

Fact Sheet

Anxiety

Being nervous is a perfectly natural in everyday life, from meeting new people to taking big risk being nervous is a normal element of human nature. Anxiety however can become far more serious, often affecting an individual's physiology, their behavior and how they function in day to day activities. Anxiety is a scale that ranges from everyday worry/nerves to extremes of phobias and OCD. Being aware of how high your anxiety levels are is an important element of maintaining your wellbeing

One in four Australian's experience mid to severe anxiety at some point

Symptoms

- Excessive worrying and fear
- Compulsive behavior
- Obsessive thinking
- Lack of concentration that interferes with ability to function
- Negative interpretations of situations
- Restlessness and irritability
- Tightening of the chest
- Avoidance of situations that may trigger panic or anxiousness
- Avoiding challenging situations
- Avoiding social situations, being withdrawn, isolating yourself
- Excessive shyness, lack assertiveness
- Thinking negatively and seeing the worst in any situation
- Sweating
- Difficulty Breathing
- Hyper arousal/jumpiness
- Nausea
- Feeling easily tired
- Difficulty relaxing
- Insomnia



Managing

- Seek help from a health professional
- Practice breathing exercises
- Increase exercise
- E-therapies (computer-assisted psychological therapy)
- Meditation or practicing other relaxation techniques
- Improve time-management skills
- Reduce caffeine intakes
- Reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs
- Have a relaxing hobby
- Take time out every day to reflect
- Seek support from family and friends
- Strategies/plan ways to reduce stress in your life

Causes

Anxiety is caused by an individual's 'fight or flight' instinct takes over. In the face of a perceived nerve-wracking, emotionally driven, dangerous or unknown situation an individual's body automatically takes steps to protect its self – whether that is to fight or run away.

The hormone *adrenaline* is released during the 'fight or flight' mechanism and is often responsible for the physiological and behavioral symptoms of anxiety.

Someone may be more likely to be anxious if they have had a family history, experienced a traumatic event(s) or are naturally an overly cautious person

Prolonged anxiety can lead to long term issues such as PTSD or health problems.

Zonta House Refuge Association provides support services to women who have experienced family and domestic violence, mental health issues, homelessness and other crises enabling them the opportunity to make safe and sustainable life choices. For more information or support, visit our resource page at www.zontahouse.org.au