Fears: How Phobias Affect People

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Fear is an emotion that everyone deals with and in different ways. Fear is when you are scared of something or someone that is dangerous or threatening. Fear can also be caused by thoughts that you have. One thing that might cause you to fear, might not cause someone the same amount of fear or fear at all. That is where people's phobias come in. Phobia is a different type of fear. It is a deeper fear. "The term 'phobia' derives from the Greek word phobos meaning flight, panic-fear, and terror."(Marks, 1969) The focus of this paper is to see how phobias affect people's brains, life, and how phobias affect specific people's lives.

Phobias are not all caused by the same thing for each person. Phobias can be caused by something traumatic that happened with the said phobia. It can also be caused by just not liking how it looks for feels. It can be caused by something so little or something so big. You would think that having a phobia could not be detected in your brain, but it can. Phobias actually do major alterations to your brain and its activity. "Individuals who suffer from phobias have been shown to display increased activity of the amygdala, emotional reaction, when exposed to phobia-inducing stimuli, noted on functional MRI."(Moawad, 2016) The responses lined up with more negative emotions and distress. Phobias have a great effect on people and they really do affect the brain more than we realize.

Phobias affect people's everyday life and not always in a positive way. People with phobias can control their lives. "Approximately 10% of people in the U.S. have specific phobias, 7.1% experience social phobias (fear of social situations), and 0.9% have agoraphobia (fear of open space)." (Fritscher, 2020) Social phobias and specific phobias cause stress and anxiety and because of that everyday life becomes more difficult. People with social phobias have anxiety in social settings which makes it difficult for said person to go out. People with the fear of heights, flying, insects, animals, and storms all get anxiety from those things. Things that you see every day, experience any day, or do every day cause other people stress. Things that you may think nothing about cause some others terror. People without certain phobias find petting a dog or getting through a storm super easy, but a person with Cynophobia or Astraphobia would not. They would not even be able to do it. Something so simple would cause someone with these phobias so much fear to a point of a breakdown or even worse, a panic attack. Having a phobia makes it more difficult to live a "normal" everyday life, especially if what you fear can be found all around you.

My phobia started when I was six years old. We had dress-up clothes and in the dress-up clothes, we had a clown wig. I asked my mother to dress me up like a clown, so she did. She did my makeup and put the wig on me. When I turned and look in the mirror, I started to cry. I was terrified of what a saw, which was a clown. That's when my coulrophobia started. Having a phobia of clowns is not really that bad when you think about it. Not every day do you see clowns. Halloween and fairs sometimes are bad because there are people dressed as clowns but other than that you don't see clowns. I always felt so silly having a phobia of clowns. It's just such a weird phobia to have. In 2017, people started to dress up as clowns and walk around the streets to scare people. During this time, my anxiety was super high. I was so scared

that a clown was going to pop out of nowhere when I was leaving work or coming home after a game. I was always looking over my shoulder scared.

Another example of how phobias can have an effect on people’s lives is my mom, Angie. Ever since she was young, my mom has been scared of spiders. She can not stand to be around any type or size of the spider. It could be the smallest spider in the word by my mom who will still stand on something and yell for someone else to come kill the spider. When we do kill the spider, it can not be with her shoe. It has to be one of our shoes or something else that does not belong to her. Spiders have always been something she has been afraid of and the look of terror on her face will just show you how scared she is.

In conclusion, phobias have a big impact on people’s lives. Phobias have a big effect on people. Phobias affect people’s brains and can be detected in a scan of the brain. Phobias also affect people’s everyday lives with stress and anxiety, making life more difficult for those with phobias. Phobias have a big impact on people physically, emotionally, and mentally.