

Fact Sheet

Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear that we get when something feels uncertain or scary. It's normal to feel anxious sometimes, like before a test or when trying something new. Anxiety can help us stay focused and do our best. But if it happens a lot and starts to get in the way of daily life, it might be time to ask for help.

Signs of Anxiety

Anxiety shows up in different ways. Here's what it might look like:

1

Physical symptoms

Stomach aches, headaches, feeling dizzy, fast heartbeat, sweating, or trouble sleeping.

2

Emotional symptoms

Worrying a lot, feeling scared, stressed or overwhelmed for no clear reason, feeling nervous about things happening or what others think of you.

3

Behavioural symptoms

Avoiding school, activities, or hanging out with friends. You might also feel really shy or want to be with your parents all the time.

4

Changes in daily activities

Finding it hard to focus on school or homework, feeling tired or not wanting to do things you usually enjoy.

What Causes Anxiety?

- Family history (if someone else in the family feels anxious).
- Big changes or stressful events in life.
- Feeling like something is dangerous when it's not.
- People around you feeling anxious.
- Comorbid conditions (depression, OCD).
- Poor physical health.

Common Types of Anxiety



Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Worrying too much about everyday things without a clear reason.



Social Anxiety

Feeling very nervous in social situations, worrying that others will judge or make fun of you.



Separation Anxiety

Being afraid to be apart from a parent or caregiver, even for short periods.



Specific Phobias

Fears of certain things like animals, the dark, heights or big crowds.

What Can You Do If You're Feeling Anxious?

Take care of yourself

Sleep well, get active, and try self-care activities.

Talk to someone you trust

Share how you feel with a parent, teacher, work colleague or friend.

Notice what makes you anxious

Keep track of things that make you feel worried, so you can figure out how to deal with them.

Challenge avoidance

Sometimes we want to avoid what makes us anxious, but facing our fears slowly can help.

Try deep breathing

Take slow, deep breaths to calm your mind.

When is it time to seek professional help?

- If anxiety is stopping you from doing everyday things – school, sports, or hanging out with friends.
- If anxiety lasts a long time, like weeks or months.
- If physical symptoms are happening a lot and are interfering with your daily life.
- If you feel anxious and nothing seems to help, even after talking to a trusted person such as a teacher or parent.
- Visiting your GP is a good first step in talking about your experiences of anxiety with a professional. Your GP can help you to see what support and treatment options there are for you.

Resources for Anxiety

- **Kids Helpline:**
1800 55 1800 - Free, confidential support for children and teens.
- **Headspace:**
Helping young people understand and manage anxiety.
- **Beyond Blue:**
Information and support for anxiety.