


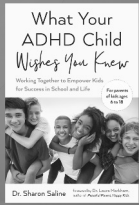
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BUILDING SOCIAL RESILIENCE: STRATEGIES FOR LIVING WITH ADHD IN A SOCIALLY COMPLEX WORLD

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1

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DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

- “I don’t like most of the kids at school. . .Elijah, age 13
- No one’s ever told me that they want to hang out. . .” Dustin, age 16
- The other kids don’t let me play games . . .” Camilla, age 10
- “When someone gives me feedback. . .” Julia, age 14
- “The only friends I have are outside of the boxers too. . .Bree, age 11

2

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SOCIAL RESILIENCE IS:

- Taking skills from successful past events and applying them to new situations
- Seeing yourself as capable of making and keeping friends, colleagues & partners
- Believing that making mistakes doesn't lessen your value as a human being
- Having confidence that you will recover and learn from disappointments




Living with a growth mindset, compassionate self-acceptance and community support nurture social resilience 

3


WHAT IS ANXIETY?

1. Mind and body responses
2. Disproportionate reactions
3. False alarms
4. All or nothing thinking



➔ **ADHD and Anxiety:**

- 34% (9% general population of kids 3-17)
- 50% in adults (general population)

➔ **Complications from untreated anxiety can lead to depression, suicidality, eating disorders and substance abuse.** 

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TRAITS OF ANXIETY

- Scanning for threats
- Catastrophizing
- 'What if' thoughts and worries
- Unreliable emotional messages
- Interpreting predictions as facts
- Reduced self-confidence
- Increased overwhelm



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POLL # 1:

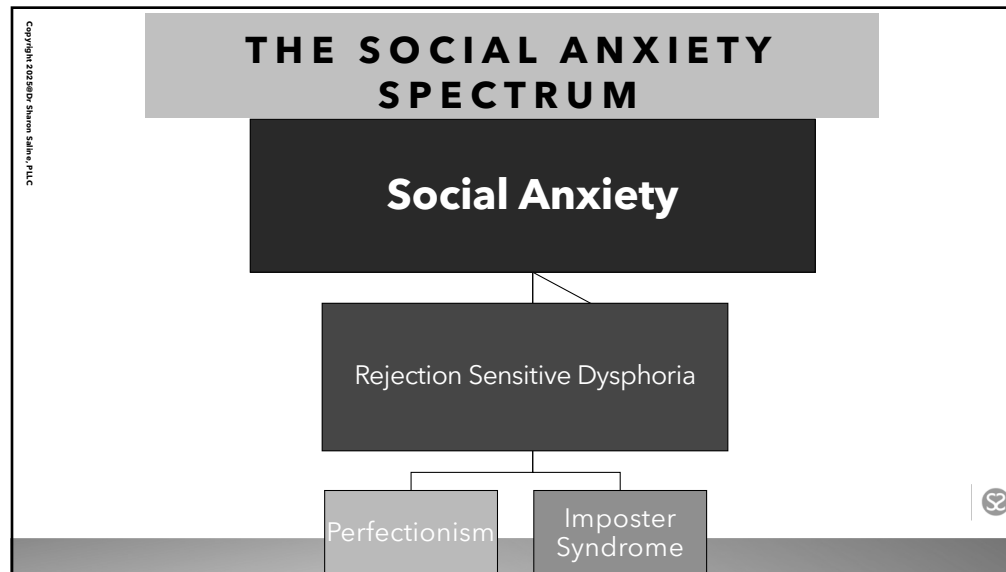
WHAT ARE THE TWO BIGGEST ISSUES YOUR CHILD OR TEEN IS CURRENTLY STRUGGLING WITH?

1. Trouble making friends
2. Trouble keeping friends
3. Loneliness
4. Increased agitation or anxiety
5. Depression or lack of energy
6. Isolation
7. Over-use of social media, gaming or other digital activities



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SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

Key Traits:

- ❖ Fear of rejection or social humiliation based on a core belief of deficiency
- ❖ Noticeable disconnect between public appearance and negative views of self
- ❖ Discomfort speaking in public to people outside of your immediate family
- ❖ Having trouble making or keeping friends.
- ❖ Avoiding experiences or places where social interaction occur



➤ **Higher rates among neurodivergent children and adults (33%) than in general population (10% in youth and 12% adults)**

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COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Emotional
- Physiological



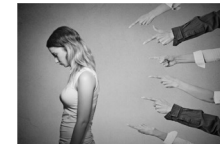
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REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA (RSD)

Key Traits:

- Intense feelings based on a *belief* that you've let other people down or embarrassed yourself
- Difficulty letting go of past hurts and/or rejections
- Heightened emotional sensitivity
- Intense mood shifts
- Shame related to any missteps or mistakes





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PERFECTIONISM AND IMPOSTER SYNDROME



- All or nothing thinking
- Fear of disappointing self or others
- Sensitivity to criticism
- Desire to control outcomes to avoid rejection or judgment
- Reject praise and acknowledge success as luck
- Set unrealistic or impossible standards of performance that result in procrastination

11

POLL # 2: WHAT IS THE PRIMARY CORE BELIEF FOR YOUR CHILD OR TEEN RELATED TO SOCIAL ANXIETY?

1. I will embarrass myself.
2. I will make a bad first impression.
3. People won't like me right away.
4. I am not very smart.
5. I will say or do something wrong.
6. I will be rejected no matter what.

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE SOCIAL ANXIETY SPECTRUM

- ❖ Connections and contact
- ❖ Lurking: reading others' content more often than posting themselves
- ❖ Fear of missing out fuels anxiety
- ❖ Public stage for conflict and support
- ❖ Measure of popularity
- ❖ Misdiagnosis of ADHD and other mental health issues



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BULLYING FOSTERS SOCIAL ANXIETY



- Bullying is the intent to hurt or intimidate someone whom the aggressor perceives as weak, vulnerable and unable to defend themselves
- 24/7 digital connectivity can also cause someone to feel like there is no safe space for them
- Neurodivergent kids can be targets or aggressors and these are fluid roles



14

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CYBERBULLYING

- Cyberbullying can occur faster and more easily bc it can take only one photograph instead of the repeated incidents of bullying in the past.
- Only 1/3 cyberbullying victims reported experiences to adults because of fear of adult over-reaction or loss of technology.

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THE 5 C'S SOLUTION TO MANAGING ANXIETY

- Self-Control: Interrupt anxious thinking and use breathing techniques.
- Compassion: Meet people where they are, consider their perspective and nurture self-acceptance.
- Collaborate: Work together on creating solutions to reduce worry and brainstorm new phrases for positive self-talk.
- Consistency: Encourage regular daily routines and aim for steadiness.
- Celebration: Acknowledge courageous behavior and teach self-validation.

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16

COGNITIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR SOCIAL ANXIETY

Shift your thinking:

- Identify limiting core beliefs and negative self-talk.
- Find evidence that contradicts or supports those beliefs.
- Name safety-seeking behaviors and their function
- Recall a situation when they were uncomfortable and did something anyway
- Set a small goal that challenges their fear and is doable.
- Stop comparing your insides to other people's outsides.



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STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA

Manage big feelings by slowing things down

- Follow the **STAR** approach (**Stop, Think, Act, Recover**)
- Use **QTIP**-Quit Taking It Personally
- Plan ahead and practice positive self-talk phrases to quiet the inner critic
- Reinforce strengths and pay attention to what works
- Consider the source





18

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STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO BULLYING

What you can do:

- Differentiate between teasing and taunting
- Address the issue of bystanders
- Stay alert for cyberbullying
- Talk with teachers
- Create a safety plan


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TEACH SOCIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Take a bite out of an APPLE:

- **A=** Ask relevant questions
- **P=** Physical proximity and volume
- **P=** Participate with curiosity
- **L=** Listen and lay off self-criticism
- **E=** Enjoy connecting



➤ **Practice makes progress!**



20

STEPS FOR FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

- 1. Greet someone with a smile or wave
- 2. Ask open questions—How? What? Where? When?
- 3. Listen and reflect back what you hear
- 4. Pause and observe when you enter a room before speaking
- 5. Start small with low intensity activities—getting coffee or taking a walk
- 6. Remember everybody has insecurities whether they show them or not.

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SHAME AND BLAME WORSEN SOCIAL ANXIETY

- Persistent disappointment and often cruel judgment about oneself can be hidden or obvious.
- Culture of comparison contributes to feeling less than.

Interventions:

1. Normalize mistakes as part of natural living
2. Create alternative phrases to negative self-talk: Inner Champion vs Inner Ogre
3. Foster accountability without blame
4. Improve ability to notice what is going well



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REDUCE SOCIAL ANXIETY BY BUILDING RESILIENCE

Resilience is the antidote to anxiety and shame

1. Use a growth-oriented mindset to counter negative mentalities
2. Normalize being challenged or afraid
3. Discuss fears of failure
4. Two steps forward and one step back is still forward movement
5. YES starts the process of change; YET keeps it going



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NURTURE SOCIAL RESILIENCE BY:

1. **Wondering** about what's going to happen instead of worrying about it.
2. Focusing on what you **can** change.
3. Seeing mistakes as **learning opportunities**.
4. Acknowledging vulnerabilities as **areas for improvement**, not personal failures.
5. Identifying and appreciating your **strengths**.





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KEY TAKEAWAYS ABOUT SOCIAL ANXIETY AND RESILIENCE

1. Change the relationship to worry
2. Identify limiting core beliefs and plan positive self-talk phrases
3. Recall a situation when you were uncomfortable and did something anyway
4. Move the focus away from comparisons
5. Use QTIP
6. Practice social skills
7. Shift from worry to wonder.

25


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26