

What help is available?

- ▶ Try talking about the anxiety to a friend or relative whom you trust and respect, and who is a good listener.
- ▶ Join an Anxiety Support Groups where you can talk with people who experience similar challenges and together may suggest ways of coping.
- ▶ Counselling is a individual session which may help you to understand, control and manage the anxiety.
- ▶ Medication. In the treatment of severe anxiety, medication is sometimes prescribed by a medical practitioner.

Can anxiety disorders be prevented?

Anxiety disorders cannot be prevented.

However, there are some things that you can do to control or lessen symptoms, including:

- ▶ Reduce your consumption of products that contain caffeine, such as coffee, tea, cola and chocolate.
- ▶ Ask your doctor or pharmacist before taking any over the counter medicines or herbal remedies. Many contain chemicals that can increase anxiety symptoms.
- ▶ Exercise daily and eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- ▶ Seek counselling and support after a traumatic or disturbing experience.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Office of Student Success (OSS)

PVT Building 1st Floor
29 Princess of Wales Street
Parktown

or

OSS Satellite Office

Student Liaison Hub
4th Level
Entrance Faculty of Health Sciences



Wits Student Crisis Line

0800 111 331 (Available 24/7/365)



Anxiety Is a persistent state of anticipating or perceiving threat in the future either relating to objects or situations. Anxiety is one of the highly prevalent mental or psychological challenges in educational institutions, organizational contexts as well as home or personal spaces.

NB: It is often advisable to refrain from self-diagnosis or self-medicating. Rather consult a psychologist, psychiatrist or any other relevant mental health professional for further insight, assessment or recommendation.

Types of Anxiety

Generalized Anxiety- Persistent thoughts of worry or anxiety about various aspects of life, especial when an individual feels as though she/he has no control. For example a sense of loss of control over situations. Some common results of this state would be reactions of physical tension, irritability, fatigue, disturbed sleeping patterns, dizzy spells and appetite disturbance.

Social Anxiety- Feeling anxious in socially interactive situations, especially those that may place an individual under judgment and/or examination.

Selective Mutism- Repetitive or ongoing fear to speak in certain settings where one is expected to. Feeling highly anxious to deliver a speech in front of classmates or colleagues and therefore a negative impact in a manner which performance may not be a true reflection of capabilities.

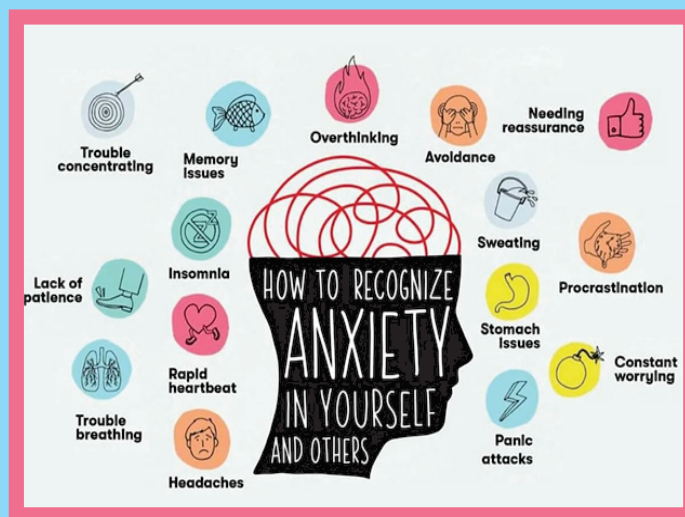
Specific Phobia- Intense fear from exposure to particular objects or situations to an extent of constantly avoiding them.

Panic Attack- A sudden feeling of an intense fear, followed by a physical reaction such a hyperventilation, tightening of chest, sweating either from an anticipated or unanticipated exposure to certain situations or objects.

Agoraphobia- Feeling fearful and anxious that one will find difficulty in escaping in an event which they may encounter panic like symptoms or any other maladaptive cognitive thoughts or behaviors that draw attention and humiliation. This is most likely to occur in situations that seem hard to escape such as open or closed spaces or large crowds.

Separation Anxiety- An intense fear or anxiety when faced with separating from someone whom a close bond or attachment has been formed.

Substance or medication induced anxiety- An individual may experience anxiety symptoms from taking or withdrawing from medication or substances such as cannabis, caffeine, sedatives etc.



Effects of Untreated Anxiety

Anxiety can lead to

- procrastination
- cognitive bias where one is highly avoidant or responds discriminately
- cognitive interference from being consumed by irrelevant thoughts to the task at hand or situational demands. Consequently, there may be a sense of low confidence in making judgment in situations due to disturbed attention, concentration and memory.
- persistent preoccupation of possible failure to succeed resulting in low self-esteem.
- intense stress is translated physiologically, such as poor immune system, gastroenteritis, migraine, muscle tension etc.

Common factors that induce Anxiety

Family Stress: Parent-child relational problems; domestic violence; exposure to hostile marital discord or divorce of parents.

Academic Pressures: intense fear of failing, adjustment difficulties, pressure to produce and maintain particular grades as a means to secure financial aid.

Financial Stress: Lack of financial means or access to basic needs; food and accommodation, education resources.

Bereavement: Loss of family member, colleague, classmate, friends or an acquaintance.