

Dealing with Anxiety

Facts about Anxiety

- ❑ Anxiety and worry are fundamental human emotions that we all feel at times.
 - ❑ Anxiety has a healthy purpose. If we didn't feel anxious about certain situations then we could put ourselves in danger.
 - ❑ Similarly, if we had no anxiety about ourselves in relation to others, we might behave with great insensitivity.
 - ❑ Sometimes anxiety can become excessive and unhealthy.
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Some general situations that may cause anxiety include

- ❑ Leaving home and / or adapting to university life
 - ❑ Giving presentations, or performing in social situations
 - ❑ Coping with exams
 - ❑ Dealing with and maintaining relationships
 - ❑ Facing sexuality issues
 - ❑ Preparing to graduate
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Some specific situations that are anxiety provoking include

- ❑ Experiencing apprehension about entering new situations
 - ❑ Having to deal with people in authority
 - ❑ Worrying about whether you have chosen the right course
 - ❑ Panicking about sitting for exams or presenting in front of an audience
 - ❑ Worrying about social acceptance and approval, or about failure, criticism or rejection from others
 - ❑ Worrying about health and wellbeing
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Some symptoms of anxiety include

Physical Signs:

- Racing heart, dry mouth, increased sweating

Sensations:

- Fidgeting, headaches and aching elsewhere in the body

Imagery:

- Flashes of imagination that show the situation negatively

Thoughts:

- Thoughts that are selective, isolating and magnifying the worst aspects of the feared situation
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Relations with others:

- Isolating self and withdrawing from others, or developing dependence on others

Activities:

- Becoming more agitated and over-reactive, or more commonly avoiding the source of worry entirely

Feelings:

- Feeling pressured, tense, overwhelmed; those feelings interfere with everyday life

One may experience only one of these symptoms or several of them.

Coping with Anxiety

Challenge your negative thoughts

- ✓ Are you worrying about the future?
- ✓ How likely is this particular situation to happen?
- ✓ What is the evidence that this situation would happen?
- ✓ Are you comparing yourself to others?

Review the stressful circumstances in your life

- ✓ Say "no" to things you do not want to do
 - ✓ Give up unnecessary, time-consuming activities and responsibilities
 - ✓ Use an organized and realistic plan of action to tackle projects
 - ✓ Ask for information or feedback if helpful
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Face the situation

- ✓ Confront, rather than avoid anxiety-provoking situations
- ✓ Expose yourself to them in small but increasing steps
- ✓ Seek to learn more about your anxiety. Reading may be a tool to help in this or ask your campus counselor for help


Get back in control

- ✓ One of the best ways to let the feelings out is to talk

Learn to relax

- ✓ Try to keep your breathing slow and regular so that you do not hyperventilate, which worsens the physical symptoms
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Why Students Don't Seek Services

- For some students, stigma remains the most significant barrier to seeking treatment
 - For other students, the fear of accepting they are struggling means they cannot lead a productive life
 - Students also might not seek help because of concerns over confidentiality
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Finding Help

- For students struggling with anxiety, the best place to start is the on-campus counseling services where counselors can help you understand and deal with your anxiety. This kind of problem is widespread among students
 - Don't let yourself make any excuses to miss the appointment. Be sure you set up the next appointment at the end of each session, don't just wait to schedule it "when I have time".
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