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WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a normal part of being human. It ranges from a vague apprehension to an intensely uncomfortable feeling similar to fear. Anxiety serves an important purpose: It is a warning signal, triggered by a conscious or unconscious perception of danger.

Anxiety can feel different for everyone, but usually we can sense anxiety physiologically and psychologically.

Physiological Symptoms:



- Muscle tension
- Shaking
- Racing heart
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Difficulty breathing
- Can't catch your breath
- Tightness/heaviness in chest
- Sleeping difficulties
- "Butterflies in the stomach"
- Changes in appetite, nausea, digestion problems



Psychological Symptoms:

- Excessive worrying or thinking something is going to go wrong
- Specific fears
- Invasive automatic thoughts
- Negative thinking
- Self-criticism and self-doubt
- Difficulty trusting others
- Paranoia
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling distracted
- Hypervigilance
- Isolation or avoidance

These symptoms are normal reactions to many situations; however, anxiety can become too intense and occur too frequently. When anxiety becomes frequent, ongoing, or causes problems with normal everyday functioning, it may be considered a disorder.

Important questions to consider:

-How often do I experience anxiety?

-How much does my anxiety get in the way of living my life fully?

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a normal reaction to loss, stress, and hardship. It affects how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, working, and connecting to others. It often manifests as lack of interest in activities that were once pleasurable and feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness that persist for at least two weeks.

Depression can feel different for everyone, but usually we can sense depression physiologically and psychologically.

Physiological Symptoms:

- Muscle fatigue
- Loss of energy
- Aches and pains
- Bodily heaviness or the feeling of being weighed down
- Changes in appetite, nausea, or digestion problems
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Reduction in physical movement

Psychological Symptoms:

- Diminished ability to think, concentrate, remember, or indecisiveness
- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Rumination of thought
- Excessive crying or emotional blunting
- Irritability or lack of control of emotions
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure, isolation
- Thoughts of death and suicide, or plans of suicide attempts



Depression is a normal reaction to many difficult situations; however, when depression continues for more than two weeks and causes problems with normal everyday functioning, it may be considered a disorder.

Important questions to consider:

-Have my symptoms lasted more than two weeks?

-How much does my depression get in the way of living my life fully?

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF STRUGGLE?



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Struggling with mental health is very common. For some, there are blatant and overt signs of struggle, for others the signs may be very subtle. With the exception of some cases, there are fundamental indicators of struggle we should be able to recognize.

Mental health challenges are experienced differently from individual to individual, and those suffering will act, express, and interact differently.

Signs of Struggle



Feeling worthless, withdrawn, helpless, or overwhelmed



Loss of hope for future or sense of futility

Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities

Feelings of guilt, self-blame, or self-hatred

Isolation or loss of interest in friends

Fear of losing control, hurting oneself or others

Mood changes, irritability, agitation, or apathy



Poor work performance, attendance, or motivation

Complaints of physical symptoms (ex. stomachaches)



Anxiety over work, money, relationships, or illness

Pressure towards perfectionism or high self-criticism

Change in sleep, insomnia, or difficulty getting out of bed

Suicidal ideation, talk, plans, or statements

*"It's all my fault...
I hate myself."*

*"Everyone would
be better off if
I wasn't here."*

*"I don't care
anymore.
Just leave
me alone."*

*"Things will
never get
better."*



While all of these are important to consider, pay close attention if there are signs of:

- A recent loss: death, divorce, separation, job, finances, status, or self-esteem
- Drug and alcohol use, increased risk-taking behavior, self-harming behavior, or impulsivity
- Preoccupation with death or morbid topics, and/or an ambivalence towards living
- Suicidal gestures: statements, making a plan, giving away personal possessions, putting affairs in order

MANAGING STRESS

MEMORABLE POINTS FROM "COVID-19 & OUR MENTAL HEALTH"



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Under normal conditions, working professionals are challenged by a wide array of stressors; however, many are now facing unprecedented stressors due to COVID-19. Highly stressful times require more effort to ensure mental wellbeing.

Quarantine influences and can lead to: psychological distress, emotional disturbance/exhaustion, depression, increased stress, low mood, anger, irritability, insomnia, and post-traumatic stress symptoms.

These reactions due to increased stress from quarantine and life/work adjustments are normal and treatable.

Working from Home: Best Practices

1. Try your best to stick to your schedule and routine. Establish times when you are available.
2. Dress and set yourself up for success. Set up an appropriate workspace that is separate from home space and allows you to work effectively.
3. Stay connected with your colleagues. If you are on a team, try to stay in touch and check in regularly.
4. Find ways to disengage from work. Have quality personal time if traditional boundaries between work and home life are no longer clear.

Managing Change in Your Home Life

1. Reassure your children/family that they are safe. Talk about the outbreak and what's going on. Share and engage in stress relievers/relaxation practices.
2. Try to keep regular routines for your children. Create a learning space for homework.
3. Make sure to keep fun activities. Take it easy and engage in games and play.
4. Be a role model for your kids and family. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, eat well. Connect with your family and friends.

During these difficult times, please remember

- Physical distancing doesn't mean emotional distancing; **use technology to connect.**
- We can hold **hope** for ourselves and others **without having all the answers.**
- Take breaks** or set aside a limited amount of time you can watch, read, or listen to the news.
- Whatever you're feeling right now is okay.** Tune-in to these feelings to the degree that is possible.
- Tiny moments of **mindful awareness** repeated many times become continuous and automatic.
- Your problems are never too big or too small to **reach out for professional help.**
- We are all in this together!** There are resources available to you. Find many on multiple topics at www.mindingyourmind.org/virtual-resources/