

Paruresis Awareness Day

An informational presentation for family members and friends of shy bladder syndrome sufferers from the International Paruresis Association.

What is Paruresis?

Primary vs. Secondary Paruresis

What does recovery look like?

How can I help?

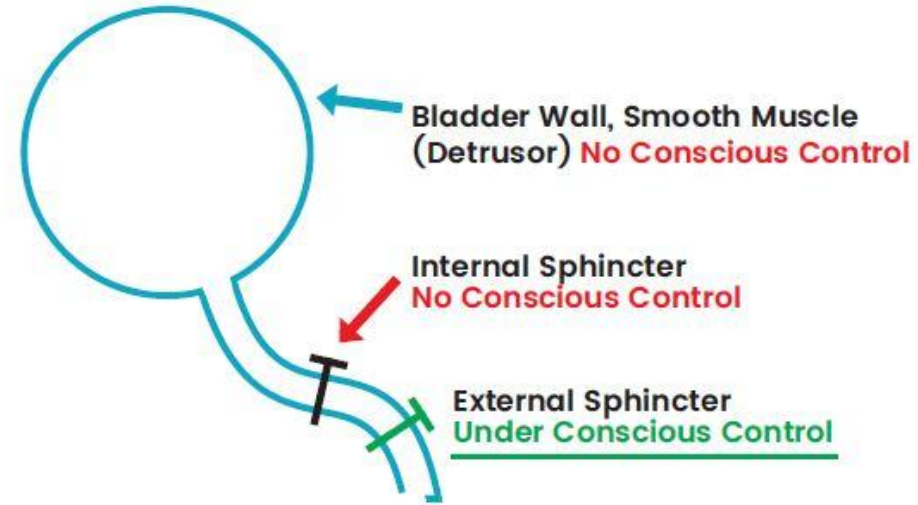


What is Paruresis?

Not being able to relieve yourself in the presence of others is called Paruresis

- (“par-YOU-ree-sis”)
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5 300.23)
- Those suffering from this phobia often live uncomfortable, severely restricted lives
- Treatable with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helping 4 out of 5 sufferers.

THE BLADDER/LOCKUP



	Bladder Wall	Internal Sphincter	External Sphincter
Normal Need To Go	Squeezes	Open	Closed
Normal Peeing	Squeezes	Open	Open
Under Threat	Relaxes	Closed	N/A

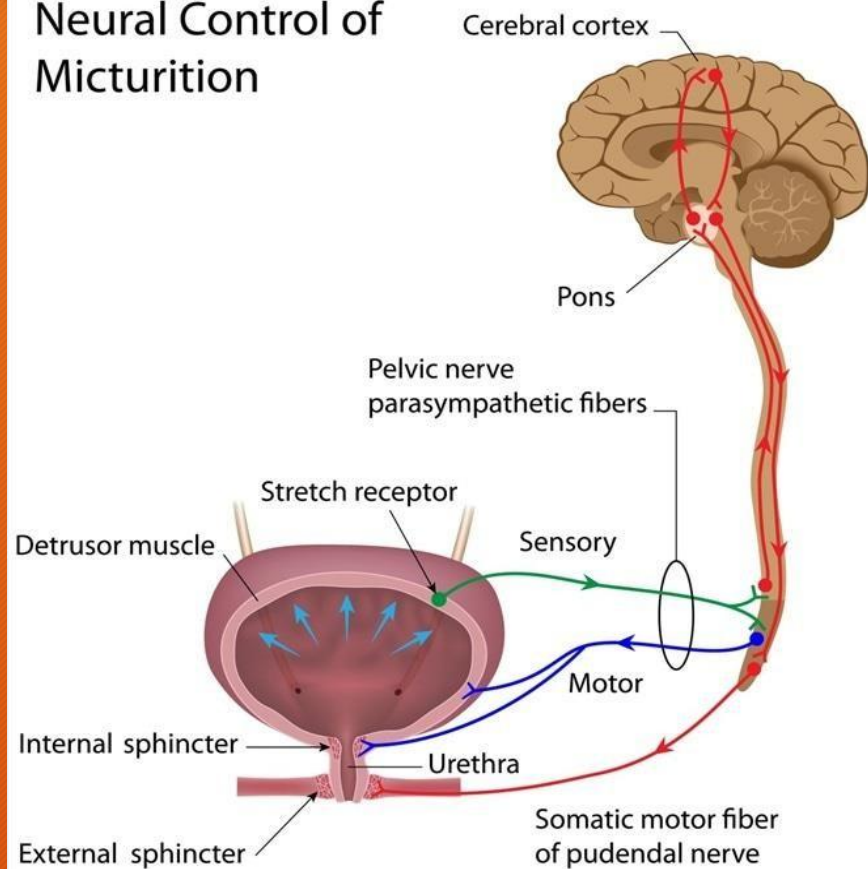
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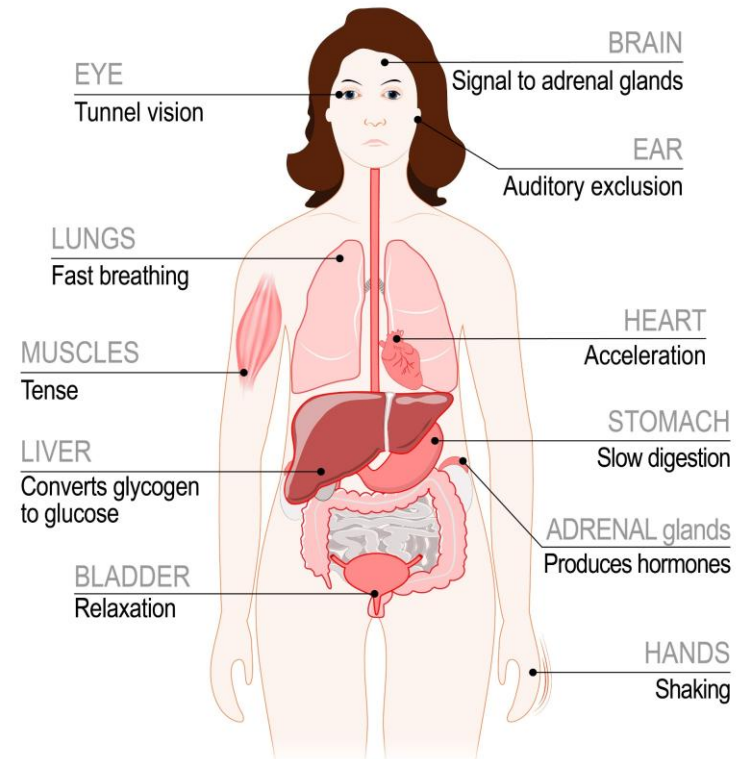
The Brain-Bladder Pathway

Diagrams courtesy:
Drs. Jared Worchel and Phillip Yang (2026)

Neural Control of Micturition



Fight-or-flight response



“What causes Paruresis?”

Triggering event?

Reinforced by avoidance behaviors

Genetics?

Constellation of Characteristics

- Conscientious
- Sensitive to needs of others

“Is there a cure?”:
We call them “recovery methods”

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Catheter

Breath-Hold

Disclosure
(Telling
Others)

Self-
Acceptance

Graduated
Exposure



Primary vs. Secondary Paruresis

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- Primary: What a fly on the wall would see
- Secondary: The internalized thoughts and feelings based on what has occurred
 - Shame
 - Embarrassment
 - “The Secret”

Mission: The IPA is dedicated to supporting people with paruresis; providing information, recovery strategies and advocating in the mental health, medical and legal communities.

Vision: To champion paruresis awareness.



Recovery Key: Graduated Exposure

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- Fluid load
- Start in a situation where have 95% confidence
- “Misfires” - not Success or Failure
- Gradually increase the level of anxiety
- Change one variable at a time

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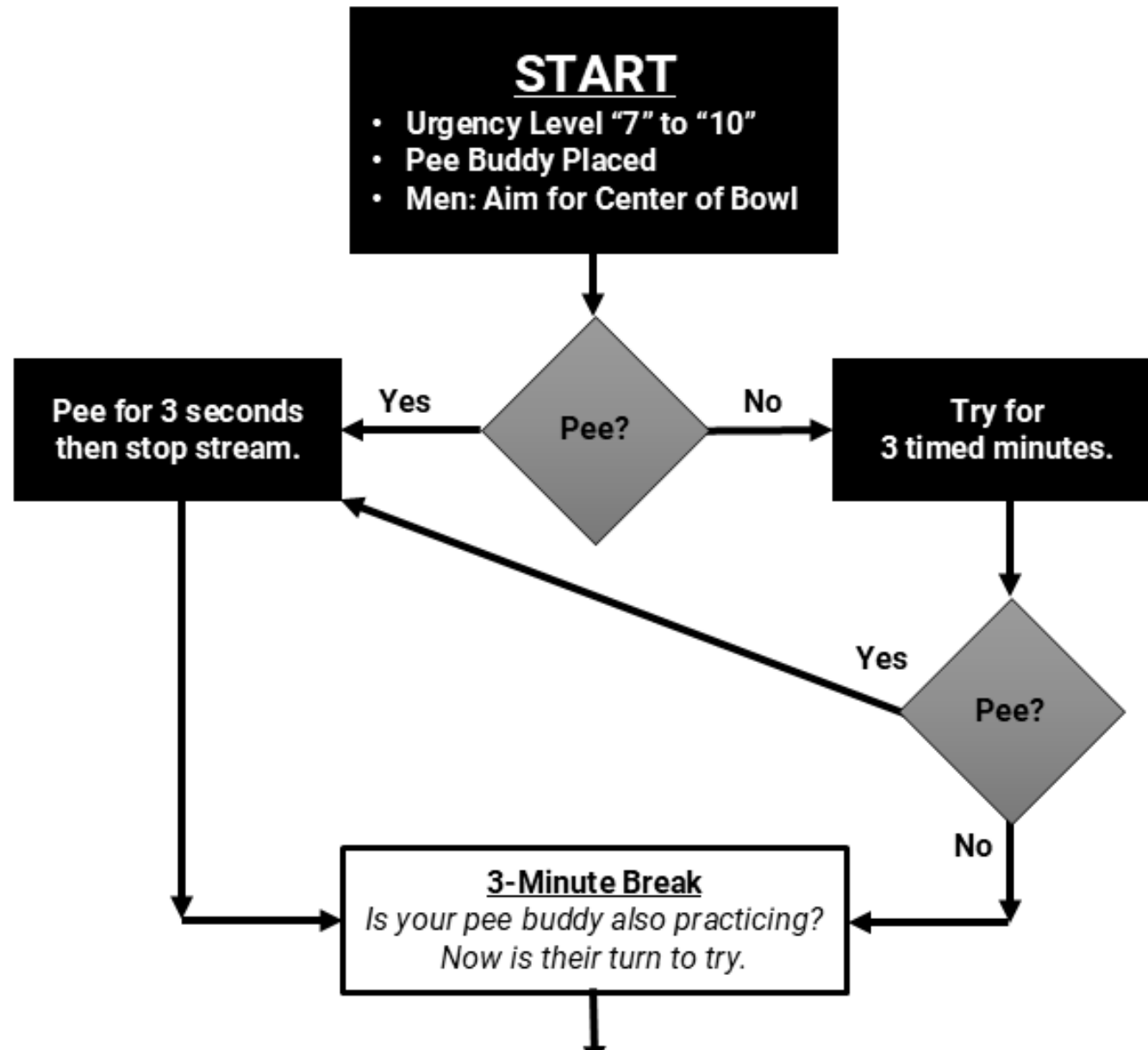


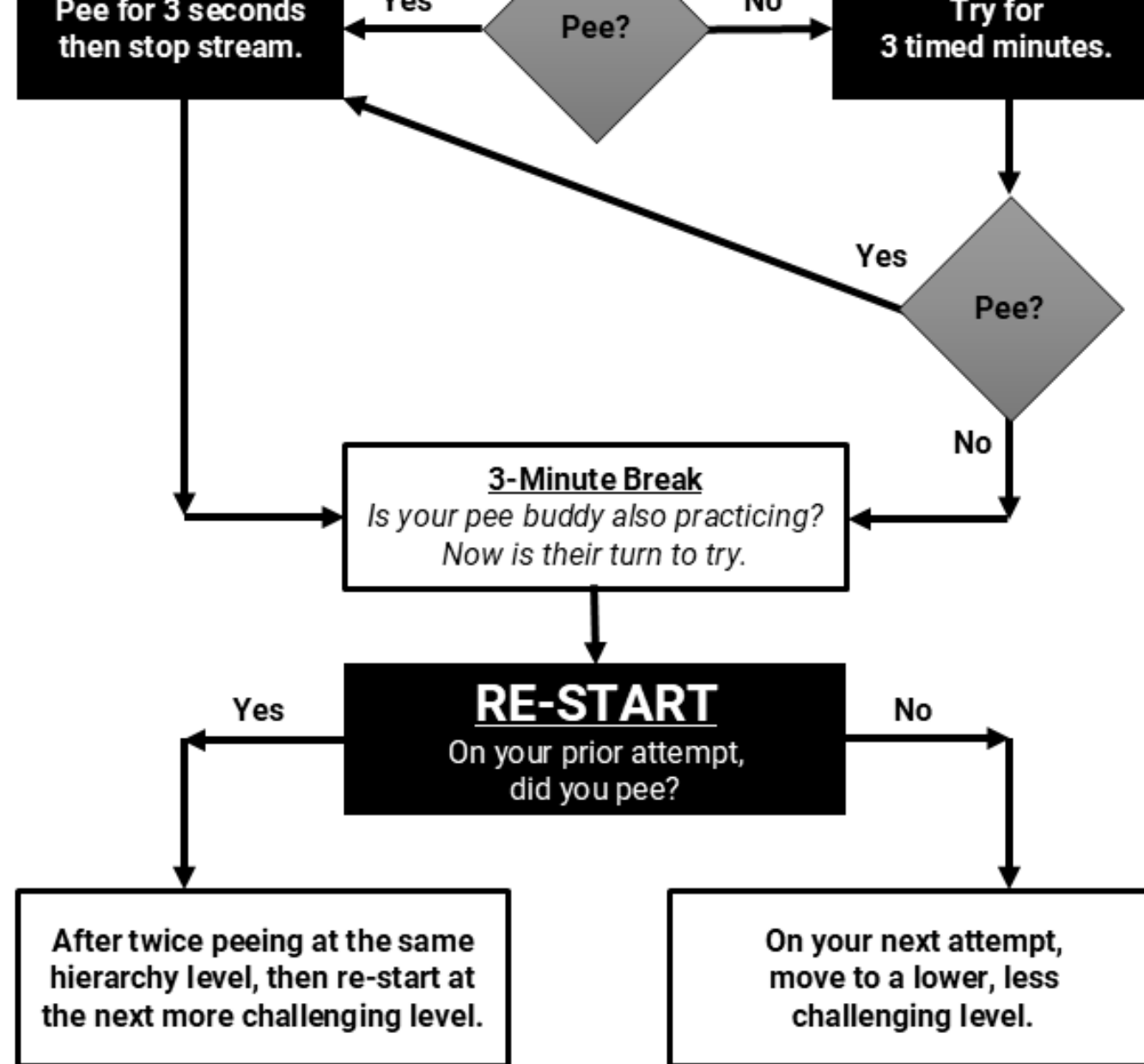
- Suggested criteria to vary depending on personal requirement (X is the buddy)
- Start at 1 and move up to 10. Distance/Sitting vs. standing/Making a noise
- X in sight, but not watching vs. X watching (difficult); X silent vs. X talking

Variable: Distance

10	You and X are “side on” but X is in open doorway.
9	X is in sight in open doorway.
8	X is by bathroom door but out of sight. Bathroom door wide open.
7	X is by bathroom door but out of sight. Bathroom door cracked open.
6	X is half way across the room. Bathroom door cracked open.
5	X is in the room as far from the bathroom as possible. Bathroom door cracked open.
4	X is by bathroom door. Bathroom door shut.
3	X is half way across the room. Bathroom door shut.
2	X is in the room as far from the bathroom as possible. Bathroom door shut.
1	X is out in the corridor.

The Graduated Exposure Process for Paruresis Recovery





Repeat this process for 30-45 minutes and then move to an environment where you can empty your bladder fully. Whether you were able to urinate or not in this practice session, simply working through this process is considered "success!"

“How can I help?”

Understanding Primary Paruresis vs. Secondary Paruresis

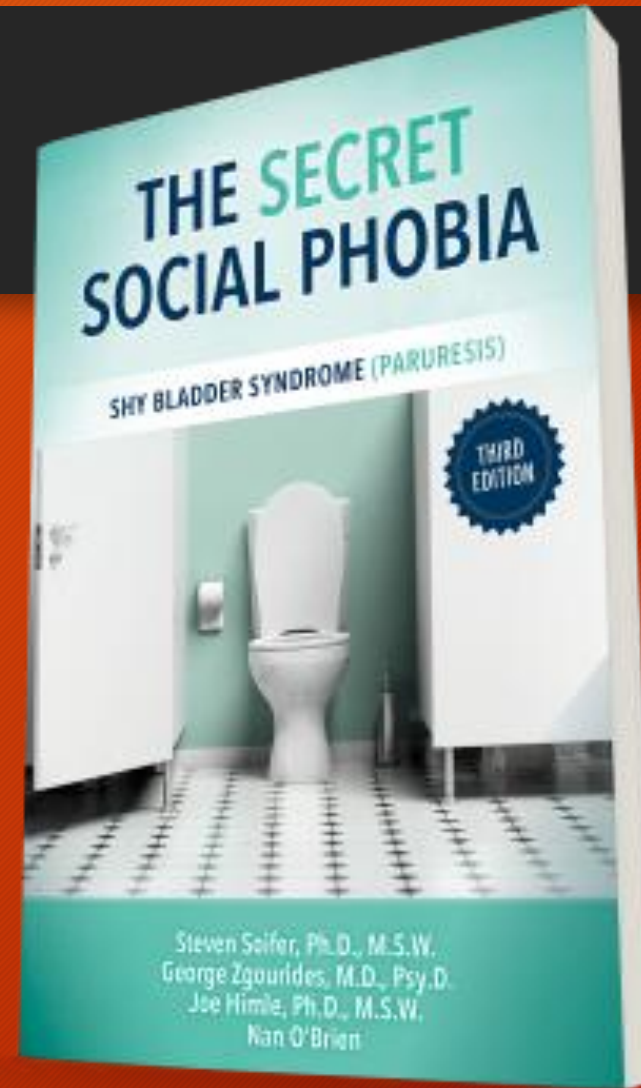
Encouragement, support, listening

“Pee Buddy”

Not a “failure”, just a “lock up” or “mis-fire”

Education

- **Dr. Steven Soifer, PhD, MSW**
 - IPA Co-founder
- **Dan Rucker, MA, LCSW**
 - IPA President
- “Shy Bladder Center”
- Urologist/Mental Health Outreach
- Website: Paruresis A to Z



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Support Groups

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- Virtual
- In-Person
- Women
- Family & Friends



Workshops

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- **Virtual**
 - Saturday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- **Hybrid**
 - Two online sessions, one all-day in-person
- **Live Weekend**
 - US, Canada, Australia, and ???
 - Friday 7 p.m. - 10 p.m.
 - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 - Sunday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- **Story Sharing**
- “You are not alone”
- “Paruresis 101”
- Yes, live discreet practice peeing near others.



About the IPA: Celebrating Our 30th Year!

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Mission:

- The IPA is Dedicated to Supporting People With Paruresis, Providing Information and Recovery Strategies and Advocating in the Mental Health, Medical and Legal Communities.

Vision:

- To Champion Paruresis Awareness.

Focus Areas:

- Education
- Support Groups
- Workshops
- Drug Testing Advocacy

The International Paruresis Association (IPA) was founded in 1996 to raise public awareness about paruresis, provide support, and give out the latest information. Most of IPA's members and leadership are treatment professionals, people suffering from paruresis or recovering from it, and their loved ones. Membership is open to anyone touched by paruresis as well as those with an interest in supporting others with paruresis, advocating for their rights, and advancing scientific knowledge about the disorder.



Contact

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Tim Pyle, Executive Director

- tim@paruresis.org
- 443-315-5250

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