

ANXIETY - AN OVERVIEW



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Learning Objectives

- You will be able to distinguish the difference between Anxiety and Fear
- You will be able to identify how anxiety develops
- You will be able to identify the different types of anxieties
- You will learn to identify the symptoms of anxiety and panic attacks
- You will learn how to change anxious thinking
- We will review different treatments for anxiety

PART I



The Big Picture

The Big Picture

- Anxiety is a universal emotion experienced by everyone, everywhere and even by animals
- Anxiety is the most common mental disorder in the U.S.
- It affects 40 million people in the U.S. compared to 15 million people that suffer from depression
- Anxiety disorders are highly treatable, yet only 36.9% receive treatment
- An estimated 31.9% of adolescents have an anxiety disorder
- Female adolescents have a higher rate of anxiety (38.0%) versus males (26.1%)
- People with an anxiety disorder are three to five times more likely to go to the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized

The Big Picture - Anxiety vs. Fear

- Anxiety is focused on perceived future threats
 - ▣ It alerts us to danger

- Fear is an intense emotional reaction to some immediate threat or danger

The Big Picture - Fight or Flight Response

- The fight or flight response is triggered by the release of hormones that prepare your body to either:
 - stay and deal with a threat
 - or
 - to run away to safety

- Fight (response to threat)
 - This results in an increase in heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate

- Flight (escape from threat)

The Big Picture – Where does Anxiety Come From

- ▣ Biological Factors
- ▣ Psychological Factors
- ▣ Lifestyle Factors
- ▣ Societal Factors
- ▣ Cultural Factors

The Big Picture - Biological

- Inherited
 - ▣ From your ancestors
- Brain Chemistry
 - ▣ Chemical Imbalance - Neurotransmitters
 - Not enough/Too much serotonin, norepinephrine
- Brain Activity
 - ▣ Blood Flow
 - ▣ Not enough oxygen to our brain

The Big Picture – Psychological Influences

- What we learn and experience
- Life events
 - ▣ Illnesses, Loss of jobs/Life/Relationships, etc.
- Abuse
- Negative thoughts
- Behavior (how we behave)
- Personality (how we look at interpret the world)

The Big Picture – Social/Cultural Influences

- ▣ Your socioeconomic level
- ▣ Your ethnicity
- ▣ Family expectations
- ▣ The way you dress
- ▣ Your academic achievements or lack of
- ▣ Gender roles / Identity
- ▣ Sexual preferences / Sexual identity
- ▣ Religious upbringing

Types of Anxiety Disorders

- Panic Disorder with or without agoraphobia
- Agoraphobia without history of panic disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Substance-induced Anxiety Disorder
- Anxiety due to a general medical condition
- Specific Phobia
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Acute Stress Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Illness Anxiety Disorder (Hypochondria)
- Selective Mutism in Children

Anxiety Attack

- An **anxiety attack** is an intense and/or extended period of anxiety
- It is more severe than the simple feeling of anxiety but less severe than a panic attack
- It can last anywhere from minutes to hours, even days and week

Symptoms:

- ▣ Restlessness, feeling wound-up or on edge
- ▣ Being easily fatigued
- ▣ Difficulty concentrating or having your mind go blank
- ▣ Irritability
- ▣ Muscle tension
- ▣ Difficulty controlling worries
- ▣ Sleep problems (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless, unsatisfying sleep)

Panic Attack

- A **panic attack** is a sudden episode of intense fear that triggers severe physical reactions when there is no real danger or apparent cause
- A **panic attack** usually have at least a few of the following symptoms that usually last 10-15 minutes:

Feeling of unreality or detachment	Numbness or tingling sensation
Fear of loss of control or death	Nausea
Rapid, pounding heart rate	Abdominal cramping
Sweating	Chest pain
Trembling or shaking	Headache
Shortness of breath or tightness in your throat	Dizziness, lightheadedness or faintness

Development of Panic Attack

Phase 1 Initiating Circumstances

(internal or external)

Phase 2 Slight increase in unusual or unpleasant bodily symptoms

(i.e., heart palpitations, shortness of breath, faintness or dizziness, sweating, etc.)

Phase 3 Internalization

(Increased focus on symptoms makes them more noticeable and easily magnified)

Phase 4 Catastrophic Interpretation

(telling yourself the symptom is dangerous – i.e., 'I'll have a heart attack,' 'I'll suffocate,' 'I'll go completely out of control, etc.)

Phase 5 **Panic**

PART II



Changing Anxious Thoughts

Changing Your Anxious Thinking

- Anxious thoughts keep worry and fear alive
- Anxiety stems from negative thinking about a given situation
- Chronic anxiety can affect our heart/ blood pressure, intestinal discomfort
- Chronic anxiety manifests itself in many ways
 - ▣ Physically, psychologically and emotionally
 - Fatigue, Depression, Sense of doom

Getting to Know your Anxiety - Avoidance

- People with anxiety disorders go through great lengths in avoiding that which brings them discomfort/fear/anxiety
 - Two Types of behaviors associated with Anxiety
 - Avoidance
 - Safety Behaviors

Changing Your Anxious Thinking - Acceptance

The First Step

- Acceptance of anxiety (or any situation) is the most important step
- It allows you to acknowledge that the situation is present/exists
- It allows you to then make changes

Without acceptance, one cannot make changes

Changing Your Anxious Thinking – Steps to Achieve Change

- Challenge your core beliefs (negative thinking)
- Physical
 - ▣ Acknowledge physical sensations and work through them
- Behavioral
 - ▣ Put coping techniques in place to change the way you behave
- Emotional
 - ▣ Identify feelings and learn to express them
- Mental
 - ▣ Change negative talk to positive/affirming talk
 - ▣ Re-evaluating underlying mistaken beliefs
 - ▣ Adopt a more relaxed, easygoing perspective on life

Changing Your Anxious Thinking – Identifying Triggers

- ▣ Is your anxiety attributed to:
 - Agoraphobia (fear of leaving your home)
 - Social Anxiety (Avoidance of social settings)
 - Separation Anxiety (Avoidance of leaving the primary caregiver or primary person in your life)
 - Specific Phobia (Avoidance of a specific stimuli, ie, concerts, flying, animals, illness, etc.)
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (avoidance of traumatic events)
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (avoidance of specific circumstance – repetitive rituals)
 - Or is it something else

Changing Your Anxious Thinking – Cognitive Distortions

- Probability
- Overgeneralization
- Catastrophizing
- Rigid Rules
- The mental filter
- Diminishing the positive
- All or nothing thinking
- Jumping to conclusions
- Labeling
- Personalization

Getting to Know your Anxiety— Core Beliefs

- ▣ Are a person's most central ideas about themselves, others and the world
- ▣ They are deeply held beliefs that influence how we interpret our life experiences
- ▣ People are not born with core beliefs, they are learned
- ▣ They usually develop in childhood, during stressful or traumatic periods in adulthood
- ▣ People ignore information that contradicts core beliefs
- ▣ Core beliefs are not necessarily true, even if they feel true
- ▣ Core beliefs can be changed

Changing Your Anxious Thinking- Challenging your Core Beliefs

- Evaluate the evidence regarding your anxious beliefs, assumptions, and predictions
- Consider alternative possible beliefs, assumptions, and predictions
- Are your beliefs/assumptions really true
- The evidence will likely show that what you believe to be true is in fact the opposite

Your Core Belief	Evidence/Reality
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I won't be able to speak in front of the class because of my anxiety• I'm going to fail the exam• I won't be able to attend a concert for fear I won't be able to get out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have participated in many events and I was not anxious• I've passed all my exams because I studied• I went to see Elton John. There was no crisis and I was able to get out just fine

PART III



GETTING READY FOR TREATMENT

Getting Ready for Treatment – Who to Contact

- Relaying any medical or psychiatric concerns to your health professional is important
- When to report/discuss:
 - ▣ As you begin to experience any symptoms that are **out of the ordinary** (for example: anxiety, prolonged sadness, anxiousness, hopelessness, feelings of worthlessness, having difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, loss of appetite/increase in appetite and having thoughts of suicide/homicide)
 - ▣ If you are having thoughts of hurting yourself or others, call 911 immediately or go to the nearest emergency room

Getting Ready for Treatment

Costs of not working through anxiety:

- ❑ You lose out on life experiences
- ❑ You lose out on jobs
- ❑ You lose out on feeling good and on feeling like a normal human being
- ❑ You lose out on enjoying your life
- ❑ Depression, substance abuse, low self-esteem, etc. can develop

Benefits of working through anxiety:

- ❑ You may be able to do things you otherwise avoid
- ❑ Your self-esteem would improve
- ❑ Your concentration would improve
- ❑ Your mood would improve
- ❑ You would be living

Getting Ready for Treatment – Types of Treatments /Therapy

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Exposure Therapy
- Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Relaxation, meditation and acceptance-based strategies
- Medications and herbal remedies
- Lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, sleep)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on modifying
 - ▣ Dysfunctional emotions
 - ▣ Behaviors
 - ▣ Thoughts by interrogating and uprooting negative or irrational beliefs

This model helps the client challenge their thinking and helps the client interpret things in a different way

Eliminating the Safety Net - Exposure

- The most important and critical part of treatment for anxiety is **exposure to the stimuli or situations that provoke anxiety**
- Exposure involves confronting the situations, objects, sensations, or thoughts that trigger your anxiety
- Exposure will probably be the most important strategy for recovery
- Consult with a mental health professional to help guide you

Learning to Relax: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Tense each muscle in your body in sections
- Hold the tension for 20-30 seconds and then release
- This exercise should take about 20 minutes to conclude
- Remember to find a relaxing location where you won't be bothered

Learning to Relax: Deep Breathing

- One of the key components to relaxing is by breathing
- Do the following steps anytime you start to feel anxious
- By doing the breathing you will calm down and have time to think things through and return oxygen to your brain
 1. Place your left hand on your stomach
 2. Place your right hand above your chest
 3. Take a deep breath in through your nose (count from 1-4)
 4. Exhale through your mouth (count from 1-4)
 5. Repeat the breathing three times or as many times as you need it

Learning to Relax: Imagery /Meditation

- Imagery involves actively visualizing scenes that are tranquil and relaxing to you using your five senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch)
 - ▣ It can be a cabin in the mountains
 - ▣ A water fall
 - ▣ A garden full of flowers
 - ▣ Or any place/scene that makes you feel safe and relaxed
- Remember: Imagery is about making you feel tranquil, safe and relaxed

Learning to Relax: Mindfulness

- Mindfulness emphasizes living in the present moment (the here and now)
- Use your 5 senses to practice mindfulness
 - ▣ Hear, Touch, Smell, Taste, Sight
- Do not fight your thoughts and feelings
- If you are living in the past or the future, then you are not living and enjoying the present

Learning to Relax: Distraction

- Distraction is another tool that can be used when anxious feelings come about
 - ▣ Think about happy moments
 - ▣ Think about other things that are going on around you
 - ▣ Think about silly moments
 - ▣ Start doing something (exercise, writing, painting, etc.)

Changing Your Anxious Thinking- Positive Self Talk / Thought Stopping

Positive Self Talk

- If you are having a negative thought, change it right away to something positive
 - ▣ Example: My interview will go terrible
 - Alternate: I have a lot of experience, I will do well

Thought Stopping

- Stop your thought in its tracks
 - ▣ Example: I can't do this. No. I'm not going to entertain this thought
 - I'm going to listen to music instead

Other Techniques

- ▣ Exercise (always consult your physician before you begin any type of exercise)
- ▣ Journal
- ▣ Download a Mood app
- ▣ **Meditate on gratitude**
- ▣ Read
- ▣ Take a bubble bath
- ▣ Repeat Positive Affirmations
- ▣ Furry companions (pets)

Techniques to reducing Anxiety

- ▣ Get a massage
- ▣ Do Aromatherapy (specifically Lavender)
- ▣ Avoid Caffeine
- ▣ Stretch
- ▣ Yoga / Tai Chi
- ▣ Paint/Draw
- ▣ Pray (for those who are spiritual)

Medications / Herbal Remedies

- There are a variety of medications for anxiety
- Below is a list of the more popular medications
 - ▣ Lorazepam (Ativan)
 - ▣ Alprazolam (Xanax)
 - ▣ Clonazepam (Klonopin)
 - ▣ Zolpidem (Ambien)
 - ▣ Diazepam (Valium)
 - ▣ Clonidine (Catapres)
 - ▣ Temazepam (Restoril)
- The problem with these medications is that they are addictive, so, using natural techniques is healthier
- Always consult a physician

Teas / Supplements

- Teas
 - ▣ Chamomile
 - ▣ 7 Blossoms Tea
 - ▣ Peppermint
 - Supplements
 - ▣ There are many natural supplements that are non addicting
- ***Always consult a physician

Diet and Exercise

- ❑ Studies have shown that eating healthy and exercising daily play an important role in mental/physical wellbeing
- ❑ Exercise contributes in releasing the chemical called Serotonin
- ❑ Serotonin is a well-known contributor to feelings of well-being; it is also known to contribute to happiness
- ❑ Commit yourself to walking, dancing or whatever you like for 30 minutes a day (even if you don't feel up to it)

Creating an Anti-Anxiety Lifestyle

- Eat healthy and exercise
- Participate in activities in or outside of the home
- Get some sun
- See a therapist
- Use techniques shown
- Eliminate/Reduce the use of:
 - Caffeine, Alcohol, Nicotine, drugs (these are all stimulants that increase anxiety)
- Get plenty of sleep as it is important for your mental health/wellbeing

QUESTIONS?



Questions are the path to learning