias are based in real-life events that may or may not be consciously remembered. A phobia of dogs, for example, may stem from being attacked as a small child. A social phobia may develop from teenage awkwardness or childhood bullying.

Signs and Symptoms

- Nervous
- Sweaty
- Breathe Heavily
- Palpitating
- Dizziness or faintness
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Sense of unreality

Treatment

- *Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors*
- *Tricyclic Antidepressants*
- *Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors*
- *Beta-blockers*
- *Benzodiazepines*
- *Psychotherapy*

Phobia

Therapeutic Conversation

Nurse: How are you today, Michi? You appear tense. I noticed you've got eye bags and dark circles in your eyes.

Michi: I can't sleep. I stayed awake all night.

Nurse: I'll sit with you for a while. Tell me, what's bothering you?

Michi: I've got nausea and I could hardly breathe. I was really scared.

Nurse: Really? What are you scared about?

Michi: Yes, I was really scared being alone in a room. I don't like seclusion. I always feel like these especially in places like small rooms, locked rooms, cars, trains, tunnels, cellars, elevators. It's energy draining to always avoid this places you know.

Nurse: Go ahead, I'm listening.

Michi: I am totally ill at ease about it. Everytime, I felt like I will be suffocated to death and then seemed like my world is rotating so rapidly. Last night was a bit terrible though because I was bathed with sweat. If you can see my pillow, it's really very wet.

Nurse: I understand. Do you always have companion when you sleep?

Michi: Yes. My sister is my roommate. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to come home last night because she had an emergency appointment in the hospital.

Nurse: So in cases like that, what do you think are the needful things for you to do to alleviate the uneasy feeling?

Michi: Well, I haven't figured it out yet. But I believe I must overcome. I need to settle with a different mind-set. I can't forever be like this.

Nurse: I love your spirit. From what you say, I suspect you are feeling relieved. And I guess you need to recover your strength since you weren't well-rested.

Michi: Yes, I think that's the best thing that I have to do this time. Thank you.

Nurse: Welcome.