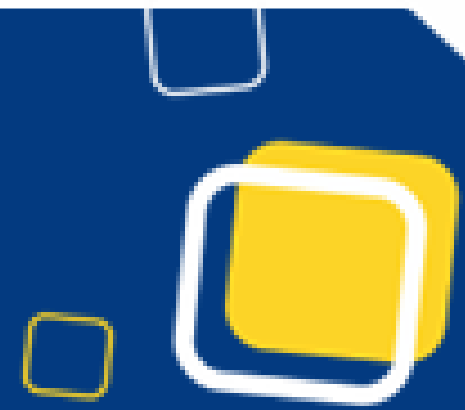




WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is a normal experience, a feeling of worry or nervousness in response to real, perceived or anticipated fear and stress. Almost everyone experiences anxiety from time to time.



SYMPTOMS:

Common anxiety signs and symptoms include:

- Feeling nervous, restless or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry
- Having trouble sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Having difficulty controlling worry
- Having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety

RISK FACTORS:

These factors may increase your risk of developing an anxiety disorder:

- **Trauma.** Children who endured abuse or trauma or witnessed traumatic events are at higher risk of developing an anxiety disorder at some point in life. Adults who experience a traumatic event also can develop anxiety disorders.
- **Stress due to an illness.** Having a health condition or serious illness can cause significant worry about issues such as your treatment and your future.
- **Stress buildup.** A big event or a buildup of smaller stressful life situations may trigger excessive anxiety — for example, a death in the family, work stress or ongoing worry about finances.
- **Personality.** People with certain personality types are more prone to anxiety disorders than others are.
- **Other mental health disorders.** People with other mental health disorders, such as depression, often also have an anxiety disorder.
- **Having blood relatives with an anxiety disorder.** Anxiety disorders can run in families.
- **Drugs or alcohol.** Drug or alcohol use or misuse or withdrawal can cause or worsen anxiety.



PREVENTION

There's no way to predict for certain what will cause someone to develop an anxiety disorder, but you can take steps to reduce the impact of symptoms if you're anxious:

- **Get help early.** Anxiety, like many other mental health conditions, can be harder to treat if you wait.
- **Stay active.** Participate in activities that you enjoy and that make you feel good about yourself. Enjoy social interaction and caring relationships, which can lessen your worries.
- **Avoid alcohol or drug use.** Alcohol and drug use can cause or worsen anxiety. If you're addicted to any of these substances, quitting can make you anxious. If you can't quit on your own, see your doctor or find a support group to help you.

*Anxiety triggers the THREE Protective Armor **fight, flight, freeze** response:*

- **Fight-** When we feel we can overpower the threat, hormones prime us for conflict. Eg kick, shout/name call
- **Flight-** When we feel the threat is too powerful, hormones prepare us to run away.
- **Freeze -** When we feel helpless we dissociate physically, mentally and emotionally. Eg disengaged, unable to focus, disinterested.