

**What is Anxiety?**

Everybody experiences Anxiety at some point. It is a natural response, useful in helping us to avoid dangerous situations and motivating us to solve everyday problems. Anxiety can vary in severity and impact people in different way.

An Anxiety disorder differs from normal anxiety in the following ways:

* Its more severe
* It is long-lasting
* It interferes with the persons work or relationships

**General Symptoms**

**Physical Effects:**

* Palpitations, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, flushing
* Hyperventilation, shortness of breath
* Dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling and numbness
* Choking, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, urinary frequency, diarrhoea
* Muscle aches and pains

**Psychological Effects:**

* Unrealistic and/or excessive fear and worry (about past or future events)
* Mind racing or going blank
* Decreased concentration and memory
* Difficultly making decisions
* Irritability, impatience, anger
* Confusion
* Restlessness or feeling on edge, nervousness
* Tiredness, sleep disturbances, vivid dreams
* Unwanted unpleasant repetitive thoughts (also known as intrusive thoughts)

**Behavioural Effects:**

* Avoidance of situations
* Repetitive compulsive behaviour, e.g. excessive checking, continual seeking of reassurance
* Distress in social situations
* Urges to escape situations that cause discomfort (phobic behaviour)

There are many different types of anxiety disorders. The main ones are:

* Generalised anxiety disorder
* Panic disorder
* Phobic disorder
* Post-traumatic stress disorder
* Obsessive compulsive disorder
* Mixed anxiety and depression

Many people with an anxiety disorder don’t realise that there are treatments that can help them have a better life. There are numerous self-help and professional treatment.

* Talk to someone you trust, this could be a friend, family member, colleague, line manager. If you feel you can’t talk to someone you know, there are lots of helplines available or your GP (see below).
* Look after your physical health by ding exercise you enjoy, try and maintain a balanced diet and get enough sleep.
* Individual guided self-help with books, online CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) or group sessions.
* Mindfulness and other relaxation techniques
* Complementary therapies like acupuncture or massage therapy
* Psychological one on one therapy/ CBT
* Your GP may also discuss drug treatments.

**Websites/Hotlines:**

Anxiety UK: 08444 775 774

NHS health in mind: 0300 330 5455 [www.healthmind.org.uk](http://www.healthmind.org.uk)

Samaritans: 08457 909090

Silver cloud- free online CBT if you’re feeling worried, stressed or low <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/silvercloud.aspx> .

Dealing with worry workshop on Essex campus: Contact wellbeing dept.

Employee Assistance Programme, supplied by Validium: Speak to HR/ Line Manager or staff portal for more info