

Understanding Anxiety Disorders

DEFINING ANXIETY DISORDERS

- While depression is termed the “common cold” of mental disorders, anxiety disorders represents the most common mental illness in the United States today, impacting more than 40 million adults or 18.1% of the population.
- This is more than doubled the impact of depressive disorders, which impacts approximately 18.8 million, which is about 9.5% of the population.

Anxiety, the most common mental illness in the US today ...

... and the most treatable type of mental health problem

- Each of us feels anxious** now and then, but frequent and intense anxiety may indicate a clinically diagnosable and treatable disorder. Anxiety prepares the body to meet challenges, dangers or unfamiliar situations.
- But, there's a big difference** between everyday anxiety and having an anxiety disorder. People with anxiety disorder feel overwhelming tension when there is no real danger; and take extreme action to avoid the source
- Millions of people have anxiety disorders.** It is often difficult to pinpoint what causes these disorders. But proper treatment can help most people overcome them.

Anxiety disorders can severely disrupt a person's work, social and family life.

TYPES AND SYMPTOMS

- PHOBIAS** are irrational fears of certain objects or situations. There are 3 main types.

SIMPLE (OR SINGLE) PHOBIAS

These are fears of specific objects such as flying; snakes or insects, dogs or other animals elevators or other closed spaces, heights

SOCIAL PHOBIAS

These are unreasonable fears of being judged by others or doing something embarrassing. Some common social phobias include fear of meeting new people, public speaking and using public restrooms.

AGORAPHOBIA

This is the fear of places or situations that a person feels he or she won't be able to escape from. For example, the person may fear going anywhere without a spouse or friend, or being inside a crowded building **or elevator.**

People with phobias are:

- (a) Overcome with feelings of terror,** when there is no actual threat to their health and safety. Their hearts race, they have difficulty breathing and they tremble and sweat.
- (b) Determined to avoid even** though it may disrupt their daily life.

PANIC DISORDER

- Is marked by** unexpected attacks of fear – panic attacks and the consistent fear of having these attacks.
- During an attack,** a person experiences a sense of terror and doom; physical signs, such as rapid heartbeat, sweating, dizziness, nausea and shallow breathing; chest pain, choking or smothering sensation, and feeling of

approaching death, losing control or “going crazy.”

- May include agoraphobia** and may lead to other problems such as depression, abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

The sooner a person gets treatment for panic disorder, the sooner he or she can find relief.

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD)

- Involves constant worry that the worst will happen. This anxiety lasts for at least 6 months. **Their worry is out of proportion.**
- Every day situations** that cause worry for someone with **GAD.** For ex., he or she may become anxious about job, money, family and/or children, health, household chores, car problems, appointments.
- SYMPTOMS OF GAD** include: restlessness, sleep problems, muscle tension, irritability, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, frequent urination, feeling lightheaded, and feeling out of breath.

OBSESSIVE - COMPULSIVE

- Involves having thoughts or practicing rituals that the person can't control.
- OBSSESSIONS** are repeated, *unwanted thoughts*, like fear of getting sick from germs or dirt; urgent doubt about having done something such as turning off the stove or locking the door, or the feeling that you will do something violent or inappropriate

Obsessions are not worries about real life problems.

- ❑ **COMPULSIONS** are repeated actions aimed at relieving anxiety caused by obsessions, like washing hands, checking doors, stoves, etc, counting or rearranging items needlessly.

Compulsions do not bring pleasure. A person with OCD knows his / her obsessions and or compulsions are not rational.

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

- ❑ A delayed reaction to a traumatic events, such as war, car crash, violent attack or sex abuse A person with PTSD:
- ❑ **"RELIVES" THE EVENT** through the experience of flashbacks, nightmares, or sudden intense emotions.
- ❑ **FEELS ON EDGE ALL THE TIME.** Symptoms include difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep; being quick to startle, having angry outbursts or losing concentration quickly.
- ❑ **MAY SHUT OFF THE WORLD OUTSIDE.** The person may:
 - AVOID** reminders of the event including certain people, places or activities
 - FORGET** all or parts of the event
 - GROW NUMB** emotionally, especially toward people he or she was once close to
 - LOSE HOPE** for the future.

TREATMENT

- ❑ Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- ❑ EDMR (Eye Movement Desensitization

- Retraining)
- ❑ Relaxation Therapy
- ❑ Neurofeedback,
- ❑ Other Types of Psychotherapy
- ❑ Medications & Lifestyle Changes
- ❑ The Word and Prayer

The Apostle Paul certainly had plenty of reasons to feel anxious. Sitting in a Roman prison, he did not know if he would be released or killed. Nevertheless, he wrote to the believers at Philippi and urged them to **"Be anxious for nothing . . ."**

Anxiety and its companion, worry, can immobilize believers. People have anxiety about the future; about events that have not happened, but could happen. As noted, anxiety causes physical problems and makes people fearful and distressed.

Paul's answer to anxiety is this "in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." When we give our anxiety to God, we can exchange it for his peace that "surpasses all understanding."

Turn to God (I Pet. 5:7)

Focus on the solution, not the problem (Matt 14:22, 23)

Don't worry (Matt 6:25-34)

Keep thoughts on God in order to have peace (Isa 26:3)

Pray (Phil. 4:4-6)

Direct your attention to the true source of hope (Psa. 91:2)

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TREATMENT

First Seek the Kingdom Education Counseling and Consulting Services

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ANXIETY DISORDERS AND THE CHRISTIAN

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your request known unto God"

(Phil 4:6)



Another Mental Health Education Pamphlet

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