

Anxiety is experienced when we feel upset, uncomfortable and tense in response to a threat, danger or stress. Life experiences such as a relationship breakdown, job loss, death of someone close, serious illness or other traumatic event can trigger feelings of anxiety. Feeling anxious in these situations usually only lasts for a limited time, and although not regarded as clinical anxiety, these feelings may sometimes require a combination of medical management, education, counselling and lifestyle changes.

Anxiety disorders develop when anxious feelings are ongoing, happen for no apparent reason, or continue long after a stressful event has passed. The level of anxiety and feelings of panic can be so extreme that it significantly interferes with a person's normal activities in their daily life and relationships. Common anxiety disorders include: generalised anxiety disorder; social phobia; panic disorder; agoraphobia; obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Treatment

Treatments for anxiety vary according to personality, severity and nature of the condition. For example, while symptoms of mild anxiety may be assisted with lifestyle changes, more severe cases may require medication to help control feelings of high anxiety. Counselling and education are also useful to help people understand their thoughts, emotions and behaviour so that they may develop new ways to deal with their anxiety. Lifestyle changes can include regular physical exercise; involvement in activities or pastimes previously enjoyed; practising regular relaxation techniques (e.g. meditation, mindfulness, deep breathing exercises etc.) and reducing caffeine intake.

Contact us on 6223 56 12 to make an appointment to speak with one of our Counsellors.

For more information about anxiety visit:

Sane Australia www.sane.org

beyond blue (www.beyondblue.org.au)

headspace (www.headspace.org.au)

Lifeline (www.lifeline.org.au)

Symptoms of Anxiety

- Emotional symptoms include ongoing worry, apprehensiveness and a sense of powerlessness.
- A sense of impending panic, danger or doom. In severe cases this may trigger a panic attack which is a sudden, intense episode of fear associated with physical symptoms such as shortness of breath, dizziness and a racing heart.
- Physical symptoms can include breathlessness, dizziness, sweating, trembling, increased heart rate, dry mouth, choking, nausea, stomach upset, pins and needles in the hands, tightness of the chest, chills or hot flushes. Many of these symptoms are the body's response to shallow, fast breathing (hyperventilating) and will often subside with slow, deep breathing.
- Other symptoms include feeling tired or restless; difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly; difficulty sleeping; nightmares; muscle tension; headaches; loss of appetite and a loss of libido (sex drive). If left untreated, severe anxiety may lead to depression and other long term physical, psychological and social problems.