

Homeopathic Healthcare George Guess, MD

Performance Anxiety

Performance anxiety, or stage fright, can be a very disabling malady for some folks. Excessive nervousness prior to any significant event — an exam, a job interview, a court appearance, public speaking or performing — can dramatically affect the outcome. I remember a case of a young man I saw while studying homeopathy in Athens, Greece. In addition to his great pre-examination anxiety, he suffered debilitating headaches and depression, largely the result of his having failed three college entrance examinations. He was desperate to pass the next exam and to be rid of his headaches. The remedy *Helleborus* quickly transformed his condition. His headaches and depression quickly disappeared, and his confidence level going into the next exam was greatly enhanced. He passed and his future academic prospects became much brighter.

Symptoms of performance anxiety vary, but generally include: feelings of anxiety and dread, sweating, rapid heart beat, diarrhea or frequent urination, weakness, butterflies in the stomach, tremulousness.

Acute homeopathic treatment is often successful in alleviating such symptoms before a big event in a person's life. Chronic constitutional homeopathic treatment can often permanently cure the predisposition to performance anxiety.

The first three homeopathic remedies listed below are most often indicated for acute "stage fright." One should try one dose of the 30C potency of the indicated remedy approximately every thirty minutes beginning two to three hours before the event until relief ensues. If there has been no improvement after three doses, try a different remedy. Once improvement is apparent the remedy should be stopped; resume the remedy at the first sign of a relapse.

Remedies for Performance Anxiety

Argentum nitricum: Persons needing *Argentum nitricum* become terribly excited in anticipation of an important event and they anxiously, fearfully imagine all kinds of "what if" scenarios. Strong palpitations of the heart and frequent urination often accompany the anxiety. They may appear hurried and impulsive, claustrophobic, and intolerant of heat. Apprehension before plane flights or any other occurrence requiring them to be in a confined or crowded space is especially characteristic of this remedy.

Gelsemium: Prior to and during an important event, usually perceived as an intolerable ordeal to persons needing this remedy, these sufferers experience weakness (verging on faintness), trembling, dizziness, and often diarrhea. They seem as if impaled by fright, rather like a deer frozen in an oncoming car's headlights. Great fatigue is typical. Trembling chills may be seen.

Lycopodium: Persons responding to *Lycopodium* are usually afraid of looking foolish during a public performance, of making mistakes and embarrassing themselves by performing well. They lack self-confidence. Typically, however, once they begin to perform they usually do so effectively. These persons are very prone to suffer digestive disturbances and diarrhea from their anxiety. These folks might feel similar anxiety in anticipation of meeting some new people at a social gathering; thus, social anxiety is frequently helped with this remedy.

Silica: This remedy is more often considered a chronic remedy for addressing the innate tendency to experience stage fright; however, it might also, at times, act acutely. Its image is very similar to that of *Lycopodium*. *Silica's* fragile ego requires that he/she maintain an image of confidence and competence; thus their fear is that they will fail and consequently appear incapable. This fear generates great anxiety not only when anticipating a public performance, but also during the performance.

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