



Anxiety

Understand the facts

It is a normal part of life to experience occasional anxiety. When we experience anxiety that is persistent, overwhelming and interferes with daily activities, this may signal an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders are the most common type of mental health disorder and can run in families. There are a number of different types of anxiety disorders including generalised anxiety disorder, panic disorder or attacks, social anxiety disorder, separation anxiety, agoraphobia (avoidance of situations that could cause panic) and specific phobias. In many cases, anxiety disorders are manageable with therapy, good lifestyle choices and, in some cases, anti-anxiety medication.



Signs and symptoms

- Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless, or unsatisfying sleep).
- Restlessness.
- Panic attacks.
- Racing thoughts, worry, rumination and overthinking possibilities.
- Physical issues (headaches, stomach aches, muscle tension, racing heart, sweaty palms, etc.).
- Irritability.
- Self-harming behaviours (e.g. cutting or hair pulling).
- Isolation from others.
- Often coupled with depression.



Self-care

- Awareness: identifying anxious thoughts is a big step. Make a list of what is and is not in your control in situations that make you anxious.
- Practice mindfulness and meditation: mindful walks, deep breathing, etc.
- Exercise: release of serotonin can help you feel better.
- Social engagement: participate in a hobby, sport, volunteer, join a club.
- Abstain from negativity: negative self-talk, negative groups or individuals, etc.
- Make good lifestyle choices: sleep, exercise, diet, caffeine intake, alcohol consumption, drug use, smoking and social media, all play a role in generating anxiety?



Reach out

- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) and schedule a session with a licensed mental health professional who specialises in treating anxiety.
- Find a local or online support group.



Need more information?

- Anxiety and Depression Association of America:
<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety>.
- Beyond Blue:
www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety.
- Harvard Medical School:
[Coping with Anxiety and Stress Disorders](#).
- Heads Up:
www.headsup.org.au/your-mental-health/mental-health-conditions.