

What is an Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety itself is a normal and important part of living. It helps us get out of harm's way and prepare for important events and it warns us when we need to take action. However, when anxiety is overwhelming, irrational and/or interferes with day-to-day activities, it can be a sign of an anxiety disorder. Anxiety Disorders is an umbrella term used to describe the following disorders.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by excessive uncontrollable worry about everyday things. Such as health, money or career.

With **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**, individuals are plagued by persistent, recurring thoughts (obsessions) that reflect exaggerated anxiety or fears and repetitive behaviors or rituals (compulsions) performed by the sufferer.

People with **Panic Disorder** suffer severe attacks of terror-which may make them feel like they are having a heart attack or are going crazy-for no apparent reason.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can follow exposure to a traumatic event and symptoms include reliving the traumatic event, avoidance, detachment, and difficulty sleeping and concentrating.

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is characterized by extreme anxiety about being judged by others, or behaving in a way that might cause embarrassment or ridicule.

People with **Specific Phobias** suffer from an intense fear reaction leading to an avoidance of specific objects or situations; the level of fear is usually inappropriate to the situation, and is recognized by the sufferer as being irrational.



1 in 6 adults suffer from an anxiety disorder



The Anxiety Disorders Association of America

The ADAA's mission is to promote the prevention, treatment and cure of anxiety disorders and to improve the lives of all people who suffer from them. To make a donation, become a member, or obtain more information visit www.adaa.org or call **240-485-1001**.

ADAA is committed to promoting the prevention, treatment and cure of anxiety disorders and improving the lives of the adults and children who suffer from them.

The ADAA is the nation's leading nonprofit organization focused exclusively on anxiety disorders. Founded in 1980, the ADAA continues to grow with the support of a unique network of clinicians, researchers and individuals with anxiety disorders. Guided by a volunteer Board of Directors, a Scientific Advisory Board and a Clinical Advisory Board, the ADAA provides educational information, funds research, and advances the science and treatment of anxiety disorders by working with researchers, clinicians and other organizations.

anxiety disorders are real, they are serious...

and they are treatable

More than 19 million Americans, ages 18-54, suffer from at least one anxiety disorder.

ANXIETY
DISORDERS
ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA

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What is an Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses in children and adults. Anxiety disorders include: Panic Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD), and Specific Phobias. These disorders frequently co-occur with other

mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder, ADD/ADHD as well as with physical illnesses such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), chronic pain, heart disease, and sleep disorders.



ADAA is the unified voice that anxiety disorders are real, serious, and treatable.



1 in 8 children has an anxiety disorder; the most common mental health disorder in children.

How You Can Help

Whether you are someone with an anxiety disorder, someone who cares for a family member or friend with an anxiety disorder, someone who treats or studies anxiety disorders, or just someone who would like to aid in the important work that the ADAA does, you can show your support of the ADAA through membership, tax-deductible donations, and endowments. Your contribution helps millions so they are not alone in their struggle with anxiety disorders.

ADAA improves lives and provides hope to all with anxiety disorders.

Your contribution is more than just a donation; with it, you provide the ADAA with vital funding to:

- > Promote the availability of effective treatment for children and adults;
- > Publicize the latest information and research on anxiety disorders;
- > Support new research about the cause, prevention and cure of anxiety disorders;
- > Provider continuing education for mental health specialists;
- > Distribute materials at no charge to all who need it;
- > Encourage greater understanding about panic disorder, GAD, PTSD, OCD, phobias and SAD with health care providers, the media, and legislators.

To learn more about the ADAA and the important work we do to make a difference in the lives of people with anxiety disorders, visit ADAA's website at www.adaa.org.

What We Do

The ADAA provides educational information, links people who need treatment with those who provide it, and supports research. The ADAA is the largest national network focused on anxiety disorders and provides the largest information through personal stories, articles, self-help quizzes, resources and lists of treatment professionals.

We are proud of our accomplishments. Among the highlights:

- > Awarding more than \$700,000 to young researchers, increasing the pool of independent investigators with interest and expertise in anxiety disorders research;
- > Increasing awareness about anxiety disorders through public education campaigns and partnerships including social anxiety disorder (Imagine Being Allergic to People) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD Alliance);
- > Co-sponsoring national mental health screening efforts for anxiety disorders;
- > Launching a Women's initiative program to reach out to women and their families and organizing the first conference on Women & Anxiety Disorders to fully understand the complexities facing women with anxiety and to meet those research needs;
- > Sponsoring the first conference on Anxiety Disorders in Children and Youth, focusing on the need for diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders among children and teens;
- > Funding the landmark study on the Economic Burden of Anxiety Disorders and disseminating the findings that anxiety disorders cost the U.S. more than \$42 billion a year;
- > Pioneering efforts to improve the diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders within primary care;
- > Offering quality educational programs to professionals and the public.

... and the ADAA leads the way to better lives for the millions with anxiety disorders by:

- > Linking people who need treatment with the health care professionals who provide it;
- > Assisting individuals with anxiety disorders in developing self-help skills;
- > Providing thousands of educational booklets and reprints each year;
- > Maintaining and expanding an award-winning website receiving 5 million hits per month;
- > Increasing awareness about all anxiety disorders and co-occurring illnesses; and
- > Advocating for improving the lives of people with anxiety disorders.



Anxiety Disorders are twice as likely to occur in women as men.



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Finding a Treatment Provider

Anxiety Disorders are treated by a wide range of mental health professionals including: psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and primary care doctors.

Finding the right therapist and feeling comfortable is vital. Speak to the therapist, either on the phone or in his/her office, and do not be embarrassed if you are uncomfortable and would rather see someone else.

To help in the process of finding a therapist, the ADAA provides a list of its members who have identified themselves as mental health providers on our website, www.ADAA.org.*

*The professionals on this list are not screened by the ADAA and the descriptions of their practices are their own.

Finding the Right Treatment and Professional for You

A therapist should be willing to answer any questions you may have about their methods, training and fees. Here are some questions you may want to ask a therapist during a consultation:

- > **What training and experience do you have in treating anxiety disorders?**
- > **What is your basic approach to treatment?**
- > **Can you prescribe medication or refer me to someone who can, if that proves necessary?**
- > **How long is the course of treatment?**
- > **How frequent are treatment sessions and how long do they last?**
- > **Do you include family members in therapy?**
- > **Will you or a staff member go to the home of a phobic person, if necessary?**
- > **What is your fee schedule, and do you have a sliding scale for varying financial circumstances?**
- > **What kinds of health insurance do you accept?**

Remember, if a therapist is reluctant to answer your questions, or if you do not feel comfortable, see someone else.

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