

Anxiety

Worry and nervousness can be a natural part of life from time to time. All of us worry at some point about things like health, money, or family problems. Recent studies show that up to 40% of the population experiences anxiety and 1 in 5 Americans have a diagnosed anxiety disorder.

While occasional worry and transient anxiety can actually be productive (studying for exams, attention to detail for certain actions such as driving a car), persistent and overwhelming anxiety can interfere with daily life and work responsibilities.

Common types of anxiety

If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of anxiety it is important to consult a clinician who can assess for the presence of an anxiety disorder. The most commonly occurring anxiety disorders include:

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Panic Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorders
- Phobias

Treatment can help

How is anxiety treated? First, talk to your doctor about your symptoms who should do an exam to make sure that another physical problem isn't causing the symptoms. The doctor may refer you to a mental health specialist. Anxiety disorders are generally treated psychotherapy, medication, or both.

Psychotherapy

A type of psychotherapy called cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) is especially useful for treating anxiety. CBT is typically provided in 12-20 sessions and teaches different ways of thinking, behaving, and reacting to situations that help him or her feel less anxious and worried. Improved coping skills are one major outcome of CBT.



Signs of Anxiety

Feeling nervous, tense or restless
Persistent worrying
Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
Chronic or severe fatigue
Trouble concentrating
Trouble sleeping
Increased heart rate
Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
Sweating
Trembling
Gastrointestinal (GI) problems

While you should keep an eye out for symptoms in yourself, it's particularly important to pay attention to signs in others so you can help them seek treatment and feel better. The support of a loved one can have a huge impact on someone seeking the help they need.

Medication

Doctors also may prescribe medication to help treat anxiety. Any decision regarding the use of medication should be made with your doctor.

Local Resources

Take a free, anonymous mental health screening at www.mental-health-recovery.org
Contact a Portage County mental health provider:
Coleman Health Services at 330-673-1347
Family & Community Services at 330-677-4124



Stress

Stress is the body's natural reaction to tension, pressure, and change. Everyone experiences it from time to time. Not all stress is bad. In a dangerous situation, stress signals the body to prepare to face a threat or flee to safety. In non-life-threatening situations, stress can motivate people, such as when they need to take a test or interview for a new job.

However, prolonged, unrelieved stress can lead to accidental injury, as well as to serious illness. For the sake of your health, safety, and happiness, it is important to recognize and manage stress before it gets the best of you.

There are different types of stress—all of which carry physical and mental health risks. Routine stress is related to the pressures of school, work, family, and other daily responsibilities. There can also be stress brought about by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness. Traumatic stress experienced during an event such as a major accident, war, or natural disaster where people may be in danger of being seriously hurt or killed.



Signs of Stress

- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Indigestion, diarrhea
- Irritability, anger
- Overeating or skipping meals
- Frequent colds
- Grinding teeth
- Feeling of Powerlessness
- Muscle tension or soreness
- Lack of energy
- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Inability to make decisions
- Lack of interest
- Sleep problems
- Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs

You should seek help right away if you have suicidal thoughts, are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, or are using drugs or alcohol more frequently.

Ways to Manage Stress

- Think positively and surround yourself with others who think the same.
- Avoid the trap of demanding too much of yourself. Get help if tasks are too big for you.
- Accept that you can't control every situation. Learn to be flexible.
- At the start of each day, write a to-do list and set priorities.
- Divide tasks into smaller more manageable ones.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and get plenty of sleep.
- Include exercise into your day to boost energy and improve your mood.
- Make time for relaxation. Try listening to smooth music, mediating, gardening, playing with a pet, reading a good book, etc
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol and drugs. They only make matters worse.
- Confide in at least one friend, share disappointment and achievements. Talk things out so minor frustrations don't build up.
- Laugh, look for humor in life and take time to have fun.
- Remember, it's OK to cry.
- Practice deep breathing: Take in a slow breath through your nose to the count 5. Hold it for another 5 count. Then exhale through your mouth to the count of 5.

Portage Helpline:
330-678-4357

Struggling, need to talk?
Call anytime!

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SOURCES: Natl Institute of Mental Health, Positive Promotions