



# The Importance of Principles and Preferences in Individual Behavioral Activation for Social Anxiety Disorder

Chiara Cortese\*

Department of Experimental Medicine, University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy

## DESCRIPTION

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is a common and debilitating mental disorder that affects about 7% of the population. It is characterized by excessive and persistent fear of negative evaluation by others in social or performance situations. People with SAD may avoid or endure such situations with intense distress, which can impair their functioning in various domains of life, such as education, work, and relationships. One of the effective treatments for SAD is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which involves challenging and modifying the maladaptive thoughts and beliefs that underlie the fear of social situations. However, CBT may not be suitable or accessible for everyone with SAD, and some people may not benefit from it or drop out prematurely. Therefore, alternative or complementary treatments are needed to address the needs and preferences of different people with SAD.

One possible alternative or complementary treatment is Behavioral Activation (BA), which is a type of psychotherapy that focuses on increasing positive interactions between a person and their environment. BA aims to help people overcome their avoidance and inactivity patterns and increase their participation in rewarding and meaningful activities. BA is based on the idea that behaviour influences mood, and that by changing behaviour, mood can also change. BA has been originally developed and tested for depression, but it has also been adapted and applied for other mental disorders, such as anxiety disorders. There is some evidence that BA can be effective for SAD, either as a standalone treatment or as an adjunct to CBT. For example, a randomized controlled trial found that BA was superior to a waitlist control condition in reducing social anxiety symptoms and improving quality of life among adults with SAD. Another randomized controlled trial found that BA combined with CBT was more effective than CBT alone in reducing social anxiety symptoms and increasing social functioning among adolescents with SAD.

However, the mechanisms and moderators of BA for SAD are

not well understood. One possible factor that may influence the effectiveness and acceptability of BA for SAD is the role of values and preferences. Values are defined as the principles or standards that guide one's actions and give meaning and direction to one's life. Preferences are defined as the choices or options that one favours or desires over others. Both values and preferences may affect how people with SAD perceive and engage in various activities, and how they respond to BA interventions.

For example, some people with SAD may value social relationships, but prefer to avoid social situations because of their fear of negative evaluation. Others may value personal growth, but prefer to stay in their comfort zone because of their low self-confidence. These values-preferences discrepancies may create internal conflicts and reduce the motivation and satisfaction of engaging in activities. On the other hand, some people with SAD may value solitude, but prefer to join social situations because of their perceived social norms or expectations. Others may value achievement, but prefer to take on challenging tasks because of their high standards or perfectionism. These values-preferences congruencies may create external pressures and increase the stress and anxiety of engaging in activities.

Therefore, it is important to consider the role of values and preferences in individual BA for SAD. By doing so, BA interventions can be tailored to the specific needs and goals of each person with SAD, taking into account their values, strengths, and challenges. For example, BA interventions can help people with SAD identify and clarify their values, explore and resolve their values-preferences discrepancies or congruencies, set realistic and achievable goals that are consistent with their values, monitor their mood and behavior before and after engaging in activities, evaluate their progress and outcomes based on their values, and reinforce their positive experiences and achievements. By incorporating values and preferences into individual BA for SAD, BA interventions can enhance the effectiveness.

**Correspondence to:** Chiara Cortese, Department of Experimental Medicine, University of Genoa, Genoa, Italy, E-mail: cortchiara@edu.it

**Received:** 03-Apr-2023, Manuscript No. JOP-23-21157; **Editor assigned:** 06-Apr-2023, PreQC No. JOP-23-21157 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 20-Apr-2023, QC No JOP-23-21155; **Revised:** 27-Apr-2023, Manuscript No. JOP-23-21157 (R); **Published:** 04-May-2023. DOI: 10.35248/2378-5756.23.26.588

**Citation:** Cortese C (2023) The Importance of Principles and Preferences in Individual Behavioural Activation for Social Anxiety Disorder. J Psychiatry. 26:588.

**Copyright:** © 2023 Cortese C. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.