



# Anxiety

Information Booklet



# Anxiety

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling everyone will experience at some point in their lives. We all experience it when faced with situations we find intimidating or difficult. When you are anxious you feel fearful and 'uneasy'. People may often use the word stress but this is not the same as anxiety. Anxiety tends to affect people both mentally and physically, and carry a range of symptoms. Anxiety can be attributed to either an ongoing "worry" or in a sudden response to something that makes us feel "scared" or "fearful" (threatened). Anxiety is normal in stressful situations and can often be helpful. For instance, when threatened by an aggressive person, or before an important event. This response enables us to use our "flight or fight" response.

## Symptoms

- Feeling Fearful or Worried All The Time
- Feeling Tired
- Unable to Concentrate
- Feeling Irritable
- Sleeping Badly
- Palpitations
- Sweating
- Muscle Tension and Pains
- Breathing Heavily
- Dizziness
- Faintness
- Indigestion
- Diarrhoea



## **Problem?**

Anxiety is “abnormal” or becomes a problem when it is,

- Out of proportion to the stressful situation, or
- Persists when a stressful situation has gone, or the stress is minor, or,
- Appears for no apparent reason when there is no stressful situation.

## **Anxiety Disorders**

There are various conditions (disorders) where anxiety is the main symptom. You may have an anxiety disorder if anxiety interferes with your day to day functioning or if you worry you may develop anxiety symptoms.

## **Types of Anxiety Disorders**

- Acute Stress Reaction
- Adjustment Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Phobic Anxiety Disorder
  - Social Phobia
  - Agoraphobia
  - Other Specific Phobias
- Panic Disorder
- Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Mixed Anxiety and Depressive Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (The symptoms and rituals cause you anxiety and distress)
- Elective Mutism
- School Refusal or Avoidance
- Trichotillomania

## Getting Help

The first step in dealing with anxiety is TALKING to someone about it. Some people think that its “weak” to admit that you are having trouble or going through a tough time. But if you have an anxiety disorder, you can’t just “snap out of it” or “pull yourself together”. Keeping it to yourself only makes things worse. Start by talking to someone you trust—maybe a parent, teacher, school counsellor, family member or a friend. If you are unsure that you need treatment , seeing your GP (General Practitioner) is a good way to start. GP’s are used to recognising and treating common health problems including anxiety. They can help you work out the best ways to cope with how you’re feeling and make a plan to get you through it. If needed they can also refer you to expert help, such as help from Mental Health Teams.

## Self-Help

Along with seeking treatment to manage your anxiety, looking after yourself on a day to day basis will help you recover.

- **Diet** — Eating regular meals, and a varied nourishing diet can improve your sense of well -being.
- **Keep active** — Helps you to lift your mood, help you get a good nights sleep, increase your energy levels, help block negative thoughts and distract you from your worries.
- **Avoid Alcohol & Drugs** — Although they seem to make things better, the effects are temporary and the after effects are usually worse.
- **Relax** — Learning ways to relax, writing down things you enjoy will help you reduce anxiety and stress.
- **Problem Solve** — Learning ways to identify and solve your problems can be very helpful



## Treatment

- Understanding—The cause behind the anxiety symptoms.
- Counselling or Talking Therapies
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) - It deals with, and aims to change your current thought processes and/or behaviour.
- Self Help—Such things as relaxation and taking care of yourself.
- Antidepressant Medication—Found to be beneficial in treating anxiety
- Other Medication—As advised by your doctor or psychiatrist.

## More Support

- Aware - phone 1890 30 33 02
- Samaritans - phone 1850 60 90 90
- Teenline - phone 1800 833 634
- Your Local GP / Mental Health Nurse
- Emergencies call 112 / 999 or go to your local Emergency Department

## Websites

- Headstrong - [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie)
- SpunOut - [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)
- Aware - [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)
- Childline - [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

Look - For the signs and symptoms  
Listen - To your friends experiences  
Talk - About what's going on  
Seek Help

**St Patrick's Mental Health Services**

James' Street, Dublin 8, Ireland.

t: +353 1 249 3200. f: +353 1 679 8865.

Support & Information Line: 01 249 3333

e: [info@stpatsmail.com](mailto:info@stpatsmail.com)

[www.stpatricks.ie](http://www.stpatricks.ie)