



## **ANXIETY**

It is defined as a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. It may lead to depression. Psychological definition of anxiety is an emotion, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure. People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They avoid certain situations out of worry. It is an indicator of underlying disease when feelings become excessive, all-consuming and interfere with daily living.

### **WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?**

A big event/ buildup of smaller stressful life situation may trigger excessive anxiety e.g. death in family, work stress or ongoing worry about finances, relationship problems or family issues and side effect of medication. Persons with certain personality types are more prone to anxiety disorders than others. Other mental health disorders.

### **6 TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS**

- **Generalised Anxiety Disorder**  
A person feels anxiety on most days, worrying about lots of different things, for period of 6 months or more.
- **Social Anxiety**  
A person has an intense fear of being criticized, embarrassed, public speaking.
- **Specific Phobias**  
A person feels very fearful about a particular object.
- **Panic Disorder**  
Uncontrollable feelings of anxiety combined with range of physical symptoms. Last for 1 month.
- **Obsessive Compulsive Behavior**  
A person has ongoing unwanted/ intrusive thoughts and fears that cause anxiety e.g fear of germs and contamination can lead to constant washing of hands.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**  
This happens after a person experiences a traumatic event (assault, accident/disaster). It is presented after a relative passed over. Symptoms are: difficulty relaxing, upsetting dreams or flashbacks of the event or avoidance of anything related to the event. During lockdown or  
  
Isolation, lack of being with friends or family, not being able to visit/see loved one and losing a relative.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

### Common symptoms:

#### 1. Physical:

Panic attacks, hot and cold flushes, racing heart, tightening of the chest, quick breathing and restlessness.

#### 2. Psychological

Excessive fear, worry, catastrophically or obsessive thinking.

#### 3. Behavioral

Avoidance of situations that make you feel anxious which can impact on study, work or social life. Fear of going to out (Agoraphobia); crowded areas and public places

## ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION CHECKLIST

1. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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2. How often did you feel nervous?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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3. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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4. How often did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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5. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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6. How often did you feel hopeless?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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7. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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8. How often did you feel restless or fidgety?

Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	NEVER
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9. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?

Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarey	Never
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10. How often did you feel depressed?

- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rerey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
11. About how often did you feel tired out of no good reason?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
12. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
13. How often did you feel that everything was an effort?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
14. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
15. How often did you feel tired out of no good reason?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
16. How often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
17. How often did you feel worthless?
- |            |       |           |       |       |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarey | Never |
|------------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|

## WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AMID THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

- 1. Try to maintain perspective.**  
Try to remember that medical, scientific, and public health experts around the world are working hard to contain the virus, treat those affected and develop a vaccine as quickly as possible
- 2. Find a healthy balance in relation to media coverage.**  
Being exposed to large volume of negative information can heighten feeling of anxiety while it's important to stay informed, you may find it useful to limit your media intake if it's upsetting you/your family.
- 3. Try to maintain a practical and calm approach.**  
Do your best to stay calm and follow official advice, particularly around observing good hygiene habits.
- 4. Try not to make assumptions.**  
To contribute to a sense of community wellbeing try to remember that the coronavirus can affect anyone regardless of their nationality/ ethnicity and remember that those with the disease have not done anything wrong.
- 5. Seek Support.**  
We encourage people who have experienced mental health issues in the past to:
  - Activate your support network.

- Acknowledge feelings of distress.
- Seek professional support early if you've having difficulties.

For those already managing a mental health issue, continue with your treatment plan and monitor any new symptoms.

Social contact and maintaining routine can be supportive for our mental health and wellbeing. Where not possible staying connected with friends and family online/ by phone may assist.

### **10 WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF DURING COVID-19**

These strategies can help you navigate life and cope with the impact of COVID-19.

#### 1. Stay Active

Exercise good for both physical and mental health. (Nike training club. It also features wellness and nutrition guidance from experts). Walk reduces stress and anxiety, stay fit and boost your immune systems so we are less susceptible to infections.

2. Chat with your friends via text, messenger, WhatsApp or phone call. Ask how they are doing and share your own experience if you feel safe to do so.

3. Check out forums

5. Make a homemade meal.

6. Take a break from the news.

7. it's important to stay informed but try to **limit your media intake** to a couple of times a day and use trusted news sources and give time on another activity.

8. Declutter for five minutes. Pick a shelf to start with.

9. Watch/ read something uplifting.

10. Learn something new e.g. drawing, dance.

### **WHAT HELPS ANXIETY NATURALLY?**

- Stay Active.
- Don't drink alcohol. It's a natural sedative.
- Stop smoking.
- Ditch caffeine.
- Get some sleep.
- Meditate.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Practice deep breathing.

### **WHAT HELPS SEVERE ANXIETY**

1. Identify and learn to manage your triggers.

2. Adopt cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).

3. Try supplements/ change diet.

4. Keep body and mind healthy.
5. Ask your doctor about medication.

### **DIAGNOSIS**

A Mental Health professional can diagnose anxiety and identify the possible causes.

The physician will take a thorough medical and personal history, perform a physical examination, and order laboratory tests if needed. These may provide useful information about a medical condition that may be causing anxiety symptoms.

To identify the condition, a doctor will look for one of the following anxiety symptoms

- Restlessness
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating

### **Support Network**

- South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG) Mental Health Line: 011 234 4837/ 0800212 223
- Gift of the Givers COVID-19 Counselling: Experiencing Stress, Depression or Anxiety: Toll – Free Hotline Monday- Friday (9am-4pm)- 0800786 786
- Adcock Ingram Depression and Anxiety Helpline : 0800 70 80 90
- Suicide Crisis Line: 0800 567 567 SMS 31393

**GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER**