Lecture 4: Cognitive Models of Anxiety, Phobias

Overestimation of:
- Probability of feared event
- Severity of feared event

Underestimation of:
- Attentional rescue factors
- Coping ability of individual

Specific Phobias
- A particular object or situation causes excessive unreasoned fears
  - Blood, insects, injections
  - Natural environment (water, heights)
  - Animals
  - Situations (closures)

Social Phobias
- Persistent fear linked to presence of or evaluation by others

Matthews Model of Specific Phobias
- Step 1: Classical Conditioning
  - Stimulus paired with an aversive unconditioned stimulus leads to fear
    - e.g., bitten by a dog
- Step 2: Operant Conditioning
  - Negative reinforcement means individual avoids stimuli
    - e.g., avoid dogs to prevent feelings of anxiety
  - Avoidance reinforces the fear through anxiety reduction