

# Anxiety

## Fact Sheet

### What is Anxiety?

Everyone experiences anxiety at times, it is a normal and helpful human emotion. However, some people can experience too much fear, worry or panic. There are many different reasons why someone may feel anxious, and what makes one person anxious may not be the same for someone else. You may have feelings of anxiety when breaking up with a partner, during exam time or when you start your course. Everyone may feel anxious at some time but if it is stopping you from doing your day-to-day activities, it may be a problem.

### It can help to identify the warning signs and symptoms of anxiety:

Physical reactions	Mental reactions	Emotional reactions	Behavioural reactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• heart beating fast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anticipating the anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apprehension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• insomnia</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sweating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being pessimistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perfectionism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• muscle tension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• worrying about the worst</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tense and jumpy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over-reacting</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• headaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I'm going to fail'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• irritability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• argumentative</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shortness of breath/ hyperventilation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It always happens to me'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling of losing control or going crazy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoiding people or situations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tiredness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Everything that can go wrong will go wrong'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restlessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• freezing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stomach pain/ nausea</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling detached or unreal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repetitive or ritualistic behaviours</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nightmares</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overwhelming panic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trying to control your environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dizziness</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trouble concentrating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• isolating yourself</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trembling or shaking</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear of losing control</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chest pain</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling like you're going to pass out</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hot flashes or chills</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fearing change</li> </ul>	

### Quick Tips (what you can do)

- **Use self-care strategies**
  - Talk to a friend or family member
  - Exercise regularly
  - Adopt healthy eating habits
  - Limit caffeine and sugar intake
  - Minimise alcohol intake
  - Monitor your sleeping patterns
  - Keep a journal to help identify any unhelpful thoughts



- **Learn how to relax**

- Control your breathing through deep breaths
- Practice mindfulness and meditation

- **Learn to accept uncertainty**

- Ask yourself: 'Is it possible to be certain about everything in life', do you tend to predict that bad things will happen? Where is the evidence for that prediction? What is the likelihood of a positive outcome?

- **Create a 'Worry Time'**

- Learn to postpone worrying by creating a 'worry time' in your day where you can reflect on the things you worried about during that day (writing a list of your worries may help)

- **Challenge Unhelpful Thoughts**

- Use more helpful self-talk: 'I can handle this', 'I can do this', 'just take a few breaths', 'relax', 'I know this feeling will pass', 'I will get through this', 'I am safe right now'

- **Change your Environment – Take 'Time Out'**

- Remove yourself from the situation = go outside
- Give yourself a break
- Have a drink of water
- Find 'Personal/Quiet Time' each day to do something you enjoy

- **Use Distraction**

- Count to ten, listen to music, talk with a friend, watch TV or a movie, start another task
- Use guided visual imagery of a relaxing place

## Where to go for help

Seek Professional assistance/support

- Go to your General Practitioner
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- *beyondblue*: 1300 22 4636
- Mensline: 1300 78 99 78
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria: 1300 269 438  
[www.arcvic.org.au](http://www.arcvic.org.au)
- Anxiety Disorders Association of Victoria  
[www.adavic.org.au](http://www.adavic.org.au)

## RMIT Training Wellbeing Service

The Wellbeing Service is free and confidential for students. To arrange an appointment please email [wellbeing@rmit.edu.au](mailto:wellbeing@rmit.edu.au)

