

## ANXIETY DISORDERS

Everyone experiences anxiety at some time

Anxiety can be useful in helping a person avoid a dangerous situation and motivate a person to solve everyday problems

Anxiety can vary in severity from a mild uneasiness to a terrifying panic attack

An anxiety disorder differs from normal anxiety :

- It is more intense

- It is long lasting

- It interferes with the person's work, activities or relationships

Symptoms of anxiety:

**Physical** - pounding heart, chest pain, flushing, hyperventilating, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, numbness, dry mouth, nausea, vomiting, inability to relax and tense muscles ( some examples)

**Psychological** - unrealistic or excessive fear, mind racing, decreased concentration, irritability, indecisiveness, impatience, anger, restlessness, sleep disturbances (some examples)

**Behavioral** - avoidance of situations, obsessive or compulsive behavior or phobic behavior

Phobic disorder

The person with a phobic disorder avoids or restricts activities because of persistent and excessive fear. Most common are heights, enclosed places or snakes for a few examples

Obsessive- compulsive is the least common anxiety disorder but can be very disabling.

Obsessive thoughts are recurrent impulses and images that are experienced as intrusive, unwanted and inappropriate and cause marked anxiety. Compulsive behaviors are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that the person feels driven to perform to reduce anxiety

Causes of anxiety disorders:

- Have a more sensitive emotional nature and tend to see the world as threatening

- Have a history of anxiety in childhood

- Female

- Abuse alcohol

- Have had a traumatic experience

Anxiety symptoms can result also from:

Medical conditions - such as endocrine problems

Side effects of some prescription drugs

Intoxication with alcohol, caffeine, marijuana or hallucinogens

Withdrawal from alcohol, cocaine or sedatives

Treatment

Anti-anxiety medications

Cognitive behavioral therapy