

ACTION STEPS

Diagnosing and living with an anxiety disorder is a journey. However, these helpful first steps can guide you along the way:

- ✓ Schedule an appointment for a check-up with your primary care provider.
- ✓ Talk with your health care providers about treatment options.
- ✓ Adhere to medication and treatment regimens prescribed by your doctor.
- ✓ Seek out individual counseling or support groups.
- ✓ Connect with those who will support and encourage you.
- ✓ Practice positive coping skills, like taking a walk or meditating.

KEEP IN MIND

Remember, an anxiety disorder does not define you, nor does it comprise the whole of your life. Consider reaching out to your health care provider and engaging other counseling resources for guidance on next steps.

What steps will you take today to be well and live life more fully?



Anxiety Disorder
Mental Health

Anxiety Disorder

Sick of anxiety
keeping you
ALONE AND AFRAID?

It doesn't have
to be this way.

*Imagine for a moment how much more enjoyable
and productive life might be in the absence of
such overwhelming anxiety.*

Worry and fear are a normal part of life. Our biology programs us to regulate our responses to threats or crises. However, intense and persistent anxiety about everyday situations is a sign of something more serious.

STRUGGLING WITH ANXIETY?

Anxiety disorders affect over 40 million Americans, interfering with daily activities. Many of these disorders involve panic attacks, which are sudden feelings of intense terror that peak quickly.

ANXIETY DISORDER SYMPTOMS

Experiencing anxiety for a short period, such as before a big exam or a major event, doesn't necessarily mean you have an anxiety disorder. You must be symptomatic for a minimum of six months. The following are common anxiety disorder symptoms:

- A sense of danger or panic
- Increased heart rate
- Feeling nervous or powerless
- Rapid breathing or hyperventilation
- Feeling tired
- Trembling
- Sweating
- Difficulty concentrating

TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

There are several types of anxiety disorders and each person experiences the disorder somewhat differently. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013)* classifies the most common forms of anxiety disorders as follows:

- **Separation Anxiety Disorder** occurs when a child feels extreme anxiety due to a parent's absence.
- **Social Anxiety Disorder** describes someone feeling intense anxiety in social situations. These emotions are triggered by fear of embarrassment or self-consciousness about how others view them.
- **Panic Disorder** involves experiencing repeated instances of intense terror, resulting in panic attacks.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** affects people with persistent, upsetting thoughts called obsessions.
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder** involves experiencing consistent and excessive worry about events, health, relationships, work, etc.
- **Agoraphobia** occurs when a person feels anxiety and thus avoids locations where they might feel trapped or out of control.
- **Specific phobias** can prompt a panic attack. Typically, a person tries to avoid a particular situation or object related to the phobia.