

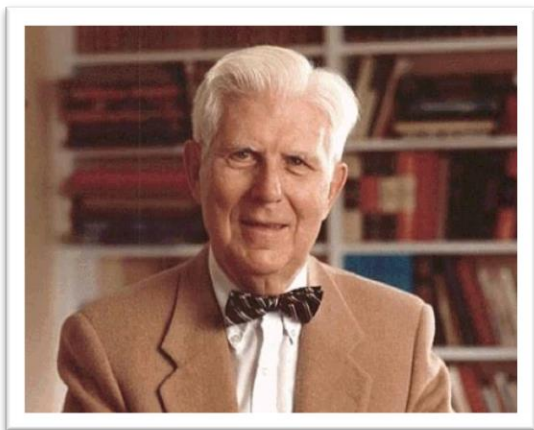
---

## Cognitive History

---

Cognitive refers to "learning" and this leads us back to the brain, since the brain processes information and causes us to "learn." There is no short-cut to learning. If we are discussing what will WORK in helping us overcome social anxiety, then there is no other process than learning what is rational and then acting on it (thus, CBT).

Today, many scientific communities, including psychiatry, as well as the new areas of brain science – usually termed "cognitive neuroscience" – are built on the foundation of what we in psychology call "cognitive-behavioral" therapy.



**Dr. Aaron Beck**

CBT is generally credited to Dr. Aaron Beck and Dr. Albert Ellis, who worked independently and challenged prevalent Freudian psychoanalytic theory in the 1950's for the majority of people with mental health problems.

In the sixties and seventies, growing amounts of research began to show that cognitive-behavioral therapy was indeed the therapy of choice for many conditions.

In the 1980s, this research on CBT was solidified, and more importantly for us, "social anxiety" was discovered and found its way into the DSM.

The massive body of research we have today, beginning in the 1990s, was supported by the National Institutes of Mental Health, and was under the direction of Dr. Richard A. Heimberg and M. R. Liebowitz, currently of Temple University. These are the original "gold standard" studies on social anxiety and its treatment.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy has been the only type of therapy to prove effective in permanently alleviating anxiety disorders and depression.

“Overlearning” all the methods and strategies that help us get better is the only solution to social anxiety disorder.

In the psychiatric journal, *Psychiatric Annals*, Volume 30, Number 11, November 2000, the editor-in-chief, Jon Fawcett, M.D., wrote a lead editorial titled, "Psychiatrists Should Be Proficient in Cognitive Therapy."

In the article, Dr. Fawcett points out that "a mass of studies demonstrating the efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapies has built up following the dogged persistence of Aaron Beck, M.D., in developing cognitive-behavioral therapies for depression and anxiety disorders..."



**Dr. Albert Ellis**

We have published an article that explains how cognitive-behavioral therapy works for social anxiety, and why cognitive-behavioral therapy must be specific to the problem being addressed. That is, CBT for social anxiety consists of different therapy elements than for panic disorder. This article may be found at:

<https://socialanxietyinstitute.org/comprehensive-cognitive-behavioral-therapy-social-anxiety-disorder>

Many adjunct and pseudo-therapies also exist. Some are helpful as supplements to CBT, and others are get-rich-quick schemes. Relaxation methods, some forms of hypnotherapy, massage, meditation, and acupuncture have been shown to be helpful sometimes in temporarily relieving symptoms of social anxiety. None of them can change the brain, so none of them are permanent solutions. Appropriate medications may be helpful too, but they only temporarily address the problem.

Only a change in the brain's neural pathways (this is what "learning" is) can cause permanent changes to occur so that we can change irrational thinking into rational thinking and then act on it. This is the heart of cognitive and behavior therapy.

This is the way the human brain works. As we have discovered more about the human brain, it has helped us develop and design therapies that cause the brain to change, and

allow solutions to problems like social anxiety.

As many of us have found, if, in the past, we have learned irrational thoughts and beliefs, then, today, we can more easily learn rational thinking patterns and belief systems. Cognitive and behavior therapy must go together in treatment for social anxiety. One without the other is not going to provide us an acceptable solution.

What we have done at SAI is to find, develop, and use specific strategies and solutions for social anxiety. The therapy we do here, and the therapy contained on the audio therapy tape series, is constructed specifically for overcoming social anxiety. It is cognitive-behavioral therapy designed to help overcome social anxiety in the quickest and most effective (permanent) way.