

Anxiety

information leaflet

Anxiety

is a normal response to situations that we see as threatening to us, which we all experience from time to time. Anxiety at mild levels can be helpful, for example, when we need to perform well or cope with an emergency.

Anxiety at more severe levels is not helpful, as symptoms of anxiety can be extremely uncomfortable and frightening. People with anxiety symptoms often worry they may have something seriously wrong with them, which results in more anxiety symptoms which then increases the worry! Anxiety can be a vicious circle and can often prevent people from doing what they want to do. If anxiety goes on for a long period of time, it can sometimes make physical problems worse (e.g. stomach problems or high blood pressure).

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear.

Common symptoms of anxiety:

- Feeling constantly on edge and alert to everything around you.
- Feeling that people are looking at you.
- Thinking you might die, have a heart attack.
- Feeling detached from your environment.
- Feeling like running away/wanting to escape from the situation.
- Increased heart rate or palpitations.
- Difficulty in breathing.
- Dry mouth, hot flushes, shaking, dizziness, feeling sick.

Causes of anxiety:

- Early experiences that made the person feel anxious and insecure.
- A series of stressful life events e.g. redundancy, divorce etc.
- Feeling under pressure at work or at home.

What can I do about it?

Attend the education programmes - These will address negative patterns in the way we view the world and ourselves. Engaging in cognitive behavioural techniques will help you understand your thought and behaviour patterns, how they affect your anxieties, and how to regain a sense of control over your feelings. These programmes are found to be highly effective as part of your treatment.

Breaking the cycle - Anxiety often leads to avoidance, which only leads to greater feelings of anxiety. Talking to other people and getting out and about is a good place to start, even when it is the last thing that you feel like doing. Make a plan of action and actively try to challenge and change your unhelpful behaviours.

The Healthy Minds psychological therapy – Here you will have the opportunity to speak to psychological wellbeing practitioners, high intensity therapists and counsellors.

Information booklets on:

- Understanding anxiety and panic attacks
- How to manage stress
- Understanding mental health problems
- How to improve and maintain your mental wellbeing

Can be found in Mind's Booklet Shop at
<http://shop.mind.org.uk/shop/booklets>