



ANXIETY

Everybody knows what it's like to feel anxious – the butterflies in your stomach before a first date, the tension you feel when your boss is angry, and the way your heart pounds if you're in danger. Anxiety rouses you to action. It gears you up to face a threatening situation. It makes you study harder for that exam, and keeps you on your toes when you're making a speech. In general, it helps you cope.

But if you have an anxiety disorder, this normally helpful emotion can do just the opposite -- it can keep you from coping and can disrupt your daily life. There are several types of anxiety disorders, each with their own distinct features.

An anxiety disorder may make you feel anxious most of the time, without any apparent reason. Or the anxious feelings may be so uncomfortable that to avoid them you may stop some everyday activities. Or you may have occasional bouts of anxiety so intense they terrify and immobilize you.

Anxiety disorders are the most common of all the mental health disorders. Considered in the category of anxiety disorders are: Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Agoraphobia, Social Phobia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Specific Phobia, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Acute Stress Disorder.

Specific Symptoms of Anxiety Disorder:

- palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate
- sweating
- trembling or shaking
- sensations of shortness of breath or smothering
- feeling of choking
- chest pain or discomfort
- nausea or abdominal distress
- feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or faint
- derealization (feelings of unreality) or depersonalization (being detached from oneself)
- fear of losing control or going crazy
- fear of dying
- paresthesias (numbness or tingling sensations)

Personal Counseling Services

If you feel that anxiety is keeping you from meeting your goals or that it is creating stress and unhappiness, you could benefit from the Personal Counseling Assistance Program (P-CAP). This free service is provided for CPCC students by Counseling Services. For more information, call 704-330-6433.

Six Simple Habits That Defeat Anxiety

If you're like most anxiety sufferers, you probably spend much of your day wrestling with physical symptoms, feeling afraid, or even hiding your anxious feelings from others. Anxiety can keep you feeling trapped — and once you feel this way, it's difficult to know how or if you can ever feel better. If you suffer from anxiety, studies show that simple anxiety-reducing habits can go a long way toward improving how you feel. Here are six simple habits you can use to defeat anxiety and take back control of your life.

Acknowledge your Anxiety

When you hide your anxious feelings for months or years, you perpetuate your anxiety by assuming it's your fault. Anxiety is **not** your fault. There is nothing inherently wrong with who you are. You are a good, valuable, uniquely special person. You simply suffer from anxiety.

Learn Strategies to Immediately Deal with Anxiety Symptoms

Educate yourself by learning strategies to immediately deal with anxiety symptoms. The National Institute of Anxiety and Stress has just made available free information that can help you reduce anxiety symptoms quickly, easily, and effectively.

http://www.conqueranxiety.com/Anxiety_Pyramid.htm .

Use “Power” Language

Mind-body research shows that the words you use can have a powerful effect on how you feel. Most anxiety sufferers use negative words that destroy their self-esteem and promote a sense of loss of control. These are "victim" words. A few victim words include: can't, always, never, and should. Victim words perpetuate your anxiety and fear. They create a negative self-fulfilling prophecy that results in anxious thoughts and physical symptoms. You can learn to defeat anxiety by replacing victim words with “power” language. Power language means using words that promote your feelings of self-worth and personal power.

Tone your Inner Power Daily

Think of your inner power as a muscle just like any other muscle. The more you use it, the more toned it becomes and the more you are able to accomplish. Every time you practice a healthy life strategy, you actually increase your ability to conquer your anxiety. What you couldn't do yesterday, you can do today. With practice, your new skills will become automatic. This is how you create lasting freedom from anxiety.

Set Small, Achievable Goals

Anxiety sufferers tend to set unrealistically high expectations. To counteract this tendency, set goals that you can easily accomplish. This builds your confidence and your sense of accomplishment. Then you are learning skills to handle stress and reduce your anxiety, small steps work best. For example, if your goal is to integrate deep breathing into your life, start by practicing for one-minute intervals three or four times a day instead of for an hour all at once.

Realize that Now is the Perfect Time to Start Feeling Better

Realize that your anxiety and fear will not go away until you stop waiting and start learning. There are many resources available to you to help you overcome your anxiety — books, courses, doctors, counselors, support groups, and more. Some people have been waiting for the “perfect” time to conquer your anxiety. You may be saying to yourself...“I can't tackle my anxiety right now. I'll wait until my symptoms aren't so strong to make changes in my life.” Or ...“I'll start making changes when my life is less hectic.” The list goes on and on. Here's what I've discovered: You'll be waiting a lifetime for these things to happen. Because when you wait for something else to happen to improve your life, you're giving away your power. You feed your anxiety and feelings of loss of control.

The only perfect time to conquer your anxiety is right now...this moment. You do not need to feel symptom-free or confident or energetic, or anything else to begin. All you need to do is take the first step.