

WHERE DOES SOCIAL ANXIETY COME FROM?

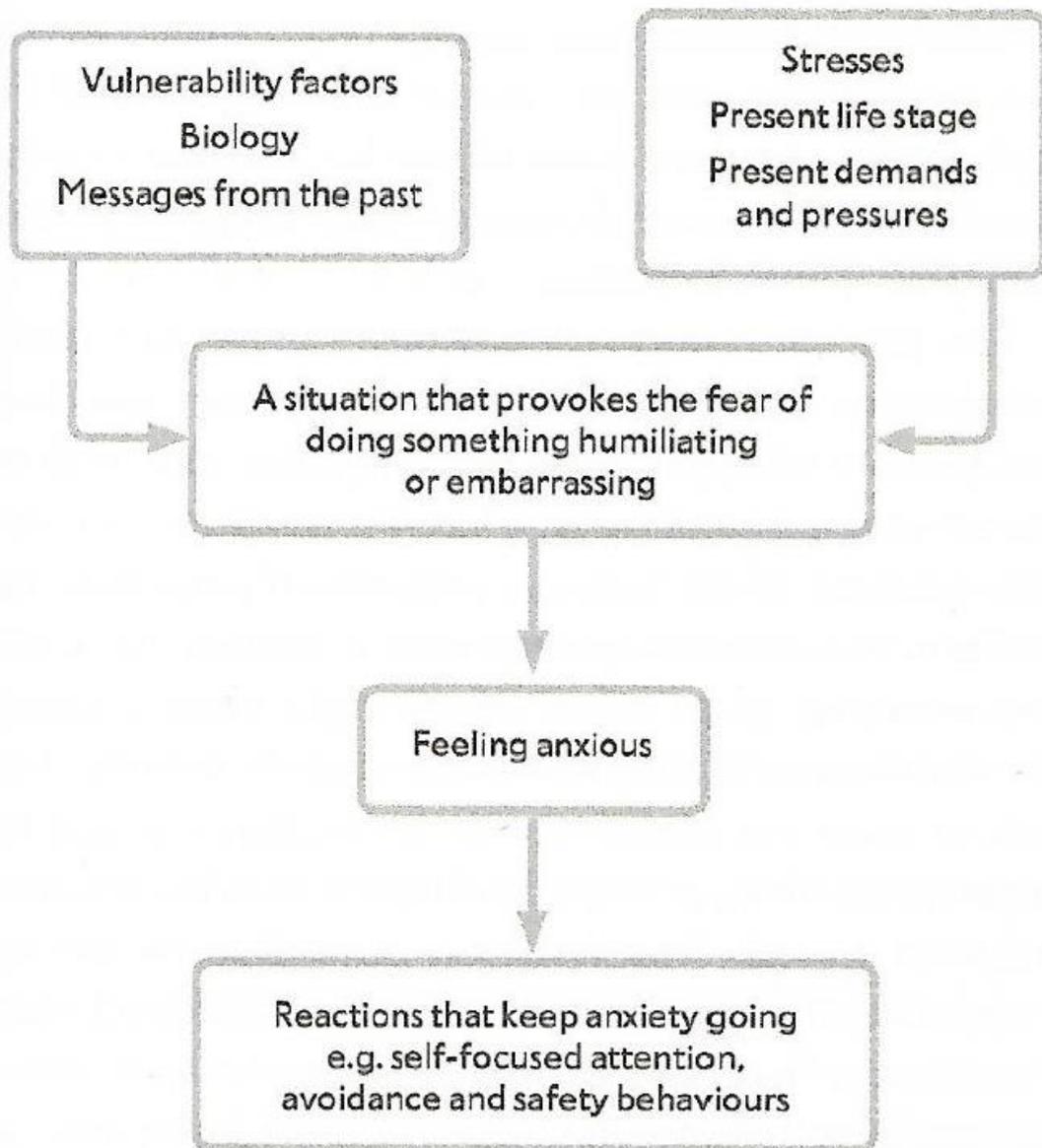


Figure 4.1 Summarising the causes of social anxiety

The diagram shows that for people with social anxiety, the problem will occur when they encounter situations that provoke the fear of doing something that will be embarrassing or humiliating. Once they feel anxious then their reactions create vicious cycles which perpetuate the problem. Reactions to anxiety, such as looking for a way out, worrying about what others might notice, feeling self-conscious or finding it difficult to speak fluently, feedback to make the anxiety worse. So whatever caused the anxiety in the first place may be different from the reactions that keep it going. The cycle that perpetuates the anxiety is one of the most important factors to be considered when it comes to overcoming anxiety. Breaking the cycle allows the anxiety to subside, and then it is easier to see how to deal with the stresses and personal vulnerabilities that may otherwise bring it back again.