

HOW TO TELL SOMEONE – AND SURVIVE!

We recommend telling people you trust on a need-to-know basis. This means you can stop all the deception, which is a relief. It is not easy to tell someone, but everyone who has says it was worth it. So, if you want to tell someone of you have Avoidant Paruresis (AP), avoid dropping them in the deep end. Instead lead them in gently like this:

“You know what a phobia is, don’t you?”

(Of course they do, but it sets a context; and we know AP is a phobia and a social anxiety disorder.)

“It’s an illogical fear of something.”

(Hopefully you or they know someone with a bit of a phobia: flying, spiders, needles, heights, snakes.)

“Well I’ve got a phobia and its really messing up my life, and I’m too embarrassed to tell anyone; but I’ve decided to tell you because I’m tired of pretending that things are OK.”

(Now they know it’s serious and will be concerned, and realize it’s something out of the ordinary).

“It’s a social phobia which means I can’t do something when there are people around; think of stage fright: where someone loses the ability to speak while being watched.”

(This gives them an acceptable example they can understand)

“Well in my case, when there are people around, I lose the ability to pee. I want to go, but the body doesn’t respond. It’s horrible and it makes my life miserable.”

(When they say “but surely eventually when you are bursting to go you’ll pee?” You tell them)

“It doesn’t work like that. I don’t have any choice in the matter. Apparently the subconscious closes the tap; however much as I want or need to go, that tap stays closed. I can be in pain, but unless I’m somewhere safe, the subconscious keeps the tap shut.

“I’ve discovered it’s a recognized condition, and a surprising number of men and women have it, but no-one talks about it. There is even a charity for it.

“I’ve got a chance to get some help for it over a weekend…….”

(If they ask how they can help, you can say that just their knowing takes a weight off your shoulders. They can understand when you choose one bar over another and not dispute it; they can understand when you need to take your time in the bathroom and not query it; they can understand when you ask them to do something unusual for you and accept it.)