

FREE REPORT – Stress, Anxiety Disorders and Phobias

It has been estimated that up to 80% of all illnesses are stress-related. Next time you visit your doctors, take a look at the patients in the waiting room. Most of their problems, whether physical, emotional or mental are caused by raised stress levels.

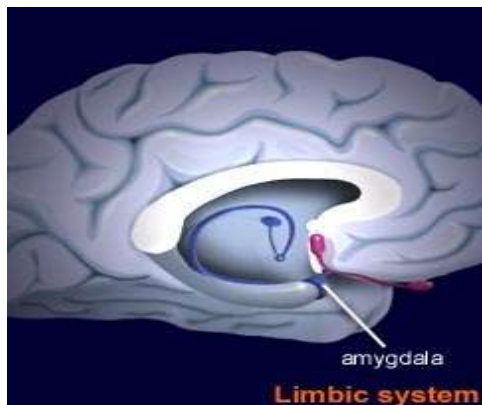
Stress is something which we all experience; it is part of modern life. Indeed, some degree of stress is essential to help us all function effectively and to enjoy life to the full. Take for example top performers in sports, the arts and entertainment. Some degree of stress is essential for them to perform at their best. Too much stress however may impair the quality of our lives. It can lead to under-achievement, lack of motivation, cause deep unhappiness and depression, affect personal relationships and cause distressing physical symptoms.

However, what we need to be aware of is that the word 'stress' is rather abstract and vague; we need to ask ourselves '*what specifically is making me feel anxious?*' It is by identifying these 'stressors' that we can begin to deal with them in more healthy and effective ways.

Panic Attacks

Panic attacks are mostly triggered by the progressive rising of background stress levels. One more 'stress' results in a panic reaction and it can occur at anytime and any place. Rest assured that panic attacks always pass after a few moments. **You are not going to faint, you are not going crazy and you are not going to having a heart attack and die!** (Although it often feels like that!) Indeed, it is physically impossible to faint during a panic attack because, in order to faint, your blood pressure has to drop, but during a panic attack your blood pressure actually rises.

What happens is that during a panic attack the 'fight or flight' response is inappropriately set off. It is nature's way of helping us survive in the face of danger – the body prepares us to either fight or run away. This 'fight or flight' response is there to ensure our survival and is controlled by a part of the brain called the amygdala.



The emotion experienced from the panic reaction happens before conscious thought. This is why simple 'talking therapies' like counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy take longer to make a difference to anxiety disorders. It is no good simply trying to change the way you think; you have to first turn off the emotional arousal. This is best done in a deeply relaxed state, such as hypnosis, where you have direct access to the part of the brain causing the panic reaction.

Of course, this emotional arousal in the face of *genuine threat* has been around since the dawn of mankind and helps us to run from danger or fight for survival by pumping adrenalin and cortisol through the blood stream, giving us a quick burst of energy.

To the sufferer of panic attacks it is often bewildering as to why the panic attack has occurred. There doesn't appear to be any genuine danger, so why the alarm? It could be that the brain is 'pattern matching' to an earlier frightening incident in the person's life which may or may not have been consciously forgotten and which is triggered by something similar in the immediate environment. (The brain is a metaphorical pattern-matching machine – it groups things together that are partly alike – they don't have to be an exact likeness). So, during the panic attack

the brain scans the environment to find out what the source of this alarm could be, noting all kinds of associating details and storing them for future reference. Not surprisingly, the association is often with the environment where the panic attack happened, for example in the supermarket (where there are people, bright lights, queues etc.), resulting in the person avoiding supermarkets in future. However, because the panic attack was not caused by the supermarket, but by raised stress levels, the next time the person feels over-stressed and finds themselves in a *similar* situation, perhaps in a post office (where there are people, bright lights, queues etc.) the brain pattern-matches to the previous panic attack, fires off the fight/flight response and they may experience another attack and so start avoiding post offices as well. This can eventually lead to agoraphobia.

What we need to remember is **the symptoms of panic are nature's way of burning off the excess energy** (caused by the adrenalin rush). If you were running from danger or fighting for your life you would burn off the energy in that way. But, because most people stand still or sit down during a panic attack the excess energy gets burned off by causing them to shake, breathe faster etc. It's like the fast spin in a washing machine and always passes. See it as a little work out for your body!

Fears and Phobias

When someone has a fear of something which is only remotely possible or is extremely unlikely, or a fear of something that has no basis in reality, then that person is likely to be experiencing a phobia. A phobia is an irrational fear, the experience of which can produce an irrational response. To be fearful of a huge grizzly bear is rational; to be fearful of a butterfly is not. But to those who suffer from a phobia, the fear experienced is very real indeed and is almost impossible to overcome without professional help. Phobias are often learnt through 'one-trial-learning', which simply means that it takes only one experience of something to make us phobic. For example, as a child you saw your mother extremely frightened at the sight of a spider. One experience of this could be enough to make you also phobic of spiders *or anything else that your unconscious has associated to that memory.*

People used to spend years in psychotherapy (and many still do!) trying to overcome their phobias. Since the emergence of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) most simple phobias can now be resolved, often in a single session, through the use of the Fast Phobia or 'Rewind' Technique.

Using the Fast Phobia/Rewind Technique means that I won't waste hours trawling through your past looking for reasons as to why you have the phobia; it is nearly always not necessary to find the imprinting event because the brain always updates the memories with the most recent occurrence of the phobic reaction. And you won't have to 'relive' the experience either; this only serves to strengthen the emotional aspect of the memory in the brain!

The word 'phobia' originates from the ancient Greek god of fear – 'Phobos'. There are countless definitions of phobia, the most apt defining it as a 'fear of fear'. Perhaps, more accurately a phobia can be described as 'an extreme reaction to fear triggered by a stimulus'.

More than 10% of the population have a phobia of some sort, of which there are more than 300, the most common being;

- fear of heights (acrophobia)
- fear of the outdoors or open spaces (agoraphobia)
- fear of closed or confined spaces (claustrophobia)
- fear of spiders (arachnophobia)
- fear of dogs (cynophobia)
- fear of cats (ailurophobia)
- fear of birds (ornithophobia)
- fear of wasps (spheksophobia)
- fear of crowds (ochlophobia)
- fear of flying (aerophobia)
- fear of needles (belonophobia)
- fear of snakes (ophidiophobia)

- fear of strangers (xenophobia)
- fear of water (hydrophobia)
- and fear of vomiting (emetaphobia).

Treating anxiety disorders with hypnosis

In treating all anxiety disorders, including fears, phobias, panic attacks, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) an important ingredient for effective therapy is calmness. In hypnosis, you will experience deep relaxation and in this state your unconscious mind is more able to re-evaluate all stress, panic and phobic reactions with the realisation that the fear is unwarranted. In effect, faulty pattern-matching that causes the inappropriate firing off of the fight or flight response is turned off, meaning that you no longer react by panicking or having those fearful thoughts. The Fast Phobia/ Rewind Technique can be used for all manner of symptoms, not just phobias. At **stow-hypno** I've used it successfully for panic attacks, post traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and traumas (such as sexual abuse). Using this technique in a deeply relaxed state enables you to re-programme neural pathways in the brain, so that the amygdala no longer responds by causing panic.

At **stow-hypno**, I will also teach you how to step outside the limited and restricted viewpoint of emotional, 'anxiety trances' so that objective reality can take over. I use hypnosis and NLP to 'de-hypnotise' you out of the 'negative' symptomatic trance of anxiety, fears and phobias and enable you to develop new resources for dealing with stress. You will be taught how to relax quickly and calm your mind in any situation. Your reaction to long-standing fears and phobias will be de-conditioned, enabling you to live a normal life once again.

"I would also like to thank you for the help you gave me with stress. I lost my dear mother to a dreadful illness 3 years ago. I was finding it more and more difficult to deal with. I also have a very stressful job (running 2 businesses) and I felt everything was becoming too much. After numerous visits to my GP for general help with aches and pains, fatigue, depression etc, I couldn't get to the root of the problem and I felt my GP was unable to help. I visited you on 4 occasions and I now have the old me back; I find it easy to deal with the loss of my mum, any situation at work is very easy to deal with, I no longer get upset and wound up at the smallest of things, I sleep better, my aches and pains have gone, all the doom and gloom has gone, I enjoy life again without worrying all the time. I can never thank you enough for the help you have given me." *L.T. Stowmarket*

Imagine a life free of fear...what would you be able to do that you can't do now?

Call me on 0845 450 2326

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