Understanding anxiety and depression

Anxiety and depression both have many variations and can look and feel different for everyone. Depression and anxiety disorders are not the same, but people with depression often experience symptoms similar to an anxiety disorder. It is not uncommon for someone with an anxiety disorder to suffer from depression and vice versa. Although, as many as 60% of people with depression often experience anxiety and as many people with anxiety experience depressive symptoms.[1]

Depression and anxiety are two of the more common co-occurring conditions in mental health. There is no evidence that one disorder causes the other. Yet, there is clear evidence that each disorder has its own causes, its own emotional and behavioral symptoms, and that many people suffer from both, separately and combined.[2]

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What is depression?

Depression, also called clinical depression or major depressive disorder, is a common, serious mood disorder that affects how you feel, think, and are able to function in your day-to-day life.[4]

Depressive episodes are classified as mild, moderate and severe based on the number, type, and severity of symptoms the person experiences, as well as the impact that the depression has on their ability to function. For a health care provider to diagnose an individual with depression, the individual must have symptoms for at least two weeks.[4]

Signs of depression include:[4]

• Lasting feelings of unhappiness or hopelessness

• Loss of interest in things or activities that once were enjoyed

• Feeling tired, sleeping all of the time or sleeping poorly

• Aches and pains

• Loss of appetite or sex drive

• Trouble concentrating, restlessness or irritability

• Memory lapses or trouble making decisions

• Thoughts of death or suicide or attempts at suicide

People with chronic depression may also experience persistent physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomach problems or pain that do not respond to treatment or have no other cause.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is characterized by lengthy preparation for a real or perceived threat.[4]

As there are different types of depression, there are different types of anxiety. People with **generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)** experience excessive anxiety or worry, most days for at least six months.[7] Worries can include anything, and even the most common worries can cause significant problems in their lives. Generalized anxiety disorder symptoms include:[7]

• Restlessness, worrying or being on-edge

• Fatigue

• Difficulty concentrating

• Irritability

• Muscle tension

• Difficulty falling or staying asleep

People with **panic disorder** have recurrent, unexpected periods of intense fear that come on quickly and reach their peak within minutes.[7] Panic disorder is a form of anxiety disorder. During a panic attack, people may experience:[7]

• A pounding heartbeat

• Sweating

• Shaking

• Shortness of breath

• The feeling that something bad is going to happen soon

Phobias are fears of specific objects (like needles) or situations (like flying) that are out of proportion to the actual danger caused by the situation or object.[7] People with a phobia tend to:[7]

• Excessively or irrationally worry about encountering the feared object or situation

• Take active steps to avoid whatever it is they fear

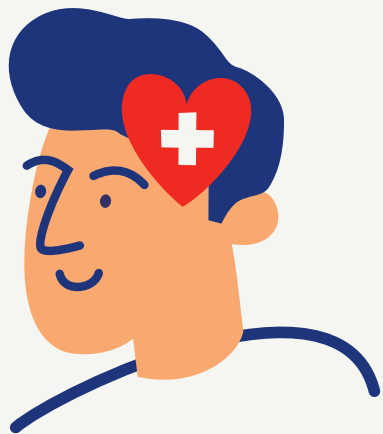• Experience immediate intense anxiety when in the presence of the feared object or situation

Treatment for anxiety and depression

Medication for anxiety and depression are often the same medications. Additional anxiety and depression medicine may be used depending on the circumstances. In either case, it is important to note that any of these medications may take up to four weeks to begin having an effect, and up to 12 weeks to reach full effect. Also, it's common to have to try various medications or doses of medications to find out what works for you.

For additional information, reach out to your primary care provider.

For additional services and tools visit *walgreens.com/findcare*.

If you or someone you know needs help now, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273- TALK (8255) or call 911.

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