

FACTS ABOUT ANXIETY

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

We all experience anxiety when we are under physical, economic, social or psychological stress and it helps us by driving us to remove the source of it. If it becomes too much or is present all the time for no obvious reason, it's known as anxiety disorder and needs treatment.

One in ten Australian adults experience anxiety so crippling it affects every aspect of their lives and generalised anxiety disorders affect 14% of adults a year.

GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER

This is the most common type of anxiety and is characterized by excessive, uncontrollable worry about minor events. Symptoms include chronic muscle tension, mental agitation, fatigue, irritability and difficulty sleeping. It is most common in females and the elderly.

PANIC DISORDER

This is characterised by extreme panic attacks in situations where most people would not be afraid. This can cause worry about attacks occurring, losing control and embarrassment. It can be accompanied by agoraphobia due to a fear of being unable to escape or get help when a panic attack occurs.

SOCIAL PHOBIA

An extreme, lasting, irrational fear and avoidance of social situations, which can interfere severely with the sufferer's life due to avoidance of the situation or enduring it with intense distress.

SPECIFIC PHOBIA

Excessive or unreasonable fear of an object or situation which interferes with the person's life and daily functioning. They recognise the fear but go to great lengths to avoid it.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

The experiencing of recurrent, unwanted and intrusive thoughts or urges to perform repetitive actions to suppress them or provide relief. The actions are time consuming and cause anxiety and distress. It tends to be chronic and onset is usually in early adolescence or adulthood.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

An enduring and distressing disorder following exposure to a traumatic event involving fear or helplessness. The person re-experiences it, avoids associated stimuli and develops a numbing emotional response and it can affect their ability to function. It may not develop for up to several years after the event.

SYMPTOMS

- Worry
- Nervousness or apprehension
- Irritability
- Negative thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Avoidance and distress of situations
- Physical symptoms- sweating, nausea, dizziness, restlessness
- Sleeping difficulties and fatigue
- Muscle tension

CAUSES

Usually a combination of factors including genetic, psychological, behavioural, environmental, physical or medical. It could be a reaction to a major life stress.

TREATMENT

- Psychological treatment and counselling
- Psychiatric treatment
- Medication
- Relaxation and meditation
- Support groups

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

Adopt a healthy lifestyle including diet and exercise, and make time to relax and meditate.

HOW CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS HELP?

Be understanding and empathetic, reminding the person they can recover, including providing emotional support and reassurance. It is important to be non-judgemental and encourage them to talk about their recovery.

REFERRAL/SUPPORT INFO

Drug ARM 1300 656 800
info@drugarm.com.au
drugarm.com.au

Drug ARM Central Intake
07 3620 8880

Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
24/7 crisis support

Or contact your local GP (General Practitioner)

REFERENCES

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Mental health. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4125.0main+features3150Jan%202013>



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