# Writer explores challenges of social anxiety

By Erika Spicer FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Daniela Grazia couldn't bear stepping onto her iunior high school bus.

In this simple moment, Grazia realized the intensity of her problem: social anxiety disorder.

In what she calls a novel/memoir, "On the Outside Looking in - My Life with Social Anxiety Disorder," Grazia, of Centre County, describes the hardships that come along with the disorder.

"I was always so rigid and tense," Grazia said. "And because of this, I was teased."

Intense anxiety and fear of social situations characterize social anxiety, and often the affected individual is terrified of being judged, scrutinized or embarrassed in front of others, something that Grazia experienced and would never wish upon someone else, she said.

Grazia's disorder triggered bouts of depression, which required trial after trial of medications. Working as a staff accountant, interacting with coworkers on a daily basis induced a great deal of dis-

Along with the afflictions of S.A.D., Grazia was simultaneously struggling with her sexuality.

But, Grazia has come to terms with her sexuality and has been in a relationship for four-and-a-half years now — though she still struggles with S.A.D. on a daily basis.

After her experiences, Grazia said she wants people with the disorder to know they are not alone. She hopes her novel/memoir will help those silently struggling like she did.

Some students understand the potential benefit of Grazia's novel.

"I think writing can be cathartic in a way," Jen Kach (junior-English) said. "I feel that a book like this is definitely a good resource for students on campus struggling with something like that.

Mary Anne Knapp, a clinical social worker and senior staff therapist at Penn State's Counseling and Psychological Services, said social anxiety disorder affects 2 to 7 percent of the population and is prevalent on Penn State's campus.

"The college environment makes it more difficult for an individual to function," Knapp said. "For example, say a student misses class. A normal student would return without hesitation, while someone with S.A.D. might experience trembling and nausea when they go back.

Grazia said her college experience was not easy. She avoided socializing and talking to her peers throughout the course of the day, often feeling a sense of panic when she entered classrooms and buildings, she said. The emphasis that professors put on group projects complicated her abilities to function and learn, too.

On The Outside Looking In



MY LIFE WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

Courtesy of Daniela Grazia

Local writer Daniela Grazia explores her social anxiety disorder in a novel/memoir. Until meeting a clinical social worker at Penn State, Grazia didn't know there was a name for the struggles she had.

"I felt so inadequate and would get so nervous that it would leave me at loss for words. I was ashamed at how well the other students communicated compared to me," Grazia said. "When I was at college, I thought it was just me. I didn't even know there was a name for this disorder."

Her distress motivated her to seek help in coltrist left the biggest impact.

"My college psychiatrist, out of all of the help I had sought out, was so helpful," Grazia said. "It felt amazing to finally put a name to my condition. After we figured out what was going on, the psychiatrist taught me practice exercises to change my thinking

Penn State CAPS offers a variety of services to students including individual counseling, couples counseling and group discussions and groups. Enrollment in these groups is free and can be made at 501 Student Health Center according to their website www.sa.psu.edu/caps.

#### Therapy groups through CAPS

- Sexual assault recovery
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lege. To this day, Grazia says her college's psychia-

- Anxiety clinic
- Improving relaxation and controlling anxiety
- Stress management
- Depression clinic
- Loss group

### **New Orleans sound** comes to Eisenhower

**By Lindsay Cryer** COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

New Orleans jazz music isn't only found in Louisiana -- it's here in State College, too.

The New Orleans Nights' jazz concert will be held at 7:30 tonight in the Eisenhower Auditorium.

The show will feature Allen Toussaint, Nicholas Payton and The Joe Krown Trio. The show is put on by the Center for Performing Arts and sponsored by Jazz Spectrum on The Lion 90.7 FM and Glenn and Nancy

John Mark Rafacz, editorial manager for the Center of Performing Arts, said the organization tries to bring in multiple jazz acts each year, and is thrilled to present these high-profile artists.

Toussaint is a composer, producer, arranger, pianist and singer who has worked with a long list of known musicians including Paul McCartney, Etta James, Paul Simon and The Rolling Stones. Toussaint, who is known best for his work with R&B and soul music, is also a member of the Rock and Roll Hall

"He is quintessentially associated with New Orleans," Rafacz said. "He couldn't have been raised in New Orleans without knowing jazz as well.

Dan Yoder, director of jazz studies, said he is always thrilled to have jazz concerts at Penn State, and this "high-level" group of performers will bring a twist that isn't always seen in jazz music — improvisation.

"The spontaneity," Yoder said. "The fact that we can know that what we're hearing is totally different from what they play at the next show.

Rafacz said each artist will bring an individual sound to the jazz concert. Toussaint has R&B and pop sounds. Payton is known for classic jazz and The Joe Krown Trio are identified with

"It's bringing a gumbo of different kinds of New Orleans music," Rafacz said. "The vehicle is jazz.

"He is quintessentially associated with New Orleans."

> John Mark Rafacz - Center of Performing Arts

There will be elements of differ-

ent style as well. Shade Olasimbo, who works with Jazz Spectrum, said she thinks it's great The Lion 90.7 FM

sponsors so many jazz shows. "When you listen to pop and things on the radio, it all kind of sounds the same," Olasimbo (junior-journalism) said.

"Jazz will never be the same. whether it's from the past or

Zach Zimbler, general manager of The Lion 90.7 FM, said the station is happy to tend to the needs of jazz enthusiasts in town and to help promote the shows.

'It's not just about some con fetti blowing out of a cannon it's about the music." Zimbler (junior-supply chain and information, sciences and technology)

"People care about it and want to hear it."

Tickets are still available: \$22 for University Park students, \$38 for those 18 and younger and \$45 for adults. They can be purchased at the Eisenhower Auditorium Downtown Theatre Center, HUE Robeson Center, Bryce Jordan Center and online.

To e-mail reporter: Ibc146@psu.edu

#### If you go

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When: 7:30 tonight

Where: Eisenhower Auditorium Details: Tickets cost \$22 for University Park students, \$38 for 18 years and younger and \$45 for adults.

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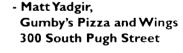
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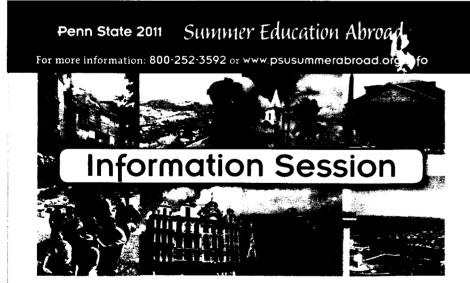




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