



Anxiety Disorders 101

By Dr. Kevin L. Gyoerkoe

If you or someone you love is suffering from anxiety, you should know that you are not alone. Anxiety disorders are among the most common of all mental disorders, striking at any point across the lifespan, from childhood to old age. Current estimates suggest that about one in five of us is suffering from an anxiety disorder at any point. Almost one out of three of us will have an anxiety disorder in our lives.

We all know what anxiety feels like—our hearts pound, our breathing quickens, we feel the adrenaline run through our veins. These feelings are a natural part of being human. So when does normal anxiety become an anxiety disorder? One way to answer this is to ask if our anxiety is both persistent and interferes with important areas of our lives, such as our health, relationships, work or school. When this occurs, there's a good chance we're experiencing an anxiety disorder.

There are several different types of anxiety disorders, including:

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD): GAD is characterized by chronic and uncontrollable worry and is accompanied by a host of physical symptoms, including upset stomach, muscle tension, headaches, and insomnia.

Panic Disorder: The central feature of panic disorder is the presence of panic attacks (sudden, intense rushes of anxiety that usually last for 10-20 minutes). While a panic attack is a common experience—most people will have at least one in their lives—to be considered a panic disorder we must also fear having another panic attack.

Social Anxiety Disorder: As the name suggests, Social Anxiety Disorder is the fear of social situations, such as parties, dating, and meeting new people.

Phobia: A phobia is the fear of a specific situation that is not actually dangerous. Common phobias include fear of flying, fear of closed spaces, and fear of needles.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD): OCD is a disorder that consists of both unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions). There are many types of OCD, including contamination, checking, and ordering OCD.

The good news is anxiety disorders are among the most treatable of all mental health issues. One effective form of treatment is Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a type of therapy that works especially well with anxiety. Extensive research has demonstrated the efficacy of CBT in treating all the anxiety disorders in both children and adults.

Anxiety is a universal experience. However, when anxiety persists and interferes with our quality of life, it may mean the presence of an anxiety disorder. Even though anxiety disorders can cause great distress and interfere significantly with your life, with proper help, there is hope when it comes to conquering these common problems and getting your life back.

Dr. Kevin L. Gyoerkoe is an MHA board member and professional member who is a licensed psychologist specializing in anxiety and OCD-related disorders. Dr. Gyoerkoe provides state-of-the-art Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) through his practice, The Anxiety and OCD Treatment Center in Charlotte, NC.



www.anxietyandocdtreatmentcenter.com