



Anxiety

To worry about things is a normal stress response, and most of us experience some form of stress in our lives. We worry about exams, finances, and relationships, to name a few.

Worry is a normal emotional response to stress, but when it becomes excessive, it can be a form of anxiety.

People with anxiety frequently have intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations and/or anticipated and future threats. These feelings are difficult to control, cause distress, and can last a long time if untreated. Anxiety can involve repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes (panic attacks). A person may avoid places or situations to prevent these feelings. Symptoms may start during childhood or the teen years and continue into adulthood, whereas some symptoms can appear suddenly after a stressful event.

Anxiety is one of the most common mental health conditions, causing physical symptoms like:

- increased heart rate,
- rapid breathing,
- sweating,
- trembling,
- trouble sleeping, and
- interfering with life.



While normal worry and a bit of anxiety help alertness and prepare the brain for increased performance, anxiety disorders involve intense fear, often with avoidance behaviours.



Statistics

One in 4 people will be affected by a mental illness in their lifetime.

More than 4.4% of the population experiences anxiety.

Anxiety disorders are the world's most common mental disorders, and as many as 359 million people are affected worldwide.

When to see a professional:

- You feel like you're worrying too much and it's interfering with your work, relationships, or other parts of your life.
- Your fear, worry or anxiety is upsetting to you and difficult to control.
- You feel depressed, have trouble with alcohol or drug use, or have other mental health concerns along with anxiety.
- You think your anxiety could be linked to a physical health problem.
- You have suicidal thoughts or behaviours. If this is the case, contact a professional right away.

Treatment

Anxiety is treated through therapy (for instance, narrative therapy), stress management, and sometimes medication, helping most people lead normal lives.

If you need assistance with your mental health, please contact the Educational Psychology Practicum Unit at: eppu@sun.ac.za or call 021 808 2229

VERY IMPORTANT!

If you are in distress, contact:

Suicide Crisis Line 0800 567 567

Lifeline 0861 322 322

Mental Health Helpline 0800 456 789

Substance Abuse Helpline 0800 12 13 14

