



**Motivational
Interviewing
and Social
Anxiety**

Margo Bristow, MA, LPC,
CADC, PCCG

The case of the introverted artist



- 23 years of age
- Never fit in at school or university
- Used marijuana as a way to address social isolation

Group settings



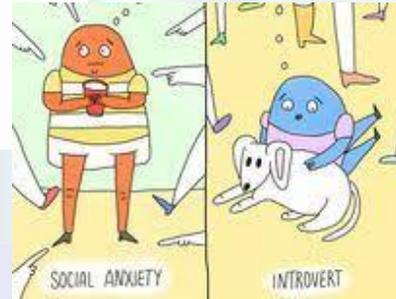
What we know

- Clients with Social Anxiety are generally non adherent to change and treatment recommendations. Profoundly ambivalent.
- Social Anxiety can impact introverted and extroverted alike.
- It often manifests as discomfort, avoidance, loneliness, and insecurity.
- Many sufferers have panic or anxiety attacks that will increase without self modulation.
- Many do not know what they are experiencing is Social Anxiety.
- Social Media helps with the symptoms but also can increase the discomfort.

Complex Change

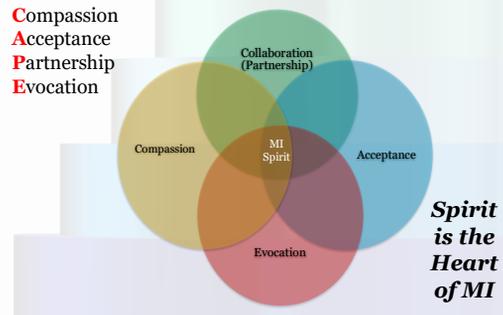
	⊖	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	<i>Confusion</i>
Vision		⊖	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	<i>Anxiety</i>
Vision	Skills		⊖	Resources	Action Plan	=	<i>Gradual Change</i>
Vision	Skills	Incentives		⊖	Action Plan	=	<i>Frustration</i>
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources		⊖	=	<i>False Starts</i>
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan		=	Change

Adapted from Leadership and Strength Coaches for Coaches for Change Coaches Series, © San Juan County, 2014. © 2016. Colorado Collaborative Partnership, School of Social Work, Colorado State University, 970-491-4076. www.coloradocollege.com



Some recent correlations

- Increased isolation due to Social Media and interactions
- Limited creative play and interaction
- Instant feedback through online portals



The case of the young teenager who would do anything to fit in



- How I dress is different
- I freeze when I speak
- They will not accept who I am
- I do not know who I am without them....

Some of the research..

- "...restriction of social technology for 5 days can influence anxiety". Social technology restriction alters state-anxiety but not autonomic activity in humans.
- "Social anxiety, phobia, and feelings of loneliness, can make individuals vulnerable to excessive use of cyber technology devices, including smartphones. Individuals with psychosocial problems such as social phobia and loneliness would prefer other methods of communication, particularly via mobile technological devices, rather than face-to-face communication because this type of communication can cause less anxiety." (Darcin. A.E. et al.)



Some more research

- Excessive mobile phone usage increases and users are more likely to experience health problems (e.g. headaches, fatigue, impaired concentration, insomnia, and hearing problems). Some dimensions of personality such as low self-esteem, extraversion, higher approval motivation, and higher self-monitoring were more frequently seen in people who suffer from mobile phone addiction (Bianchi and Phillips 2005).
- **People with social anxiety may prefer texting, while people with feelings of loneliness prefer other activities with their smartphones rather than texting (Internet surfing, games, etc.)** (Reid and Reid 2007; Takao, Taka-hashii, and Kitamura 2009).



More research information

- In individuals with increased social anxiety symptoms, the risk of *addiction to a smartphone increased* because social anxiety causes the avoidance of real-time relationships. Furthermore, virtual socialization can alleviate the fear or concern of demonstrating physical signs of physiological arousal symptoms, which are core symptoms of social anxiety. *Communication via smartphone provides the opportunity to feel free and to behave without the perception of pressure in people with social anxiety*. Pierce also reported that there is a positive relationship between 'feeling uncomfortable talking with others face-to-face' and 'talking with others online' and 'talking via text messaging' (2009).

Social Anxiety and Teaching the basics

- MI as a tool of social adaptation
 - Teaching reflective listening and open-ended questioning
 - Body language and placement
 - Mindfulness
 - Preparation for other techniques – CBT, FFT, EFT
- Role play and application of active listening skills
- Removal of social media in face to face interactions
- Social media as an enhancement strategy when removed from face to face interaction

What works (or has a better chance of working)

- Utilizing MI as a means to increase motivation and resolving ambivalence about change. This is the precursor of CBT and its use in helping clients achieve their desired change (Westra, 2012)
- Making sure challenging and confrontation are not present in the partnership
- Explore what the client's hesitation is regarding social interactions
- Utilize visualization and role play and create enactments within the session
- Narrowing down the focus of the issue. Minimalization and making the encounters less traumatizing. *Chunkets*.

What works...

- Look at the future for worst case scenarios and best case scenarios.
- When client is ready have the client “experiment” with close peers to “test” the reactions
- Psychoeducation, planning for change, utilizing client’s vocabulary, reflective listening with direction.
- Elicit, Provide, Elicit
- Empathy, empathy, empathy
- Engagement is a *priority*, they have been wounded in most relationships and have an increased sensitivity to moving too fast or engaging in quick change.
*Above all else **pace** is important. Client will respond best when they are partnering.*

References

- Bianchi, A., and J. G. Phillips. 2005. “Psychological Predictors of Problem Mobile Phone Use.” *CyberPsychology and Behaviour* 8 (1): 39–51. doi:10.1089/cpb.2005.8.39.
- Darchi, A. E., Kose, S., Noyan, C.O., Nurmedov, S., Yilmaz, O., and Dilbaz, N., Smartphone addiction and its relationship with social anxiety and loneliness, *Behavior and Information Technology*, 2016 V35, No. 7 520-525. Taylor and Francis
- Pierce, T. 2009. “Social Anxiety and Technology: Face-to-Face Communication Versus Technological Communication among Teens.” *Computers in Human Behavior* 25: 1367– 1372. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2009.06.002
- Reid, D. J., and F. J. M. Reid. 2002. “Text or Talk? Social Anxiety, Loneliness, and Divergent Preferences for Cell Phone Use.” *CyberPsychology and Behaviour* 10 (3): 424–435. doi:10.1089/cpb.2006.9936
- Takao, M., S. Takahashi, and M. Kitamura. 2009. “Addictive Personality and Problematic Mobile Phone use.” *CyberPsychology and Behaviour* 12 (5): 501–507. doi:10.1089/cpb.2009.0022.
- Westra, H.A. (2012) *Motivational Interviewing in the treatment of anxiety*. New York: Guilford Press

Contact Information

Margo Bristow, MA
1142 Chicago Avenue, 2W
Oak Park, Illinois, U.S.A. 60302

+1 847-791-1651
mb@margobristow.com