The *Essential* Handbook of Social Anxiety for Clinicians

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Contents

About the Editors vii
List of Contributors ix
Preface xv

Chapter 1 Constructs of Social Anxiety
W. Ray Crozier and Lynn E. Alden 1

SECTION ONE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction The Development of Social Anxiety
W. Ray Crozier and Lynn E. Alden 27

Chapter 2 Biological and Environmental Contributions to Childhood Shyness: A Diathesis–Stress Model
Louis A. Schmidt, Cindy P. Polak, and Andrea L. Spooner 33

Chapter 3 Behavioral Inhibition: Physiological Correlates
Peter J. Marshall and Joan Stevenson-Hinde 57

Chapter 4 Origins of the Self-Conscious Child
Michael Lewis 81

Chapter 5 Behavioral Inhibition, Social Withdrawal, and Parenting
**SECTION TWO**  **CLINICAL PERSPECTIVES AND INTERVENTIONS**

Introduction  
Social Anxiety as a Clinical Condition  
*Lynn E. Alden and W. Ray Crozier*  
123

Chapter 6  
Social Phobia in Children and Adolescents: Nature and Assessment  
*Ronald M. Rapee and Lynne Sweeney*  
133

Chapter 7  
Social Anxiety in Children and Adolescents: Psychological Treatments  
*Lynne Sweeney and Ronald M. Rapee*  
153

Chapter 8  
Interpersonal Perspectives on Social Phobia  
*Lynn E. Alden*  
167

Chapter 9  
A Cognitive Perspective on Social Phobia  
*David M. Clark*  
193

Chapter 10  
Social Anxiety, Social Phobia, and Avoidant Personality  
*Thomas A. Widiger*  
219

Chapter 11  
Social Anxiety and Depression  
*Rick E. Ingram, Viveka Ramel, Denise Chavira, and Christine Scher*  
241

Chapter 12  
Cognitive-Behavioral Group Treatment for Social Phobia  
*Meredith E. Coles, Trevor A. Hart, and Richard G. Heimberg*  
265

Chapter 13  
Psychopharmacological Treatments: An Overview  
*Sean D. Hood and David J. Nutt*  
287

Author Index  
321

Subject Index  
329
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Preface

The Essential Handbook of Social Anxiety for Clinicians comprises a set of chapters written by distinguished researchers to give an account of what each regards as important in his or her specialist area. It aims to provide an account of the “state of the art” in the field of social anxiety. There is growing recognition among psychologists that problems of extreme shyness and social phobia are prevalent in the population, and recent years have seen a surge of research into these issues. The structure of the volume recognizes that social anxiety is a broad field encompassing the study of child development, the physiology of anxiety, the psychology of shyness and interpersonal relationships, and clinical approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of social phobia. Chapters provide critical, yet accessible reviews of what they take to be the key issues and practices in their fields. They also include novel ideas and original syntheses of research where these promise to be seminal in the field.

The volume is organized into two sections, concentrating respectively on the origins and development of social anxiety, and clinical interventions designed to reduce anxiety and enhance social functioning. The volume comprises a selection of revised chapters from the set of 23 chapters that formed the International Handbook of Social Anxiety, published by John Wiley & Sons in 2001. The selection has been made, within the constraints of overall word limits for this paperback edition, with the aim of providing a comprehensive review of research into social anxiety and the clinical condition of social phobia, examining its development, assessment, and treatment. It provides clinicians and others interested in clinical dimensions of social anxiety with an accessible, valuable source of material on theory, research and practice in the assessment and treatment of social phobia.

Excellent chapters had to be omitted from this volume and the Handbook is strongly recommended to readers who would wish to consult chapters on the development of shyness in early childhood and in the school years, the social psychology of shyness, embarrassment, and interpersonal relationships, and the Stanford program for helping individuals overcome their shyness.
We are grateful to Mike Coombs at Wiley for his advice at every stage in the development of the Handbook and to Jonathan Cheek for his help in the planning stages. We are grateful to Lesley Valerio, Gillian Leslie and their colleagues at the publishers for their help in the preparation of this revised volume. Ray Crozier thanks Sandra, John, and Beth Crozier for their support throughout the project and the Research Committee and School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University for granting a period of study leave to work on the book. Lynn Alden thanks Raymond and Sarah Andersen for their support throughout this project; a grant from the SSHRC facilitated Lynn Alden’s work on the volume. We are grateful to John Crozier for help with the author index.

The diagnostic criteria for Avoidant Personality Disorder that are included in Chapter 10, Table 10.1, are reprinted with permission from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition. Copyright 1994 American Psychiatric Association.

This introductory chapter has three aims. First, it draws attention to the high prevalence rates of social anxiety in the general population and as a clinical condition. Second, it considers two frameworks in which explanations of prevalence can be located. Finally, it considers definitions of social anxiety. Questions of definition are always central to scientific investigation, and they are particularly important in a volume such as this, which draws together research carried out in different branches of a discipline, including developmental psychology, psychiatry and clinical psychology. Our goal of facilitating communication among these branches requires a shared vocabulary.
THE PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY

As we write the introduction to this volume in the early years of a new millennium it is difficult to resist the temptation to reflect on the dramatic changes that have taken place in the human condition since the beginning of the previous millennium or even, indeed, the previous century. Without glossing over the poverty and hardship that still blight life in many countries, it is a truism that the world has been transformed since the year 1000. Advances in technology, in economic and financial systems, and in communications, education, sanitation, and awareness of the conditions that foster good health have, among other changes, brought about marked improvements in health, life expectancy, and the quality of life. Even in the past one hundred years there have been dramatic developments that impact on people’s prosperity and well being. While many people in wealthy regions like North America or Western Europe still live in poverty, few experience the squalor and absolute deprivation that characterized life in the slums of the large cities at the end of the nineteenth century—for example, the London documented by Henry Mayhew, Charles Dickens, and others (Porter, 1996).

Although the general health of modern societies has improved alongside their growing prosperity (and indices of these are highly correlated) the incidence of problems of mental health is high. This is so despite considerable changes over the past century in society’s attitudes to mental illness and an enormous amount of speculation, theory, and clinical research dedicated to identifying and classifying psychological problems, understanding their causes, and developing methods of treatment. In particular, there are high levels of anxiety about social interactions and interpersonal relationships. We can draw upon three strands of evidence to support this assertion.

Shyness is the concept in ordinary English language that captures many of the characteristics of social anxiety, as it is linked to notions of wariness, timidity, and psychological discomfort in interaction with other people. It is used to describe transient feelings (“I was suddenly overcome with shyness”) and more stable individual characteristics (“I am basically a shy person”; “my life has been crippled by shyness”). Zimbardo and associates at Stanford University (see Pilkonis & Zimbardo, 1979; Henderson & Zimbardo, 2001) initially surveyed a sample of 817 high school and college students and asked them whether they considered themselves as shy and whether they regarded shyness as a problem. Over 40% of respondents characterized themselves as shy, and of those who thought of themselves as currently shy, 63% endorsed an item asking whether their shyness was a problem for them. Subsequent research has replicated these findings and has also shown that self-attributed shyness is common in all of the many countries that have been surveyed (Pines & Zimbardo, 1978). The incidence in these studies ranged from 24% among a sample of Jewish Americans to 60% among respondents in Hawaii and Japan. More recent surveys suggest that there has been a trend over several years for the incidence of self-attributed shyness to increase. The figure has apparently
risen in the USA from 40 to over 50% (Carducci & Zimbardo, 1997). The Stanford Survey also asks respondents whether they have ever been shy (now or in the past). A large majority of respondents endorse this item (a median value across studies of 84%) and there is little cross-cultural variation in these responses: the proportion of endorsements in different countries ranges from 66 to 92% of respondents—most young adults throughout the developed world have experienced shyness at one time or another.

Obviously there are problems in inferring from these data that rates of shyness are increasing. There is no information about the reliability of the single “yes–no” item or of the small set of shyness-related items comprising the Survey. In addition, tendencies to endorse the items will be influenced by growth in public awareness of shyness, a trend that becomes more likely as articles written by shyness researchers appear in popular magazines and it is covered in the media. Nevertheless, it is clear that a substantial number of people report that they are shy and that their shyness is undesirable and causes a problem for them.

A second strand is represented by a series of studies that were carried out within the framework of a behaviourist approach to the management of anxiety symptoms. In order to assess levels of anxiety and fears, self-report questionnaire measures have been constructed, for example, the Fear Survey Schedules devised by Lang and colleagues (Lang & Lazovik, 1963; Wolpe & Lang, 1964) and submitted to factor analysis. Two social fear factors emerge from these studies: one with highest loadings on items referring to fear of being with a member of the opposite sex or of speaking before a large group, and one loading on items referring to fear of criticism or of appearing foolish. Mean ratings on these social fears items are consistently high.

A third strand relates to epidemiological studies of social phobia. A clinical syndrome of social phobia has been recognized as a diagnostic category since its inclusion in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-III) of the American Psychiatric Association published in 1980. This edition identified three types of phobias: agoraphobia, social phobia, and simple phobia. Social phobia was characterized as a persistent fear of situations where the individual might be subject to scrutiny by others and anticipates that his or her behaviour will lead to embarrassment or humiliation. This causes the individual a significant amount of distress because he or she recognizes that the fear is excessive.

Epidemiological surveys suggest that the incidence of social phobia in the general population is high. For example, Kessler et al. (1994) reported the findings of the National Comorbidity Study (NCS), a survey of a very large (over 8,000 respondents) national sample in the USA. Trained staff carried out structured interviews; the diagnostic interview included social phobia items that reflected the DSM-III-R criteria. The Survey reported a 12-month prevalence of 7.9% and a lifetime prevalence of 13.3%. These data imply that social phobia is the third most common psychiatric disorder in the United States, after major depression (17% lifetime prevalence) and alcohol dependence (14%). There is also evidence that social phobia is a “chronic and unremittent disorder” (DeWit, Ogborne, Offord, & MacDonald, 1999, p. 569). Their survey of retrospective
accounts of social phobia showed that the median length of illness was reported to be 25 years and in some cases lasted up to 45 years.

These investigations have been criticized by some commentators for overestimating the prevalence of these anxieties, for example, by their reliance on survey approaches rather than clinical records, and by effectively extending the definition of phobia to embrace everyday social anxieties (Cottle, 1999). Of course, this objection begs the question why social anxieties are “everyday” or why there are individual differences in self-reported anxiety such that some people claim to be much less confident and more fearful than others do.

Cross-cultural studies of social phobia also show high prevalence rates across different cultures. There seems to be a somewhat lower incidence in East Asian countries although this conclusion must be qualified by the methodological problems of this research (these issues are discussed by Ingram, Ramel, Chavira & Scher, *Chapter 11*).

**THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL ANXIETY**

Despite possible limitations of each of these lines of evidence they do converge on a picture of widespread psychological discomfort in routine social situations. When these reactions are commonplace as opposed to idiosyncratic, they raise questions about the social conditions that foster them. That is, analysis of social anxiety might fruitfully begin, not with the reasons why particular individuals are anxious or shy, but with investigation of cultural influences on patterns of social interaction, intragroup behaviour and intergroup behaviour. What is the nature of a society that produces widespread social unease among its members? This is a question that Zimbardo, Pilkonis, and Norwood (1975) raised in the context of the Stanford Survey findings. They argued (p. 27) that “the problem of shyness is not essentially a personal problem. It is really a social problem. Certain kinds of social and cultural values lead people to imprison themselves within the ego-centric predicament of shyness.” They went on to speculate that, “Shyness in America ... is a consequence of cultural norms that overemphasize competition, individual success, and personal responsibility for failure” (p. 27). A similar point is made by Burgess, Rubin, Cheah and Nelson (*Chapter 5*) who point to differences in the meaning of shyness between Western individualistic cultures and Eastern collectivist cultures. They write that “shyness and behavioral inhibition are positively evaluated in Chinese cultures because these behaviors are considered to reflect social maturity and understanding”.

An alternative interpretation of social anxiety is that it is a response to threats to social status or reputation (Nesse, 1998). It is related to emotions of pride and shame, and to claims to entitlement to honour, dignity, and respect. These can be powerful motives for behaviour, as exemplified in the political slogan, “Death before dishonour”. All societies have means for indicating social status, for example, through forms of appearance and dress or rules governing how one approaches and addresses an individual of high status. Social interactions are
constrained by unwritten but widely acknowledged rules and conventions, such as “etiquette”, “manners”, and “taste”. Failure to recognize or comply with these forms and rules can lead to punishment or to internalized forms of punishment, notably feelings of shame or guilt. These feelings can constitute a potent means for bringing about social conformity by encouraging self-regulation of behaviour (Scheff, 1988). Nevertheless, there is cultural diversity in how status and reputation are marked. Sennett (1976) has argued that there has been a historical shift in Western societies away from rigid demarcation of status and infrequent interactions between individuals of different status to more fluid boundaries and increasing encounters. For example, rules for appropriate forms of dress for people of different status were once rigidly enforced; while such rules undoubtedly still exist they are now less strictly observed and there is greater tolerance for deviations from norms. The onus is now on individuals to assert their own identity rather than rely upon, say, their accent, uniform, or the design of a tie.

The Self-presentation Perspective

These notions were brought to the attention of social scientists through the seminal writings of Erving Goffman (1972). He paid particular attention to the role of embarrassment in the regulation of social encounters: “Goffmanian men and women are driven by the need to avoid embarrassment” (Schudson, 1984, p. 634). According to Goffman, embarrassment is closely linked with individual claims to identity in the eyes of others. As Silver, Sabini, and Parrott (1987, p. 48) summarize this position:

Participants need a working consensus about each other’s qualities (natures, selves, or characters will do just as well). This working consensus specifies which qualities are relevant to the interaction at hand. It includes the qualities that each actor can be expected to display (and be sanctioned for not displaying) and, therefore, the qualities that each interactant is entitled to treat others (and herself) as having.

Embarrassment ensues when at least one interactant perceives that the consensus cannot be sustained and this brings the interaction to a halt, leaving the participants uncertain what to do next. Typically this breakdown is brought about by a specific unforeseen event or when there is a sudden loss of poise. For example, a child discomfits his parents when they are visiting acquaintances by making a frank remark about their hostess’s appearance or by spilling his orange juice over her new carpet. This approach can also accommodate individual differences. Social discomfort can ensue when an individual senses, rightly or wrongly, that he or she lacks the qualities necessary to sustain a social encounter. Goffman regards the routine social encounters of everyday life as a series of negotiations where the social identities of interactants are claimed, accepted, or challenged. These negotiations require that interactants should have certain com-
petencies and, perhaps of particular relevance to social anxiety, confidence in their competencies. Finding himself in the company of distinguished social anxiety scholars, a psychologist who lacks confidence in his own grasp of the subject may become tongue-tied and self-conscious. This represents the approach to shyness taken by Goffman (1972, p. 107):

> Various kinds of recurrent encounters in a given society may share the assumption that participants have attained certain moral, mental, and physiognomic standards. The person who falls short may everywhere find himself inadvertently trapped into making implicit identity-claims which he cannot fulfil . . . And, if he only imagines that he possesses a disqualifying attribute, his judgment of himself may be in error, but in the light of it, his withdrawal from contact is reasonable.

An individual’s shyness might not be noticed by other interactants or it might be interpreted in other ways. Nor might it make much impact upon the social encounter, which may carry on without his or her active contribution. Nevertheless, there is evidence that an individual’s shyness can and does influence other people’s interpretations of his or her qualities and, in the longer term, it can be a significant factor in shaping social relationships.

The major legacy of Goffman’s writings has been social psychological explorations of the notions of impression management and self-presentation. Theories of self-presentation have been applied to a range of psychological phenomena. Goffman’s notion of preventive practices has given rise to theoretical analysis and empirical investigations of impression management strategies (Shepperd & Arkin, 1990). There are similarities between these strategies, the self-protective behaviours that characterize many social phobics (Alden, Chapter 8), and the “safety behaviours” adopted by the socially anxious (Clark, Chapter 9). Schlenker and Leary (1982) produced a highly influential theory of social anxiety, which conceptualizes it as the motivation to create a desired impression in others combined with a lack of confidence in the ability to do so. This theory has been applied to shyness, embarrassment, blushing, and social phobia.

Goffman’s account of embarrassment has been criticized on a number of grounds, for example, that it describes social relationships as they are located within a particular, capitalist social order, or that it overemphasizes the significance of embarrassment. After all, many people often seem oblivious to the impression that they are creating in others and most interactions proceed without any breakdown in consensus (Schudson, 1984). Nevertheless, embarrassment, shyness and other forms of social discomfort do seem to be universal. For example, although research based on the Stanford Survey identified a significant degree of cultural variation in the incidence of self-attributed shyness, this was found to characterize a sizeable proportion of respondents in all the countries sampled. An alternative approach to social anxiety focuses on this universality and positions individual concerns with status and reputation within a biological perspective.
The Evolutionary Perspective

Evolutionary psychology has provided analyses for a range of human behaviours. It takes as central to its approach the adaptive significance of behaviour. This is not adaptation in the more common sense in psychological theory, in terms of the individual’s adjustment to his or her environment, including the social environment. Adaptation is defined “as traits shaped by natural selection that serve functions that increase net reproductive success” (Nesse, 1998, p. 398). Analysis of social anxiety begins with recognition that the human is a social species, evolved, like many other such species, to live in hierarchically organized groups. Belonging to the group is adaptive in the sense outlined above, whereas social exclusion is maladaptive and makes it less likely that the individual will survive and pass on its genes. Hierarchical organisation is an effective arrangement of social life, facilitating group living while minimizing intragroup competition for mates and resources and its contingent aggression. Fear (and anxiety) has evolved because it is adaptive in a number of important ways, for example in anticipating danger and facilitating avoidance and escape. Nesse (1998) argues that although anxiety is typically thought of as maladaptive, in the sense that for the individual it is a painful experience and can be disruptive, restrictive, and overwhelming, its important feature—and the reason that it has not become extinct over time—is its adaptive significance for reproductive success.

Gilbert and associates (Gilbert & McGuire, 1998; Gilbert & Trower, 1990; see Gilbert & Trower, 2001) have pioneered the application of an evolutionary perspective to social anxiety. Their approach is based on analysis of different forms of group living in the service of reproductive success. Humans, like members of other group-living species, compete with one another for resources and seek to appear attractive to conspecifics, sexually or otherwise. The approach draws upon the thesis (Chance, 1988) that the organisation of living in groups can be classified into two forms. The agonic (threat based) mode is characterized by dominance hierarchies of power and rank. The hedonic (affiliation based) mode is characterized by mutual dependence and reciprocal relationships. Group members have developed appraisal systems that enable them to be alert to social threats of attack, exclusion, rejection, and loss of status, and have also developed competencies for selecting appropriate responses. Anxiety relates to these appraisals and responses. It can arise from the inappropriate activation of the defensive system that is responsive to threat to social status, for example, the individual tends to treat social interactions as potentially threatening. It can result from a failure to recruit the safety system which permits the individual to feel safe in the presence of others, or from fear of appearing unattractive to others.

The model offers an account of the universality of social anxiety and tries to show why social situations are threatening even when they involve little risk of physical danger. It provides an explanation of its pervasiveness, where individuals experience anxiety even though “objectively” they know that it is uncalled for or they try without success to control it. It also gives insight into specific charac-
teristics of social anxiety. For example, lowering the eyes and gaze aversion is a
typical response in shyness, embarrassment, and shame (Reddy, 2001). This is
frequently interpreted as a social gesture, intended to signal submissiveness or
appeasement (Keltner, 1995). It is sometimes construed in terms of shutting out
information. For example, Barrett (1995, p. 41) writes that, in addition to com-
communicating submission or deference, gaze aversion, along with lowering the head
and hiding the face, serves to “distance” the ashamed individual from important
others, and removes the face from their evaluation. This is similar to the inter-
pretation offered within an evolutionary framework by Dixon (1998) who argues
that “cut-off” acts and postures are used by animals when their escape from the
threatening situation is blocked and they reduce the visual information emanat-
ing from the source of threat. This interpretation draws attention to a function
of gaze aversion that could be explored in social anxiety research; it can assist in
the self-regulation of arousal and gives the organism some “space” in which to
seek an alternative strategy.

Explanations of social anxiety in terms of evolutionary psychology or the
social psychology of impression management agree in asserting that anxiety is an
inherent feature of social life. Although the aversive quality of the experience is
more usually the focus of attention, it is salutary to recognize that anxiety serves
useful functions. It helps to regulate social life while minimizing the risks of
aggression or an irreparable breakdown in the group’s activity. It is also func-
tional at the individual level in helping the individual to acquire self-knowledge,
in enhancing awareness of standards for behaviour, and in encouraging processes
of self-regulation. Nevertheless, there are individual differences in propensity to
anxiety and, for many people, this comes to dominate and restrict their social
encounters and relationships—shyness is often described as “crippling” or
a “handicap”. Much of this volume is directly concerned with this individual
variation.

MATTERS OF DEFINITION

Thus far we have been shy of offering a formal definition of social anxiety,
but we hope that our use of the term anxiety has been uncontroversial since it
Corresponds to usage in both the lay and the psychological vocabulary, for
example, as defined by The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, “A vague, unpleasant
emotional state with qualities of apprehension, dread, distress and unease-
ness”. Leary (1983, p. 15) has offered a formal definition of anxiety as: “a
Cognitive-affective syndrome that is characterized by physiological arousal
(indicative of sympathetic nervous system arousal) and apprehension or dread
regarding an impending, potentially negative outcome that the person believes
he or she is unable to avert”. By social anxiety, we mean that this anxiety is trig-
gerated by the prospect or reality of certain kinds of social situations, as opposed
to anxiety associated with, say, insects, heights, enclosed spaces, blood, death, and
so on. Empirical research can identify the range of social situations that tend to
elicited anxiety (meeting new people, going on a date, public speaking, answering the telephone, etc.) while clinical case studies can identify the specific kinds of situations that trouble individuals.

So far we have treated shyness in its everyday usage as a word that refers to apprehension and uneasiness about social situations while recognizing that it has further connotations of timidity and wariness. It would be a task for sociolinguistic analysis to tease out these connotations. However, some psychologists have also used the term in a technical sense, as a label for a specific emotional state or as a summary of a trait that is called upon to help explain social difficulties. This inevitably raises questions about the relations among the various constructs in this field: shyness, social anxiety, and social phobia. Furthermore, there are questions about the relations between these and constructs that have been developed in studies of children, particularly social withdrawal (Rubin, Burgess, Kennedy, & Stewart, 2003; also Burgess, Rubin, Cheah, & Nelson, Chapter 5) and behavioural inhibition, (see Marshall & Stevenson-Hinde, Chapter 3). These issues are particularly important for this volume, which aims to bring together research into the origins and development of social anxiety and research from clinical perspectives. This research is often published in separate scholarly journals, and it is essential to establish connections among these. Our approach to these problems of definition is based on two assumptions. The first is that it is useful in research into anxiety to distinguish between a state and a trait. The second is that it is important to consider that experiences like shyness and anxiety are complex, that they can be construed as having cognitive, somatic, and behavioural dimensions, and are not reducible to only one of these dimensions.

State Anxiety

The greatest confusion in terminology seems to occur at the state level. Psychologists have investigated a number of emotions that are distinguished in everyday vocabulary, particularly shame, guilt, embarrassment, shyness, and anxiety. Some, for example, Buss (1980), have defined these as different forms of social anxiety, but this has proved problematic, and it is not obvious that they are all anxiety states. Others have argued that they constitute distinct emotions: for example, Miller (1996) argues that embarrassment meets all the accepted criteria for identification as a basic emotion in its own right; it has quick onset, brief duration, involuntary, relatively automatic appraisal process, universal antecedent events, distinctive physiological responses, distinctive emotional display, and is found in other species. (See Lewis, Chapter 4, and Miller, 2001, for discussion of shyness and embarrassment.) Whether or not it is a distinct emotion, embarrassment shares with shyness, shame, and guilt at least one component—namely, self-consciousness; indeed, these have been labelled as the “self-conscious emotions” (Tangney & Fischer, 1995). Self-focused attention is also a characteristic of anxiety; for example, there has been considerable research in the
test anxiety literature into the detrimental effects of self-preoccupation upon task performance (Sarason, Pierce, & Sarason, 1996).

Buss (1980) argued that self-attention was the essential element shared by different forms of social anxiety and subsequent research has established its key role in shyness, shame, embarrassment, blushing, social phobia, and negative affect more generally (Mor & Winquist, 2002). For example, shy individuals spend more time in self-focus during a social encounter than the less shy (Melchior & Cheek, 1990). Improvements in social phobia following cognitive behaviour therapy are associated with reductions in self-focused attention (Woody, Chambless, & Glass, 1997). The self, and self-consciousness in particular, plays a key role in current conceptualizations of social anxiety and is addressed throughout this volume (for example: Lewis, Chapter 4; Ingram, Ramel, Chavira, & Scher, Chapter 11; Clark, Chapter 9; Coles, Hart & Heimberg, Chapter 12).

These states reflect the individual’s concern with threats to his or her reputation or standing in the eyes of others, and self-consciousness may be a key element because it forms part of the appraisal process whereby the individual monitors how his or her conduct appears to others. Leary and Downs (1995) have postulated an executive process, the sociometer, which is credited with such an appraisal function, although they also consider that it can operate outside conscious awareness. Clark (Chapter 9) also refers to the detailed self-monitoring that is triggered when the anxious individual senses that he or she is in danger of being negatively evaluated by others. Anxiety also makes individuals alert to cues of threat from the environment. Coles et al. (Chapter 12) discuss this in terms of hypervigilance for social threats and cues about potentially negative social outcomes. Clark (Chapter 9) reviews evidence on biases in processing social cues (see also Baldwin & Fergusson, 2001).

At our current level of understanding it may be more fruitful to consider these states as sharing a family resemblance rather than claiming that they are discrete emotions or that they share a single underlying factor like “social anxiety”.

There are circumstances in which experiences are more likely to be labelled in one way than in another. To consider one example, Jane is anxious while she is waiting to go on stage in a musical produced by her university drama group. Unfortunately, when she performs her first number, her singing is off key and below the standards of everyone else. Jane might feel embarrassed about her performance, attributing it to first night nerves or to the discomfort of the stage lighting and her costume. She might feel ashamed of herself for having let everyone down or guilty at having taken a part that could have been played by a better singer. She might feel shy at the prospect of talking about the show afterwards with the other cast members or with her friends in the audience. Members of the audience could be embarrassed for her, empathizing with her predicament, but they could also be embarrassed by her performance, unsure how to react. They could be ashamed of her, for letting down the university, guilty for giving her the part, and so on. They could feel any of these even if Jane is blissfully unaware of how her performance is being received. It is an important goal of research to tease out the various experiences that can occur in social situations like
These. This example suggests that the context in which emotions are elicited is an important consideration in deciding which member of a family of emotions is experienced.

Differences among states are not simply a matter of labelling. There is variation in physiological concomitants; for example, blushing is elicited in some circumstances but not in others (Edelmann, 2001; Crozier, 2004). Some experiences are recurrent, they evoke intense reactions or are difficult for the individual to assimilate to their self-image and cause her problems or predispose her to seek professional help. For example, most people blush, for many this occurs frequently or with intense colour, and some find their fear of blushing so unbearable that they are prepared to undergo irreversible surgery (Drott, Claes, & Rex, 2002). All of these states fall within the domain of social anxiety, since they are all instances of uneasiness and discomfort produced by social situations, even though it is a question for research whether they are indeed forms of anxiety.

**Trait Anxiety**

The primary problem at the trait level concerns the comparative meaning of a number of related constructs, specifically shyness, behavioural inhibition, withdrawn behaviour, social anxiety, and social phobia. There are important distinctions to be drawn. First, social phobia is not a type of temperament or a personality trait but is a category within a diagnostic classification scheme—in most research into social anxiety, the various editions of the DSM. Whether or not an individual is assigned to this category is, in part, a function of factors that influence his or her decision to seek help (hypothetically, the same level of anxiety can lead one person but not another to seek professional help) or determine access to clinicians who recognize the condition (some physicians may decide the individual is suffering from generalized anxiety or from a condition that is comorbid with social phobia, such as depression or alcohol abuse). It is possible that specific temperaments (behavioural inhibition) or traits (shyness, social anxiety, extraversion or neuroticism, see Widiger, *Chapter 10*) predispose people either to develop extreme fears or to seek help for their problems, but this is a matter for research to establish. Any scheme and its categories evolve as understanding of social anxiety develops. Thus, the defining criteria for social phobia have changed with successive editions of the DSM. DSM-IV introduced a distinction between social phobia and avoidant personality disorder. This distinction may stand the test of time or it may be redrawn in the light of accumulating evidence (see Widiger, *Chapter 10*; also Rettew, 2000). Research suggests that distinctions can also be made among generalized social phobia, where a range of situations produce anxiety, non-generalized social phobia, where anxiety is restricted to a small number of types of situations, and phobia about public speaking (e.g., Westenberg, 1998).

Turner et al. (1990) provided a summary of similarities and differences between shyness and social phobia. These share several features: negative cogni-
tions in social situations; heightened physiological reactivity; a tendency to avoid social situations; and deficits in social skills. Negative cognitions include fear of negative evaluation, self-consciousness, devaluation of social skills, self-deprecating thoughts, and self-blaming attributions for social difficulties. Social phobia is distinct from shyness in that it has a lower prevalence in the population, follows a more chronic course, has more pervasive functional impairment, and a later age of onset. There are problems with these kinds of comparisons. It is not clear in what sense “shyness” is being used, whether as a lay term (e.g. drawing upon findings from the Stanford Survey) or as tied to personality measures, and the sense in which it is used will affect, for example, estimates of the prevalence of shyness. Different kinds of information are used to assess the characteristics of social phobia; for example, interview data are used for prevalence rates whereas clinical evidence is the source for inferences about its chronic and unremitting nature. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that individuals who present with the problems that attract a diagnosis of social phobia share many characteristics with individuals who describe themselves as shy and report their shyness as a serious problem. It may be that the differences between them are quantitative rather than qualitative. For example, there are parallel sets of findings between clinical samples of social phobics and samples of students obtaining high scores on measures of shyness or social anxiety (see Clark, Chapter 9, for examples of this research).

One hypothesis about the relationship between shyness and social phobia is that they are located at different places along a continuum of intensity of social anxiety. McNeil (2001) proposed that shyness spans a range from normal to pathological levels while at the extreme anxious end of the dimension are found nongeneralized anxiety, generalized social anxiety and, finally, avoidant personality disorder. Thus, the differences between shyness and the anxiety disorders are quantitative rather than qualitative. There have been attempts to test this model with non-clinical samples, taking the Revised Cheek and Buss scale (Cheek, 1983) as a measure of shyness and the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (World Health Organization, 1997) as the measure of social phobia, either based on an interview (Chavira, Stein, & Malcarne, 2002) or self-administered (Heiser, Turner, & Beidel, 2003). Both studies identified overlap between shyness and social phobia. For example, Chavira et al. (2002) found that 50% of those participants with high scores (above the 90th percentile) on the shyness measure obtained a social phobia diagnosis, 36% a generalized social phobia diagnosis, and 14% a diagnosis of avoidant personality disorder. Both studies found that those with high shyness scores were more likely to obtain a diagnosis of anxiety disorder than were those with less extreme shyness scores. Nevertheless, in each study, substantial numbers of extremely shy participants did not attract a diagnosis of anxiety disorder and there was overlap in shyness scores between those with and those without a diagnosis, thus providing at best only partial support for a continuum model. Shy participants with social phobia differed from those without social phobia in several respects. They were more likely to report that their social anxiety impeded functioning in social life and in work