

ANXIETY

What is Anxiety and Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety is when you feel tense, worried or anxious. Anxiety can happen in any point in our life, such as during exams or upon hearing bad news. However, some people would experience anxiety that lasts longer than usual that could affect their health, work and relationships. This then becomes a medical illness known as anxiety disorder which that will require treatment.

What causes Anxiety?

Anxiety can happen for many reasons. Here are some of the common factors that may result in anxiety:

- Stress and difficulty coping with your feelings
- Family history of mood disorders
- Stress from around you (e.g. work, relationship, unsafe living conditions, financial)
- Past experiences in your life that cause high stress levels
- Health conditions (e.g. heart conditions, thyroid issues)

Common (warning) signs of Anxiety Disorder

- (a) Feeling nervous, anxious or tense
- (b) Not being able to stop or control worrying

Please consult a doctor or nurse for further assessment if you experience either or/and the above over the last two weeks.

Treatment for Anxiety Disorder

- Your healthcare provider will assess you and do lab tests to rule out other health conditions that may present as symptoms of anxiety.
- If diagnosed, the anxiety can be treated with medication, psychotherapy or a combination of both.
- Successful treatment can reduce symptoms of anxiety so you can return to your previous mental state.

What can I do if I feel anxious?

Take things one step at a time and go easy on yourself. For example:

- Focus on the present moment and the things that are within your control
- Break up large tasks into small parts; prioritise tasks that are important to you and do what you can
- Spend time with people and talk to a trusted friend or relative
- Avoid self-medication
- Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking

If you have been prescribed medication by the doctor to help your mood, do take your medication regularly. It may take 2 to 4 weeks for your condition to improve.

How can I find out more about Anxiety Disorder?

Please call:

- Institute of Mental Health Helpline – 6389 2222 **(24 hours)**
- Mindline – 1 771 **(24 hours)**
- Samaritans of Singapore – 1 767 **(24 hours)**
- Singapore Association for Mental Health – 1800 283 7019 **(Mondays – Fridays 9am - 1pm, 2 - 6pm)**
- Visit your nearest GP or polyclinic