



**WESTERN CAPE
ASSOCIATION FOR
PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**
TM. WCAPD

PO Box 1544
Millerton
7435

Phone : (021) 555-2881
Fax : (021) 555-2888
E-mail : director@wcapd.org.za
Website : www.wcapd.org.za

ShareCall : **0861 APD INFO**
0861 273 4636

More information

South African
Depression & Anxiety
Group (SADAG)
0800 70 80 90
zane1@hargray.com

Suicide Helpline
0800 567 567
SMS : 31393

Mental Health Line
(011) 262-6396

Substance Abuse
0800 12 13 14
SMS : 32313

adding
value
to
lives

Focus on

The group of anxiety disorders make up the most common category of mental disorders. They are often the principal diagnosis or the 'reason for visit' of a new patient to a psychologist or psychiatrist. Prescription drugs that are given to treat anxiety disorders are also considered to be the most widely used. In 74% of cases individuals with Anxiety disorders are also diagnosed with a second mental illness.

Fear versus Anxiety

Anxiety is an alerting signal; it warns of impending danger and enables an individual to take measures to deal with a threat. Fear is a similar alerting signal, but should be differentiated from anxiety. Fear is a response to a known, external, definite, or non-conflictual threat; anxiety is a response to a threat that is unknown, internal, vague, or conflictual.

Anxiety is a future-oriented mood state, again accompanied by strong negative effect. It is also a normal emotional state that can be functional within certain limits. Most often, anxiety concerns some future event that is very important or that may be difficult. A functional level of anxiety about an upcoming entrance examination, for example, may involve thinking about all possible ways in which it might turn out, which results in a person being very well prepared. A dysfunctional level of anxiety, however, could result in an individual feeling so wound-up and overwhelmed by the prospect of the above-mentioned examination that they avoid going altogether and miss out on a much-wanted opportunity.

Anxiety has psychological components that are both emotional and cognitive in nature. The negative emotions are experienced in feelings of fear, distress, apprehension, and uneasiness. Related to these unpleasant emotions may be preoccupying thoughts about imminent danger, a perception of powerlessness in the face of danger, and intense watchfulness or hyper vigilance.

The anxiety disorders are best understood as 'false alarms', as a person responds with fear and apprehension when there is no truly life-threatening or dangerous situation. When a generally harmless situation (speaking in public) or stimulus (riding an elevator) produces sufficient fear or anxiety in a person. So much so that the individual experiences intense distress, cannot function normally, or avoids the situation or stimulus excessively, then an anxiety disorder is most

Anxiety

likely present. This category of disorder often has a debilitating effect on lives of those living with this disorder. Thus preventing them from doing, enjoying, or even trying out many activities that the non-anxious take for granted. Moreover, certain anxiety disorders may impair an individual's capacity to perform necessary activities such as taking public transport daily or functioning in a job that requires interaction with people.

SYMPTOMS

Emotions

Restlessness
Irritability
Sense of dread
Terror

Cognitive

Worry, ruminations
Poor concentration
Anticipating harm
Fear of losing control or dying
Hyper vigilance

Somatic

Adrenaline secretion
Increased heart rate
Increased perspiration
Deep, quick respiration
Dilated pupils
Dilated peripheral blood vessels
Widened bronchioles
Muscle tension
Goosebumps

Behavioural

Freeze up
Escape (flight)
Aggression (fight)
Avoidance

Symptoms of Anxiety

The experience of anxiety has two components: the awareness of the physiological sensations (e.g., palpitations and sweating) and the awareness of being nervous or frightened. A feeling of shame may increase anxiety "Others will recognize that I am frightened." In addition to physical effects anxiety affects thinking, perception, and learning. It tends to produce confusion and distortions of perception, not only of time and space but also of persons and the meanings of events. These distortions can interfere with learning by lowering concentration, reducing recall, and impairing the ability to make associations between items .