

# Anxiety



Providing services we would be  
happy for our own families to use





# An information guide for Anxiety

This booklet aim to:

- Give you an understanding of Anxiety, it's causes and symptoms
- Provide information and advice on support available in the local area

## What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a general term for several disorders that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worrying. These disorders affect how we feel and behave, and they can manifest into real physical symptoms.

The physical symptoms from anxiety can include sweating, shaking, heart palpitations, over breathing and many other unpleasant and sometimes frightening symptoms. Mild anxiety is vague and unsettling, while severe anxiety can be extremely debilitating, having a serious impact on your daily life.

“Some people will become anxious due to stressful life events, for example, divorce, moving house, bereavements, even pleasant events like celebrations can cause anxiety”

You may have heard of the fight or flight response. This is a basic system that kicks in to help you deal with danger. Animals depend on it for their survival. These days we experience different types of danger and many of the stresses we face can't be fought or run away from, so the symptoms we experience can be overwhelming, confusing and very frightening.

## What do we mean by anxiety?

Anxiety can mean different things to different people. If you ask anyone in the street they would give you a different answer. This is because it can affect people in different ways. There are different anxiety related disorders but they all boil down to the same or similar symptoms.

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Anxiety is made up of different symptoms. Below are the different signs and symptoms of anxiety. See if you can relate to any of them.

### **Physical sensations**

- Blurred vision
- Breathing problems
- Heart palpitations
- Tense muscles
- Jelly legs
- Feeling weak
- Shaking
- Feeling dizzy
- Headaches
- Feeling sick
- Sweating

### **Actions**

- Worrying all of the time
- Worrying about lots of different things
- Avoiding certain situation
- Using safety behaviours e.g. Carrying a bottle of water around with you

### **Thoughts**

- I might die
- I will collapse
- I will make a fool of myself
- I am in danger

- I will have a heart attack
- I have to get out
- I can't cope

## **Feelings**

- Feeling on edge all of the time
- Feeling nervous
- Not being able to relax
- Being restless
- Feeling irritable
- Feelings afraid as if something terrible might happen

## **What causes anxiety?**

There are many reasons why someone becomes anxious. Some people may be more prone to becoming anxious or may have learned to be anxious from other people's behaviour.

Some people will become anxious due to stressful life events, for example, divorce, moving house, bereavements, even pleasant events like celebrations can cause anxiety.

This is even more likely to happen if there are other stressful events going on, like pressure at work or home.

## **Different types of anxiety...**

Thoughts, images and emotions of a negative nature are all common symptoms of the anxiety disorders. Worry, anxiety and panic are all very similar but have different definitions

and presentations. Each individual person will have a different experience but the following are usually identified:

#### Worry -

Some worry can be normal and can have positive effects, for example, taking out house insurance as a precaution. However, worrying about things that you believe are going to happen in the future can cause a lot of anxiety and as we all know we can't predict the future.

#### Anxiety -

Anxiety is often used as a general term for nervousness, stress, worry or any other cause of anxiety symptoms that last for a long period of time. It is usually defined differently from panic and worry because there is a feeling of constant physical anxiety related symptoms.

#### Panic -

This can be described as a sudden sensation of fear that is so strong it causes an overwhelming feeling of physical symptoms. These symptoms can lead to thoughts such as *"I am going to die"* or *"I will collapse and make a fool of myself"*.

#### Stress -

The symptoms of stress are very similar to the symptoms of anxiety. The ability to cope with stress varies from person to person. It is normal to have a certain amount of stress as this helps us to cope, but if you have too much or too little it can affect your day to day functioning.

All of the above can lead to people using safety behaviours

mentioned previously.

## Common myths of anxiety...

***You only get anxiety if you are a nervous person*** - We all have anxiety, if we didn't have anxiety we wouldn't survive. It helps us to cope with day to day life, so anxiety can affect anyone at any time.

***Tranquillizers and sleeping pills are the best treatment for anxiety*** - It is best to get advice about these types of medications from your GP. Some anti-depressant medications can be used for anxiety disorders but a Doctor is the best person to speak to about this.

***Medications for anxiety are addictive*** - Some medications are no longer prescribed due to people becoming dependant on them, your GP will be the best person to advise you on medication as stated above.

***Having an attack of anxiety can lead to a heart attack*** - Panic attacks can be extremely frightening experiences. Symptoms of feeling breathless, having chest pain and a rapid heartbeat can be common experiences during a panic or anxiety attack. It is very common to feel like you are going to die because your heart is beating so



fast. However you are not in physical danger and a panic or anxiety attack alone is not dangerous.

***If you have a fear of heights or spiders you are stuck with it for life*** - Phobias are incredibly common. There are millions of people in the UK who have an over-intense fear of a situation or an object. They can seriously interfere with the way people live their lives and unfortunately many people feel unable to talk about it. Many people do not seek help because they think there is no effective cure. But phobias can be successfully challenged and overcome.

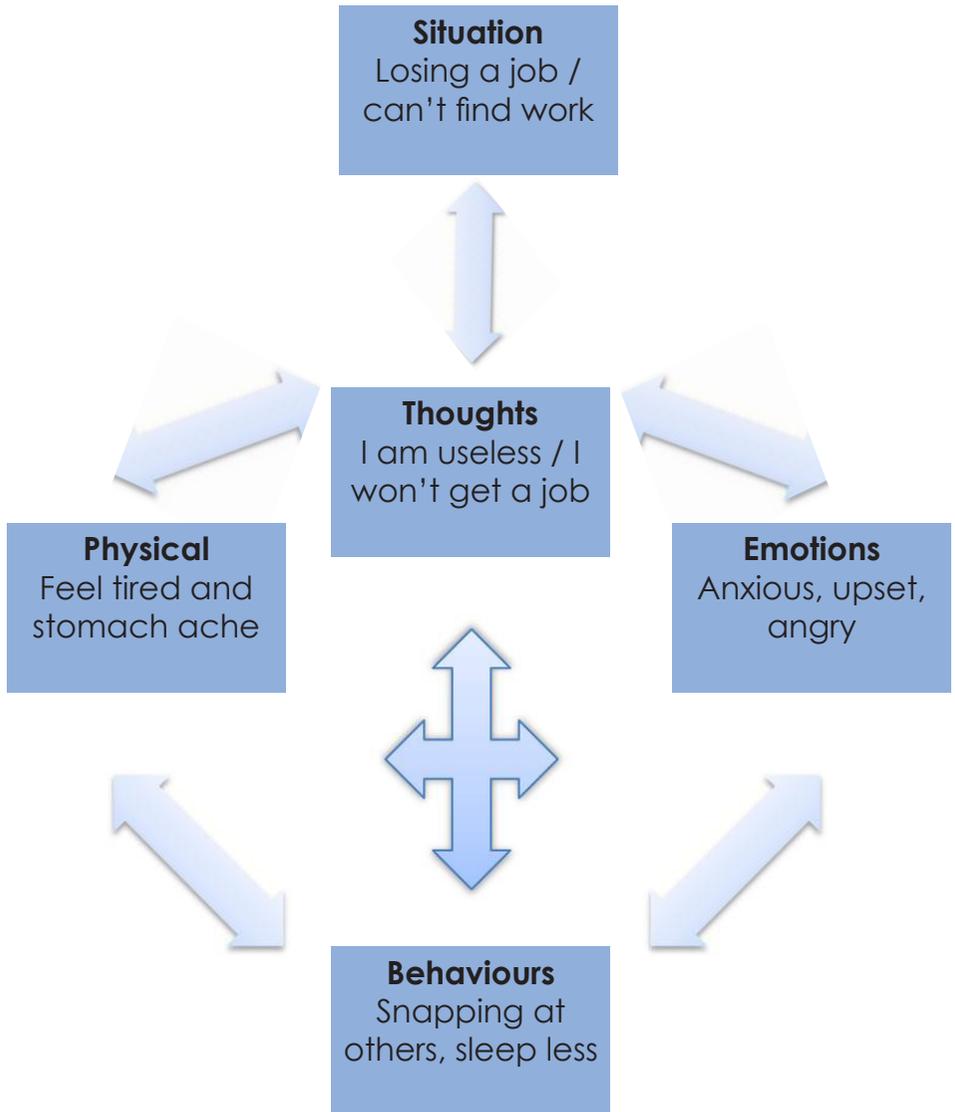
***If you have an anxiety disorder, it is important to avoid stress and situations that make you feel stressed*** - Avoidance increases anxiety, this is an important fact that we need to get across. Most people with anxiety make the decision to keep out of situations that cause them the anxiety, but this can eventually lead to avoidance of all kinds of situations or even to someone becoming housebound or dependant on another person to escort them everywhere.

***Never ending reassurance from family members and friends is good for someone with anxiety problems*** - Well-meaning friends and family can get caught up in giving reassurance because they want you to feel better but this can also help maintain fears by keeping you from facing them. Compassion and encouragement to move through anxiety and doubts, instead of avoiding them, is more helpful.

## **The vicious cycle...**

Whether we know the trigger for anxiety or not, the route out

(Figure 1)



of it remains the same. It is how we change our responses over time that will decide whether we get stuck in a vicious cycle or adapt and move on, learning from experience.

There may be many events that cause us distress throughout our lifetime, and these events will come and go. Often it is what we focus on, how we think and what we do that will determine how long we remain distressed / upset / angry in response to the events.

(See figure 1 on the previous page)

## **What can help?**

There is a lot in life that we can't control, the weather, other people, the economy. This can lead to experiences of anxiety. However it's important we don't overlook the aspects that we can experience and learn from, our thoughts and behaviours. Research shows that learning to think in different ways and respond differently to situations can alter your mood and empower you.

NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence), are in charge of deciding which evidence based treatments will be offered on the NHS and recommend cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which is a well structured approach to changing thoughts and actions.

Open Minds offers CBT, as well as other therapies such as counselling and psychotherapies. These offer a space for you to make sense of your thoughts, feelings and behaviour in relation to the environment you live in and the life events

you have experienced which may have an effect on you now.

Medication is another option, used on its own or together with a therapeutic intervention. Talk to your GP if you are interested in being prescribed medication.

Relaxation and meditation can also help. We offer these and other therapies at Open Minds, please ask your worker or at reception if you are interested in accessing any of these.

## Some do's and don'ts...

### ***What you can do if you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety.***

#### √ DO

- Keep your routine as normal as possible. Try to do at least one thing each day.
- Explore other options by talking with your GP.
- Be kind to yourself. Try pampering yourself by doing something you usually enjoy or find relaxing.
- Try relaxation techniques. Open Minds have relaxation CD's or you can search 'Youtube' online.
- Focus on something that has gone well lately.

- Remember to eat and drink enough water, proper hydration and nutrition will help you feel more positive. Remember that caffeine can increase anxiety.

× **DON'T**

- rely on negative coping strategies such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs, over spending and avoidance.

- Put yourself down. This is time where you need kindness.

- Compare yourself to others too much, you don't know what they are experiencing.

- Put pressure on yourself to feel differently. Remember anxiety is a common experience.

- Expect too much of yourself. You may be experiencing difficulty in concentrating or excessive anxiety if you put pressure on yourself to do too much.

# Notes



## Useful Contacts -

### Open Minds -

Provides short term therapy for those with anxiety and depression.

Grimsby branch  
7-9 Osborne Street  
Grimsby  
DN31 1EY  
Tel: 01472 625100

Cleethorpes branch  
13-15 Grimsby Road  
Cleethorpes  
DN35 7AQ  
Tel: 01472 252760

E-mail: [NAV.Openminds@nhs.net](mailto:NAV.Openminds@nhs.net)

### Single Point of Access -

The acute crisis home treatment service provides a open referral system where people can self-refer via the Single Point of Access.

This service can be contacted **24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

The acute crisis home treatment service is based at:

Harrison House  
Peaks Lane  
Grimsby  
DN32 9RP  
**Tel: 01472 256256**  
**(Option 3 for mental health)**



## **Rethink -**

Provides telephone support service for anyone affected by mental health issues.

Tel: 0808 800 1010

Web: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

## **Cruse Bereavement Line -**

Help for bereaved people and those caring for bereaved people.

Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Louth Branch

Tel: 01472 814455





NAVIGO, NAVIGO House, 3 - 7 Brighowgate, Grimsby, DN32 0QE

T: (01472) 583000      E: [info.navigo@nhs.net](mailto:info.navigo@nhs.net)

W: [www.navigocare.co.uk](http://www.navigocare.co.uk)



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