Demystifying Anxiety Disorders: Types and Treatments

Anxiety is a feeling that humans experience sometimes. But only a few people know what that feeling is called, how to cope with it, and how to prevent it. As you read the article till the end, you will learn more about Anxiety, the disorders associated with Anxiety, how to recognize the symptoms and the treatment options available.

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a human emotion that individuals often experience when they are stressed or worried. The feeling of Anxiety is our brain's way of telling us to stay alert, as there may be a potential danger ahead.

Humans may experience Anxiety daily as well. For example, when our boss calls for a meeting, the feeling we experience before we take an exam, or simply before taking a big personal/financial decision.

So, now you must be wondering: If anxiety is a normal feeling, and everyone faces it daily, why must we treat it? The answer to your question is that being anxious is okay, but when our anxiety starts causing problems in our daily lives, we must pay attention to it.

What are Anxiety Disorders?

Anxiety Disorder is a mental health condition that can significantly impact an individual's personal, social, occupational, spiritual, and emotional well-being. The disorder may lead the person to act differently in their daily life, which would negatively impact their relationships and other important aspects of life.

Anxiety can look different for everyone, and there are no hard and fast symptoms that all individuals must face. Anxiety disorders are further divided into conditions that may be related to fear, feelings of apprehension, and excessive worry. Constant and excessive Anxiety may sometimes overwhelm the individual and impact the human's daily functioning.

How Do You Recognize Symptoms of Anxiety?

As mentioned above, the symptoms and experience of Anxiety are very subjective. Every human may face different or similar symptoms. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the emotions we are feeling and identify what they are about.

Given below are some common symptoms of Anxiety that individuals may face. However, please remember that the symptoms can vary as per the disorder.

- Excessive fear or worry
- Feeling like you are constantly on edge
- Rapid heartbeat
- Feeling short of breath
- Sweaty palms or overall sweating
- Feeling nauseous
- Irritability
- Facing difficulty in concentrating at work or in personal life
- Tensed Muscles
- Dizziness
- Tingling feeling in hands or feet

Different Types of Anxiety Disorders

Several anxiety disorders exist in the mental health area, each with different symptoms and criteria. Some of them are mentioned below:

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** The key symptom of GAD is having excessive worry about daily life events, which significantly negatively impacts day-to-day tasks. Additionally, a person suffering from GAD may feel restless most of the time, have trouble concentrating, have disturbed sleep, and feel nauseous most of the time. These constant symptoms for at least six or more months may lead to a diagnosis of GAD.
- **Panic Disorder:** As the name suggests, a panic disorder is a feeling of excessive Anxiety where you experience a panic attack. Symptoms of panic attack include having a racing heartbeat or palpitations, feeling like you are choking, you may start sweating a lot, and more. Some individuals may also feel like they are having a heart attack, as chest pain is also one of the common symptoms.
- **Social Anxiety Disorder:** Some people feel scared or anxious when asked to participate in a social gathering or are called for lunch at a restaurant. The individual with a social anxiety disorder may worry excessively about being out in public, around people, and may have overflowing thoughts. These thoughts are often about what other people will think about them, whether people will judge them when they go out, and

more. Social Anxiety leads to constant self-consciousness and worrying about social situations.

- **Specific Phobias:** People with specific phobias have fear associated with certain things or situations. For example, someone who fears height may avoid flying on a plane or skip participating in adventures like paragliding. An individual who fears enclosed spaces may avoid lifts and would choose to climb the stairs. When exposed to these triggers or situations, the individual faces heightened Anxiety, which may get out of one's control. Hence, people avoid their fears, even if it means skipping important events.
- **Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD):** You must have noticed that kids often start crying or throwing tantrums when their loved ones or caregivers leave their surroundings. However, little kids are not the only ones who fear separation. Having SAD leads to feelings of excessive worry and Anxiety when a person that you are close to leaves. You may start worrying that something bad has happened to your person, and that would lead to constant Anxiety.
- **Medication:** Induced Anxiety Disorders: Individuals who use illegal drugs or certain medications that cause Anxiety may suffer from this disorder. Moreover, individuals with drugs or other substance addictions may also face heightened Anxiety when trying to quit. Withdrawal of drugs and other substances can lead to anxiety symptoms, like constant worrying.

Treatment Options for Anxiety Disorders

Even though Anxiety is a normal emotion, it may get serious when it gets out of control. So, if you or anyone you know is struggling with Anxiety that is hampering daily life tasks, it is time to seek help. Below are some treatments for the anxiety disorders discussed above.

- **Seek professional help:** If you are experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned above of Anxiety regularly, then you may contact a mental health professional. These may include a counseling psychologist, a **clinical psychologist**, or a psychiatrist. After proper assessment and evaluation, your treatment can start.
- **Therapy:** As per the symptoms and intensity of the disorder, the mental health professional will decide if you need medication or psychotherapy. Cognitive Behavior Therapy has proved to be one of the most effective therapies in managing Anxiety.
- **Changes in Lifestyle:** Sometimes, having a mundane lifestyle may lead to feelings of hopelessness or Anxiety. Therefore, it is advised to make changes in your lifestyle, like having a balanced diet, doing regular exercise, focusing on self-care, and having quality sleep at night.
- **Talk to someone:** Keeping thoughts and feelings inside can lead to bottled-up emotions, which may get triggering and overwhelming. Hence, having a supporting network of friends or family with whom you can talk about your problems is important.
- **Journaling:** We often see people in movies or real life who keep a personal diary with themselves. They use the diary to write about their day, what happened all day, how it made them feel, and more. This technique is also called Journaling, where you write

about your emotions and the feelings that you experience after something bothers you. Keeping a journal often helps individuals in managing emotions and identifying their triggers.

Conclusion

Understanding and addressing Anxiety or its symptoms is an essential practice that individuals must take care of. We often keep our physical health in check but ignore the thoughts and feelings inside our heads. These feelings and constant worry can become very troubling for people if not managed at the right time. Talk to a **mental health professional** today, and walk towards the path of physical and mental well-being.