



ANXIETY

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WHAT IS ANXIETY?

It can be experienced as intense feelings of fear, nervousness, or worry that don't go away, even when there is not an identifiable trigger or threat. The symptoms of anxiety are similar to stress but they are generally experienced on a more intense level.

IS IT DIFFERENT THAN STRESS?

Yes. Stress is often experienced in response to an external event or situation that is occurring in the present moment and requires us to take some form of action right now. Compared to anxiety, stress is more temporary and the symptoms usually go away after the stressor is no longer a threat and or we no longer feel under pressure.

WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?

Generally, it's not caused by one specific thing or reason. It can be caused by a combination of things like stress, bad experiences, chronic illness or other physiological reasons.

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY?

Anxiety can affect how we think, feel, and act. Symptoms can include:

- Feelings of danger, panic, or dread.
- Worrying to the point that it makes concentrating, getting things done or making decisions difficult.
- Feeling agitated or irritable.
- Having a hard time falling or staying asleep, feeling tired/fatigued more easily, or experiencing restlessness.
- Avoiding social situations and/or feeling so self-conscious that it affects new or current relationships, work, and/or school.
- Sweating; rapid breathing and/or heart rate.
- Experiencing trembling or chills, muscle tension, headaches, or chest tightness.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY:

- Identify what is bothering you. Sometimes the physical symptoms of anxiety can become overwhelming, so pausing to give yourself time to reflect on what is causing you to feel this way can help provide relief.
- Write down your thoughts. It helps to get anxious thoughts out of your mind so they feel less overwhelming.
- Focus on what you can change. If your mind is filled with "what-if" thoughts, try to separate the worries that are within your control from those that are out of your control.
- Distract yourself. Distraction can be an effective way of stopping unhelpful, worrisome thoughts. Make sure the distraction activity grabs your full attention so it effectively reduces your anxiety.
- Identify your triggers and then try to avoid exposure to them if possible. If that isn't possible, prepare and plan for how to cope with the event or situation e.g. breathing exercises and relaxation techniques.
- Get moving. Exercise releases calming neurotransmitters (endorphins), tires the muscles and works off the stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol) that contribute to anxiety symptoms.

For free, confidential counseling for Gwynedd Mercy University students, contact:

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