

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a common enough feeling that everyone experiences at some stage and can be a normal emotional response to stressful situations.

It's also a natural emotional response that can help us prepare for challenges, like sitting that next exam or worrying about an awkward social occasion.

What makes one person anxious may not create the same response in someone else.

A break-up, concern about exams or work, or a fight with a friend can make you feel anxious, worried or scared.

While anxiety is an everyday feeling it can become a problem when there is no obvious reason for that anxiety or when anxious feelings persist for more than a couple of weeks.

How can anxiety affect you?

Taken on their own, individual symptoms of anxiety are things we all experience from time to time. However, if you're experiencing more than one of the following over a couple of weeks or longer you may need some extra support. Some of the ways anxiety can affect you physically are:

- dry mouth and/or difficulty swallowing
- nightmares
- difficulty getting to and staying asleep
- poor concentration
- muscle tension and headaches
- rapid heart rate and breathing
- sweating or trembling
- diarrhoea
- flare-up of another health problem or illness (e.g. dermatitis, asthma)
- sexual problems, such as not having any sexual feelings or being interested in sex

Some common ways anxiety can affect your behaviour and feelings include:

- irritability or constantly being in a bad mood
- worry or constantly feeling that something bad is about to happen
- asking many unnecessary questions and requiring constant reassurance
- being a perfectionist
- being pessimistic and easily able to identify what may go wrong in any given situation

There are a number of things you can try to reduce your feelings of anxiety.

Making changes

Identify the times you get anxious and what causes you stress. Can you see changes you could make that might help? Are there people that make the situation better or worse? Are there things that make you feel more relaxed that you can do more of?

Eating and exercise

When people feel anxious they often neglect themselves. Ensuring you're eating healthy food at regular mealtimes and getting regular exercise will improve your overall health and well-being.

Relaxation

There are loads of ways to relax but some of us need to learn how. Different things work for different people, but it's really important to find what works for you.

Yoga, pilates and meditation are very popular these days with classes available in nearly every town but they're not the only way to relax. Going for a walk, run or playing football with a friend or just taking some time out for yourself are all methods of relaxing.

Self-talk

When you're feeling anxious remind yourself this is an uncomfortable feeling that will pass. Try to distract yourself by thinking about something different.

See if you can concentrate on your breathing, focusing your attention elsewhere. Read more about self-talk.

Talking

Bottling things up can increase how anxious you feel. It can be hard but if possible, talk to a friend, family member or a GP about what's making you feel anxious. The simple act of talking to someone outside the situation can help get some perspective.

Give it time

Changes in behaviour don't happen overnight. But, you can learn to manage feelings of anxiety and not let them take over. Following the tips here will help and don't forget to reach out to someone for extra support if you need it.

Extra support

If you're feeling so anxious that it's impacting on your day-to-day life, you might need some extra support. See face-to-face help to see who you can talk to if you decide you do.

How Are My Stress Levels Today?

- ☐ I eat at least one hot balanced meal a day
- ☐ I get seven to eight hours of sleep four nights a week
- ☐ I give and receive affection regularly
- ☐ I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely
- ☐ I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week
- ☐ I do not smoke
- ☐ I drink fewer than 5 alcoholic drinks a week
- ☐ I am the appropriate weight for my height
- ☐ I have an income adequate to meet my basic expenses
- ☐ I get strength from my spiritual beliefs
- ☐ I regularly attend club or social activities
- ☐ I have a network of friends and acquaintances
- ☐ I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters
- ☐ I can speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried
- ☐ I have conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, chores, money and daily living issues
- ☐ I do something for fun at least once a week
- ☐ I am able to organise my time effectively
- ☐ I drink fewer than 3 cups of tea, coffee, cola per day
- ☐ I take quiet time for myself during each day

BALANCING FOR LIFE

When we are students, one of the hardest things to do is to maintain a sense of balance in our lives. We often start the academic year with new resolutions; we may be revitalised with energy after a holiday break, we are motivated and committed to a successful academic year.

But maintaining that sense of control over our lives may become increasingly difficult as the demands of university study unfold.

It is easy to overlook the basic factors which provide balance in our lives. When one of these factors is ignored or forgotten, we may become out of balance and our bodies let us know this has occurred. We may become unmotivated - stressed - depressed - anxious - exhausted - lose our appetites or over-eat - become run down or sick - feel anti-social - not be able to sleep or sleep too much - unable to study or work - lose our libido.

We need to remember that we are a complex mix of academic, physical, mental, spiritual and emotional dimensions. Each of these dimensions needs to be acknowledged and nurtured to maintain an adequate equilibrium for effective functioning.

So what are the basic factors which need to be in harmony and which are the building blocks for this necessary holistic balance?

D Diet nutrition

R Relaxation

E Exercise

S Sleep and adequate rest

S Socialising with friends, having fun

Now you have read this simple list you are probably saying "I knew that!" But it is so easy to overlook these fundamental building blocks. We often ignore the signs that we are out of balance, until our body malfunctions and our attention is drawn to the fact that something is out of sync!

Tips for Beating Stress

1. Take PHYSICAL EXERCISE
2. Practise DEEP BREATHING. Do RELAXATION EXERCISE
3. Talk to a COUNSELLOR or Someone you can trust
4. ACCEPT WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE (use Serenity Prayer)
5. AVOID SELF-MEDICATION / Cigarettes / Alcohol / Coffee
6. GET ENOUGH SLEEP
7. TAKE TIME OUT TO RELAX & ENJOY – LISTEN TO MUSIC
8. DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS – in moderation
9. DO ONE JOB AT A TIME - STRUCTURE YOUR DAY – TIMETABLE
10. ENJOY A HOBBY – (even if you don't enjoy it – USE it)
11. IF YOU ARE ILL – DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE NOT.
12. WATCH YOUR DIET - EAT SENSIBLY - EAT FOOD WITH TRYPTOPHANE ACTIVATORS – WARM TURKEY, BAKED POTATO, CREAM SOUPS. MAINTAIN REGIMEN OF VITAMINS IF ANY TO BOOST IMMUNE SYSTEM.
13. DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY “NO”. YOU ARE REFUSING THE REQUEST – NOT THE PERSON.
14. DELEGATE TASKS TO OTHERS – LISTEN TO TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS.

The 10 Commandments

For Reducing Stress

1. Thou shalt not be perfect, nor even try.
2. Thou shalt not be all things to all people, nor even try.
3. Thou shalt sometimes leave things undone which ought to be done.
4. Thou shalt not spread thyself too thin.
5. Thou shalt learn to say "NO".
6. Thou shalt schedule time for thyself and supportive network.
7. Thou shalt switch off and do nothing regularly.
8. Thou shalt be boring, inelegant and inattentive at times.
9. Thou shalt NOT feel guilty.
10. Especially thou shalt NOT be thine own worst enemy BUT be thine own best friend.
11. Thou shalt not take life too seriously.

Name:

Date: 12/10/2017

My Personal Rating of these aspects of my Life
Satisfaction level with/Time spent re etc
0= total dissatisfaction and 10=Perfect

	Home Place	Fun/ Rec.	Personal Growth	Romance	Friends	Family	Health	Money	Career
10									
9									
8									
7									
6									
5									
4									
3									
2									
1									
0									

LOOK AT THE HIGH-SCORING COLUMNS – Why are these GOOD?

LOOK AT THE LOW-SCORING COLUMNS – Why are these low?

What can I do this week to improve a low score?

Does this change impact on any other column (area of Life)? Yes/No If so:

How? _____

Is this acceptable i.e. is it a GOOD DEAL for me – is it worth the move? Yes/No

4 "DOWNS

BREATHE DOWN

SHOULDERS DOWN

VOICE DOWN

SLOW DOWN

If I had My Child to Raise Over Again

If I had my child to raise over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later,
I'd finger-paint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.
I'd take my eyes off my watch, and watch with my eyes.

I would care to know less and know to care more.
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play,
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging and less tugging.
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more. I'd model
less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love

By Diane Loomans

From the book "Full Esteem Ahead" p.194

One of the most interesting facts to be found in a study, *The Antecedents of Self-Esteem* by Stanley Coppersmith is that the child's self esteem is NOT related to family wealth, education, geographic living area, social class, father's occupation or always having mother at home!

Coppersmith found there were 4 conditions which are most often associated with high self-esteem in children:

- (1) The child experiences full acceptance of thoughts, feelings and the value of his or her being.
- (2) The child operates in a context of clearly defined and enforced limits that are fair, non-oppressive and negotiable, but the child is NOT given unrestricted "freedom".
- (3) The child experiences respect for his/her dignity as a human being.
- (4) The parents THEMSELVES tend to enjoy a high level of self esteem.

Self - esteem

The Building Blocks:

A SENSE of :

SECURITY

IDENTITY

BELONGING

PURPOSE

COMPETENCE

Personal Viewpoints

1. I am a good daughter because_____.

2. I am a good worker because_____

3. I am a good friend because_____

4. Something that others like about me is_____

5. One thing I'm really good at is_____

6. I am pleased with my ability to_____

7. I am still proud of the time when_____

8. One thing I value about myself is_____

9. I am a good team player because_____

10. I am a good brother/sister because_____

11. Because I am honest, I always_____

12. Because I value my life, I will_____

13. I am a valuable community member because_____

14. I am a trusted confidante because_____

15. I am a good person because_____

Feelings

Describe your experience of the following feelings (an event or a situation).

1. I felt proud when _____
2. I felt disappointed when _____
3. I felt excited when _____
4. I felt anxious when _____
5. I felt surprised when _____
6. I felt sympathetic when _____
7. I felt exhausted when _____
8. I felt befriended when _____
9. I felt lonely when _____
10. I felt angry when _____
11. I felt embarrassed when _____
12. I felt discouraged when _____
13. I felt bored when _____

Self-esteem in my Child

Exploratory Questions

How would your son/daughter answer?

- Do I like most things about myself? _____
- Am I satisfied with my school grades? _____
- Am I clumsy? _____
- Am I an important member of my family? _____
- Do I worry about other kids liking me? _____
- Do I pay attention to my homework? _____
- Is my reading ability OK? _____
- Is my maths. ability OK? _____
- Do I like the way I look? _____
- Do I feel good about myself when I'm with my family? _____
- Do I feel I'm good enough when I'm with other kids? _____
- Am I OK about my height? _____
- Do I feel OK about my weight? _____
- Do parents and other family members listen to me? _____
- Is it OK for me to lose a game or make a mistake? _____
- Am I a good sister/brother? _____
- Am I a good son/daughter? _____
- Am I a good friend? _____
- Do I have support at home? _____
- Do I respect home rules? _____
- Do I help out at home? _____
- Do I have good friends?
- Do I have a nice smile?
- Are my parents proud of me?
- Am I happy the way I am?
- Do I love my family?
- Do I get praised when appropriate from my parents and family?
- Am I OK with reasonable correction in my family?
- Do I have really interesting hobbies?
- Do I own my anger and express it appropriately?
- Do I pay attention to personal hygiene?

Children Learn What They Live

If

a child lives with criticism,
she learns to condemn

If

a child lives with hostility,
he learns to fight.

if

a child lives with ridicule,
she learns to be shy.

If

a child lives with shame,
he learns to feel guilt.

If

a child lives with tolerance,
she learns to be patient.

If

a child lives with praise,
he learns to appreciate.

If

a child lives with encouragement,
she learns confidence.

If

a child lives with fairness,
he learns justice.

If

a child lives with security,
she learns to have faith.

If

a child lives with approval,
he learns to like himself.

If

a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
he or she learns to find love in the world.

WHAT DO I LOOK OUT FOR?

The following are signs of anxiety in teens:

- Consistent or excessive worry about school, friends.
- Physical problems such as headaches, stomach aches, or tiredness.
- Problems sleeping. Changes in diet/eating habits
- Critical of self. Doubting self. Low self-esteem.
- Regularly seeking the approval of parents and teachers.
- Continually checking and rechecking schoolwork. Perfectionism.
- Withdrawal from friends or not wanting to go to school. Neglecting Hobbies that were once enjoyed.
- Constant worrying. FREQUENT CRYING.
- Irritability, mood swings. Hostility. Deterioration in school performance
- Experimentation with alcohol or drugs.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Parents can help by:

Pay attention to your child's feelings - LISTEN

Stay calm when your child becomes anxious about a situation or event.

**Recognize and praise small accomplishments.
Mol an Óige agus Tiochaig said.**

Don't punish mistakes or lack of progress. Be Patient

Be flexible, but try to maintain a normal routine.

HOWEVER – if there is a reluctance or tardiness about getting ready for, or even going at all, to school – ask in a concerned way.

Yes – it COULD be bullying

Modify expectations during stressful periods. Homework this night might NOT be a top priority – Enquire, gently.

Tell her you love her

Some Handy “Mantras”

This is just a feeling

Feelings are not Facts

What is the Evidence for this?

Face, Accept, Float, Let Time Pass

Tech Addiction?

For example – if “screen time” takes over from hobbies previously enjoyed that could well be a sign of “screen Dependence” and could well be a cause for concern. If a sports-mad son no longer wants to kick a ball, or the once-sociable teen now only interacts online, a tech addiction could be developing.

There are real concerns now that dependence on smartphone, iPads, etc could become as damaging to physical and mental health as the well known addictions like alcohol, gambling etc.

Let's remember that “addiction” is when a person cannot control how they use it (the substance or BEHAVIOUR), and become dependent on it to cope with daily life.

So using a screen as a “dummy” or babysitter is not such a good idea? According to research it can happen that some 2-year olds do not get as much as ONE HOUR A DAY ACTIVITY. Not good!

What do we do?? According to Catherine Steiner-Adair, research associate at Harvard Medical School and author of “The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age”, says the key is not to turn to tech as the default distraction: “Children learn from play, especially pre-schoolers and primary-aged children. Be sure yours spend more time playing and learning from hands-on engagement in the real world than they do on screens.” Delay buying them their own gadgets; an eight-year-old might want the latest iPad or smartphone, but they certainly don't need it.

Set a decent example: how many of us are glued to our gadgets - jumping to grab our phones every time a message bleeps, or checking the football scores??

With that in mind, Steiner-Adair warns that parents should worry if screen dependence starts to override previous pleasures. So when that

According to clinical psychologist and psychotherapist Dr Jay Watts, the key characteristic of a true addiction is “when someone has a persistent, compulsive habit of doing something”, adding that “addictions on-screen aren't that different from those off-screen, in nature”.

Writer Sarah Holmes-Lancaster* believes her sons Tom (15), and Dan (12), are both in the grip of a full-blown addiction. “Screen time dictates their entire lives; without it they are raging wrecks”, she says. “They are on Instagram, Snapchat or Twitter. My 15-year-old is often up until 2am”.

Recent research by Eon found one in five parents say their children couldn't go more than two hours without technology, and 37% parents think gadgets have the biggest impact on the amount of time they spend together as a family.

It could all be a nail in the coffin of family life but author Liat Hughes Joshi has other ideas. She has a new book out: “How To Unplug Your Child: 101 Ways To Help Your Kids Turn Off Their Gadgets And Enjoy Real Life” It has useful activity suggestions for toddlers through to teenagers and to help families find something to do that doesn't involve screen time.

Sometimes, wouldn't you appreciate a little downtime from the technological torrent that eats into our offline relationships? To actually talk to each other and do things together that don't involve texting and messaging, tapping and swiping?”

The aim, says Liat, is to remind children that they don't have to be staring at a screen to have fun. Suggestions include setting up a family murder mystery game, turning the power off for the night and using torches and candles to play cards and board games, creating a life-size self-portrait, and performing random acts of kindness such as inviting a child round who struggles to make friends.

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

By Portia Nelson

Chapter One

I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost..... I am helpless
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter two

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place,
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter three

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in It's a habit!
My eyes are open,
I know where I am.
It IS my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter Four

I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter Five

I walk down another street.