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UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

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Welcome To Nevada PEP

Content and Topic Outline

- Mission Statement
- What is Anxiety?
- Generalized Anxiety
- Treatment
- Thinking Errors
- Mindfulness
- References & Resources
- Contact Information



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About PEP

OUR MISSION

To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

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Anxiety



“I tell myself that I am not afraid.” – Piglet

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What is Anxiety????



According to the DSM5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) there are several types of anxiety:

1. Separation Anxiety Disorder – fear of separation from attachment figure.
2. Selective Mutism – failure to speak in social situations.
3. Phobia – fear of a specific object.
4. Social Anxiety Disorder – anxiety about social situations.
5. Panic Disorder – recurrent unexpected panic attacks.
6. Generalized Anxiety Disorder – anxiety and worry about a number of events.

We are going to focus on Generalized Anxiety Disorder as one of the most common of the Anxiety Diagnoses.



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Generalized Anxiety . . .



Generalized Anxiety Disorder . . .

1. Excessive anxiety and worry occurring more days than not for at least months about a number of events or activities.
2. Difficulty controlling the worry.
3. Anxiety and worry are associated with 3 or more of the following six symptoms (adults) – only 1 needed in children:
 - a. Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge.
 - b. Being easily fatigued.
 - c. Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank.
 - d. Irritability.
 - e. Muscle tension.
 - f. Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep).
4. Symptoms cause significant distress – impair functioning in social, work or school settings.

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Generalized
Anxiety
Cont'd. . .



Where does Anxiety come from????

Nature – can be passed down in families through genetics.

Nurture – can be due to life experiences (particularly trauma).

Anxiety can exist with other mental health diagnoses as well as look like other mental health diagnoses – PTSD, ADHD, Depression, etc.



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Generalized
Anxiety
Treatment . . .



Treatment for Anxiety Disorders . . .

1. Therapy – individual or group therapy can be helpful.
 - a. Find a provider that has training in dealing with anxiety.
 - b. Cognitive Behavioral Techniques are often effective - work on thinking errors.
 - c. Work with thinking patterns and provide techniques to relax and calm self.
2. Medication – may be necessary if anxiety is interfering with ability to function – ex. refusing to go to school, not sleeping, nightmares, etc.
 - a. Find provider that works with the age of the child/youth that needs assistance.

Good Self-Care is vital – calm environment, nutrition, exercise, and connection with positive support system.

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Common Thinking Errors . . .



- Mind reading
- Focusing on the bad
- Catastrophizing
- Fortune telling
- Blaming yourself
- Minimizing
- Jumping to conclusions
- Feelings as facts



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Mindfulness for Anxious Kids . . .



Mindfulness Techniques:

- Paying Attention with Your Five Senses – what do you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch.
- Get together a shoebox of collectibles that can help you with the five senses
- Draw, color or craft.
- Deep breathing – practice when not anxious.
- Guided Meditation on YouTube or App.



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References & Resources



Grounding Techniques - <https://mended-hearts.org/8-grounding-techniques-for-kids-with-anxiety-that-parents-may-benefit-from-too/> - you can Google "Grounding Techniques for Children and Adolescents and there is a lot of great information out there!

Cognitive Behavior Therapy – CBT Skills Workbook – Practical Exercises and Worksheets to Promote Change – Dr. Barry M. Gregory (Good for Adolescents & Adults).

Mindfulness – Mindfulness for Anxious Kids: A Workbook to Help Children Cope with Anxiety, Stress & Worry – Dr. Cook-Cottone & Dr. Vujnovic



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Thank you!



Strengthening Families *with*
Education • Empowerment • Encouragement

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Generalized Anxiety Disorder:

When Worry Gets
Out of Control



National Institute
of Mental Health

Do you often find yourself worrying about everyday issues for no obvious reason? Are you always waiting for disaster to strike or excessively worried about things such as health, money, family, work, or school?

If so, you may have a type of anxiety disorder called generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). GAD can make daily life feel like a constant state of worry, fear, and dread. The good news is GAD is treatable. Learn more about the symptoms of GAD and how to find help.

What is generalized anxiety disorder?

Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. Many people may worry about things such as health, money, or family problems. But people with GAD feel extremely worried or nervous more frequently about these and other things—even when there is little or no reason to worry about them. GAD usually involves a persistent feeling of anxiety or dread that interferes with how you live your life. It is not the same as occasionally worrying about things or experiencing anxiety due to stressful life events. People living with GAD experience frequent anxiety for months, if not years.

GAD develops slowly. It often starts around age 30, although it can occur in childhood. The disorder is more common in women than in men.

What are the signs and symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder?

People with GAD may:

- Worry excessively about everyday things
- Have trouble controlling their worries or feelings of nervousness
- Know that they worry much more than they should
- Feel restless and have trouble relaxing
- Have a hard time concentrating
- Startle easily
- Have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep

- Tire easily or feel tired all the time
- Have headaches, muscle aches, stomachaches, or unexplained pains
- Have a hard time swallowing
- Tremble or twitch
- Feel irritable or “on edge”
- Sweat a lot, feel lightheaded, or feel out of breath
- Have to go to the bathroom frequently

Children and teens with GAD often worry excessively about:

- Their performance in activities such as school or sports
- Catastrophes, such as earthquakes or war
- The health of others, such as family members

Adults with GAD are often highly nervous about everyday circumstances, such as:

- Job security or performance
- Health
- Finances
- The health and well-being of their children or other family members
- Being late
- Completing household chores and other responsibilities

Both children and adults with GAD may experience physical symptoms such as pain, fatigue, or shortness of breath that make it hard to function and that interfere with daily life.

Symptoms may fluctuate over time and are often worse during times of stress—for example—with a physical illness, during school exams, or during a family or relationship conflict.

What causes generalized anxiety disorder?

Risk for GAD can run in families. Several parts of the brain and biological processes play a key role in fear and anxiety. By learning more about how the brain and body function in people with anxiety disorders, researchers may be able to develop better treatments. Researchers have also found that external causes, such as experiencing a traumatic event or being in a stressful environment, may put you at higher risk for developing GAD.

How is generalized anxiety disorder treated?

If you think you're experiencing symptoms of GAD, talk to a health care provider. After discussing your history, a health care provider may conduct a physical exam to ensure that an unrelated physical problem is not causing your symptoms. A health care provider may refer you to a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker. The first step to effective treatment is to get a diagnosis, usually from a mental health professional.

GAD is generally treated with psychotherapy (sometimes called "talk therapy"), medication, or both. Speak with a health care provider about the best treatment for you.

Psychotherapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a research-supported type of psychotherapy, is commonly used to treat GAD. CBT teaches you different ways of thinking, behaving, and reacting to situations that help you feel less anxious and worried. CBT has been well studied and is the gold standard for psychotherapy.

Another treatment option for GAD is acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). ACT takes a different approach than CBT to negative thoughts and uses strategies such as mindfulness and goal setting to reduce your discomfort and anxiety. Compared to CBT, ACT is a newer form of psychotherapy treatment, so less data are available on its effectiveness. However, different therapies work for different types of people, so it can be helpful to discuss what form of therapy may be right for you with a mental health professional.

For more information on psychotherapy, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/psychotherapies.

Medication

Health care providers may prescribe medication to treat GAD. Different types of medication can be effective, including:

- Antidepressants, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)
- Anti-anxiety medications, such as benzodiazepines

SSRI and SNRI antidepressants are commonly used to treat depression, but they also can help treat the symptoms of GAD. They may take several weeks to start working. These medications also may cause side effects, such as headaches, nausea, or difficulty sleeping. These side effects are usually not severe for most people, especially if the dose starts off low and is increased slowly over time. Talk to your health care provider about any side effects that you may experience.

Benzodiazepines, which are anti-anxiety sedative medications, also can be used to manage severe forms of GAD. These medications can be very effective in rapidly decreasing anxiety, but some people build up a tolerance to them and need higher and higher doses to get the same effect. Some people even become dependent on them. Therefore, a health care provider may prescribe them only for brief periods of time if you need them.

Buspirone is another anti-anxiety medication that can be helpful in treating GAD. Unlike benzodiazepines, buspirone is not a sedative and has less potential to be addictive. Buspirone needs to be taken for 3–4 weeks for it to be fully effective.

Both psychotherapy and medication can take some time to work. Many people try more than one medication before finding the best one for them. A health care provider can work with you to find the best medication, dose, and duration of treatment for you.

For basic information about these and other mental health medications, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/medications. Visit the Food and Drug Administration's website (www.fda.gov/drugsatfda) for the latest warnings, patient medication guides, and information on newly approved medications.

Support Groups

Some people with anxiety disorders might benefit from joining a self-help or support group and sharing their problems and achievements with others. Support groups are available both in person and online. However, any advice you receive from a support group member should be used cautiously and does not replace treatment recommendations from a health care provider.

Healthy Habits

Practicing a healthy lifestyle also can help combat anxiety, although this alone cannot replace treatment. Researchers have found that implementing certain healthy choices in daily life—such as reducing caffeine intake and getting enough sleep—can reduce anxiety symptoms when paired with standard care—such as psychotherapy and medication.

Stress management techniques, such as exercise, mindfulness, and meditation, also can reduce anxiety symptoms and enhance the effects of psychotherapy. You can learn more about how these techniques benefit your treatment by talking with a health care provider.

To learn more ways to take care of your mental health, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/mymentalhealth.

How can I support myself and others with generalized anxiety disorder?

Educate Yourself

A good way to help yourself or a loved one who may be struggling with GAD is to seek information. Research the warning signs, learn about treatment options, and keep up to date with current research.

Communicate

If you are experiencing GAD symptoms, have an honest conversation about how you're feeling with someone you trust. If you think that a friend or family member may be struggling with GAD, set aside a time to talk with them to express your concern and reassure them of your support.

Know When to Seek Help

If your anxiety, or the anxiety of a loved one, starts to cause problems in everyday life—such as at school, at work, or with friends and family—it's time to seek professional help. Talk to a health care provider about your mental health.

Are there clinical trials studying generalized anxiety disorder?

NIMH supports a wide range of research, including clinical trials that look at new ways to prevent, detect, or treat diseases and conditions—including GAD. Although individuals may benefit from being part of a clinical trial, participants should be aware that the primary purpose of a clinical trial is to gain new scientific knowledge so that others may be better helped in the future.

Researchers at NIMH and around the country conduct clinical trials with patients and healthy volunteers. Talk to a health care provider about clinical trials, their benefits and risks, and whether one is right for you. For more information, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/clinicaltrials.

Finding Help

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Communicating well with a health care provider can improve your care and help you both make good choices about your health. Find tips to help prepare for and get the most out of your visit at www.nimh.nih.gov/talkingtips. For additional resources, including questions to ask a provider, visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality website at www.ahrq.gov/questions.

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ClinicalTrials.gov

www.clinicaltrials.gov

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National Institute
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes of Health

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Social Anxiety Disorder:

More Than
Just Shyness



National Institute
of Mental Health

Are you afraid of being judged by others? Are you self-conscious in everyday social situations? Do you avoid meeting new people due to fear or anxiety? If you have been feeling this way for at least 6 months and these feelings make it hard for you to do everyday tasks—such as talking to people at work or school—you may have social anxiety disorder.

Social anxiety disorder is an intense, persistent fear of being watched and judged by others. This fear can affect work, school, and other daily activities. It can even make it hard to make and keep friends. The good news is social anxiety disorder is treatable. Learn more about the symptoms of social anxiety disorder and how to find help.

What is social anxiety disorder?

Social anxiety disorder is a common type of anxiety disorder. A person with social anxiety disorder feels symptoms of anxiety or fear in situations where they may be scrutinized, evaluated, or judged by others, such as speaking in public, meeting new people, dating, being on a job interview, answering a question in class, or having to talk to a cashier in a store. Doing everyday things, such as eating or drinking in front of others or using a public restroom, also may cause anxiety or fear due to concerns about being humiliated, judged, and rejected.

The fear that people with social anxiety disorder have in social situations is so intense that they feel it is beyond their control. For some people, this fear may get in the way of going to work, attending school, or doing everyday things. Other people may be able to accomplish these activities but experience a great deal of fear or anxiety when they do. People with social anxiety disorder may worry about engaging in social situations for weeks before they happen. Sometimes, they end up avoiding places or events that cause distress or generate feelings of embarrassment.

Some people with the disorder do not have anxiety related to social interactions but have it during performances instead. They feel symptoms of anxiety in situations such as giving a speech, competing in a sports game, or playing a musical instrument on stage.

Social anxiety disorder usually starts during late childhood and may resemble extreme shyness or avoidance of situations or social interactions. It occurs more frequently in females than in males, and this gender difference is more pronounced in adolescents and young adults. Without treatment, social anxiety disorder can last for many years, or even a lifetime.

What are the signs and symptoms of social anxiety disorder?

When having to perform in front of or be around others, people with social anxiety disorder may:

- Blush, sweat, or tremble.
- Have a rapid heart rate.
- Feel their “mind going blank,” or feel sick to their stomach.
- Have a rigid body posture, or speak with an overly soft voice.
- Find it difficult to make eye contact, be around people they don’t know, or talk to people in social situations, even when they want to.
- Feel self-consciousness or fear that people will judge them negatively.
- Avoid places where there are other people.

What causes social anxiety disorder?

Risk for social anxiety disorder may run in families, but no one knows for sure why some family members have it while others don’t. Researchers have found that several parts of the brain are involved in fear and anxiety and that genetics influences how these areas function. By studying how the brain and body interact in people with social anxiety disorder, researchers may be able to create more targeted treatments. In addition, researchers are looking at the ways stress and environmental factors play a role in the disorder.

How is social anxiety disorder treated?

If you're concerned you may have symptoms of social anxiety disorder, talk to a health care provider. After discussing your history, a health care provider may conduct a physical exam to ensure that an unrelated physical problem is not causing your symptoms. A health care provider may refer you to a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker. The first step to effective treatment is to get a diagnosis, usually from a mental health professional.

Social anxiety disorder is generally treated with psychotherapy (sometimes called “talk therapy”), medication, or both. Speak with a health care provider about the best treatment for you.

Psychotherapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a research-supported type of psychotherapy, is commonly used to treat social anxiety disorder. CBT teaches you different ways of thinking, behaving, and reacting to situations to help you feel less anxious and fearful. CBT also can help you learn and practice social skills, which is very important for treating social anxiety disorder. CBT has been well studied and is the gold standard for psychotherapy.

Exposure therapy is a CBT method that focuses on progressively confronting the fears underlying an anxiety disorder to help you engage in activities you have been avoiding. Exposure therapy is sometimes used along with relaxation exercises. CBT delivered in a group therapy format also can offer unique benefits for social anxiety disorder.

Another treatment option for social anxiety disorder is acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). ACT takes a different approach than CBT to negative thoughts and uses strategies such as mindfulness and goal setting to reduce your discomfort and anxiety. Compared to CBT, ACT is a newer form of psychotherapy treatment, so less data are available on its effectiveness. However, different therapies work for different types of people, so it can be helpful to discuss what form of therapy may be right for you with a mental health professional.

For more information on psychotherapy, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/psychotherapies.

Medication

Health care providers may prescribe medication to treat social anxiety disorder. Different types of medication can be effective in treating this disorder, including:

- Antidepressants, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)
- Beta-blockers
- Anti-anxiety medications, such as benzodiazepines

SSRI and SNRI antidepressants are commonly used to treat depression, but they also can help treat the symptoms of social anxiety disorder. They may take several weeks to start working. Antidepressants may also cause side effects, such as headaches, nausea, or difficulty sleeping. These side effects are usually not severe, especially if the dose starts off low and is increased slowly over time. Talk to your health care provider about any side effects that you may experience.

Beta-blockers can help control some of the physical symptoms of social anxiety disorder, such as rapid heart rate, sweating, and tremors. Beta-blockers are commonly the medication of choice for the “performance anxiety” type of social anxiety disorder.

Benzodiazepines, which are anti-anxiety sedative medications, are powerful and begin working right away to reduce anxious feelings. These medications can be very effective in rapidly decreasing anxiety, but some people build up a tolerance to them and need higher and higher doses to get the same effect. Some people even become dependent on them. Therefore, a health care provider may prescribe them only for brief periods of time if you need them.

Both psychotherapy and medication can take some time to work. Many people try more than one medication before finding the best one for them. A health care provider can work with you to find the best medication, dose, and duration of treatment for you. People with social anxiety disorder usually obtain the best results with a combination of medication and CBT or other psychotherapies.

For basic information about these and other mental health medications, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/medications. Visit the Food and Drug Administration’s website (www.fda.gov/drugsatfda) for the latest warnings, patient medication guides, and information on newly approved medications.

Support Groups

Many people with social anxiety find support groups helpful. In a group of people who all have social anxiety disorder, you can receive unbiased, honest feedback about how others in the group see you. This way, you can learn that your thoughts about judgment and rejection are not true or are distorted. You also can learn how others with social anxiety disorder approach and overcome the fear of social situations.

Support groups are available both in person and online. However, any advice you receive from a support group member should be used cautiously and does not replace treatment recommendations from a health care provider.

Both psychotherapy and medication can take some time to work. A healthy lifestyle also can help combat anxiety. Make sure to get enough sleep and exercise, eat a healthy diet, and turn to family and friends who you trust for support. To learn more ways to take care of your mental health, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/mymentalhealth.

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