

ANXIETY

It is normal to experience anxiety from time to time. Anxiety is when we feel upset, uncomfortable and tense in response to a threat or danger. We may feel anxious due to life experiences such as a relationship break down, job loss, death of someone close, serious illness, or a traumatic event. Some people experience anxiety disorders that greatly affect their daily life.



YOUR EAP PROVIDER

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

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Each year in Australia, approximately 2 million people experience anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders develop when anxious feelings are ongoing, happen for no apparent reason, or continue long after a stressful event has passed. Anxiety disorders can interfere with a person's daily life, in areas such as school, work and relationships.

There are a range of different types of anxiety disorders and people can experience more than one anxiety disorder at a time. It is also common for people to experience both anxiety disorders and depression at the same time.

At Positive Solutions we are here to help. If you feel you might need some assistance to cope with anxiety, please contact us to make an appointment.

CAUSES OF ANXIETY

There are many different reasons why people develop anxiety disorders. Sometimes a combination of factors can be the cause. Examples include:

- **Ongoing stress** (e.g. problems at work or home, relationship issues)
- **Traumatic events** (e.g. witnessing death or natural disaster, experiencing abuse)
- **Family history of mental health issues** (e.g. having a parent or sibling with anxiety)
- **Personality factors** (e.g. perfectionism, low self esteem)
- **Physical issues** (e.g. heart disease, thyroid condition, asthma and diabetes)
- **Substance abuse** (e.g. cannabis, amphetamines, alcohol, caffeine or sedatives)

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

- Ongoing worry
- Feeling apprehensive
- Feeling impending panic, danger or doom
- Sense of powerlessness
- Breathlessness
- Racing heart
- Muscle tension
- Tightness of the chest
- Sweating
- Dry mouth
- Feeling dizzy
- Pins and needles
- Chills and hot flushes
- Stomach upset
- Avoiding people or situations

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TREATMENT

There are a range of effective treatment options for managing anxiety.

Medication can help to 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 help lower anxiety levels. Examples include: regular exercise, dietary changes (such as reducing caffeine and alcohol), participating in pleasurable activities, and learning relaxation techniques (such as breathing, muscle relaxation and meditation).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
- www.sane.org
- www.headspace.org.au
- www.lifeline.org.au

TYPES OF ANXIETY

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)

A person with GAD worries or feels anxious most of the time about a number of events or activities in their daily life. For example they may worry about issues with their family, health, money or work.

Panic Disorder

A person with Panic Disorder experiences recurring panic attacks. A panic attack is a sudden intense fear, anxiety or discomfort that appears out of the blue for no apparent reason.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

A person with PTSD experiences significant distress following a traumatic event. They may have distressing memories about the event, nightmares or flashbacks, and avoid reminders of the event.

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)

A person with OCD experiences recurrent obsessions (distressing thoughts, urges or images) and/or compulsions (repetitive and rigid behaviours or mental acts that aim to reduce distress).

Specific phobia

A person with a specific phobia has a significant fear of a specific object or situation. For example, they may fear injections, heights, flying, or specific animals such as spiders or snakes.

Social phobia

A person with social phobia experiences fear or anxiety about social situations where they may be negatively evaluated. For example, they may worry about being humiliated, embarrassed or offending others.



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