

What is anxiety?

Feeling anxious in response to a stressful situation is normal, it can help us work harder to achieve a goal. However, these feelings should go away once the stressful situation has passed. When anxious feelings do not go away, or happen for no apparent reason, it may be a sign of an anxiety condition.

Signs and symptoms

There are many different kinds of anxiety disorders, but there are some symptoms shared across them. These symptoms can impact a person's day-to-day life including work, study, and relationships.

Emotional	Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive fear or worry • Obsessive thinking • Catastrophising • Feelings of self-consciousness or self-judgement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling restless, tense, or on edge • Panic attacks • Racing heart, quick breathing, or tight chest • Head, muscle, or stomach aches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding situations that cause anxiety • Difficulty concentrating • Difficulty sleeping or excessive fatigue • Irritable



Causes of anxiety

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition in Australia, one in four people will experience anxiety at some point in their life. There are many factors than can increase the likelihood of developing anxiety.

Biological	Psychological	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic predisposition and family history of mental illness • Some medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality traits or an emotional nature • Perceived lack of control over life events • Intolerance of uncertainty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life experiences such as trauma • Use of drugs and alcohol • Stressful lifestyle such as work or relationship stress



Managing anxiety

People with anxiety can live productive and normal lives, but they may need strategies, treatment, or other support to help manage symptoms. Everyone is different, so different things will work for different people.

Professional help

- Psychologists and psychiatrists can provide support
- Talking therapies targeting thoughts and behaviours
- Medications

Self-management

- Slow breathing and relaxation exercises
- Positive self-talk
- Challenging anxious thoughts
- Confront anxiety-provoking situations

Peer support

- Calling phone support services
- Talking to a friend or family member
- Connecting with others on online forums



Getting support

If you are experiencing anxiety, symptoms of anxiety, or have noticed symptoms in others, knowing where to get support for yourself and others is important.

Doctor

- Your GP can provide initial guidance and refer you to support from a psychologist or psychiatrist
- They can provide other resources and recommendations

Psychologist

- With a GP referral, Medicare will subsidise 10 visits to a psychologist
- You can also visit private practice psychologists

Phone Counselling

- Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636
- MindSpot
1800 6144 34
- SANE
1800 187 263
- Head to Health
1800 595 212

