

“ I never realised that there could be help for anxiety. I have been anxious for most of my life and I just thought that was the way I was. ”

“ It was mind blowing for me to realise that my son, who is always angry, might actually be expressing his anxiety. It's made me see his behaviour in a completely different light. ”

“ Simple, not overwhelming and exactly what I need in situations of stress, anxiety or fear! Can only recommend :) ”
(Clear Fear app review)



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USEFUL CONTACTS

Anxiety UK

Support and help for those diagnosed with, or who suspect they may have, an anxiety condition.

Text Service: 07537 416 905

Infoline: 03444 775 774 (Mon – Fri, 9.30am – 5.30pm)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

No Panic

Information for sufferers and carers of people with panic, anxiety, phobias and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD).

Helpline: 0300 772 9844 (Every day, 10am – 10pm)

Youthline: 0330 606 1174 (For under 18s, Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, 3pm – 6pm / Thurs, 3pm – 8pm / Sat, 6pm – 8pm)

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

OCD Action

Support and information for anybody affected by OCD.

Helpline: 0300 636 5478 (Mon – Fri, 9.30am – 8pm)

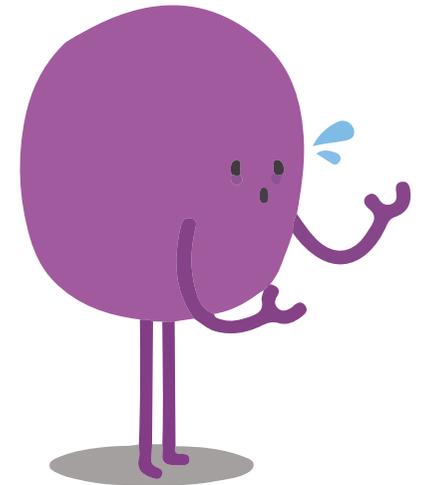
Website: www.ocdaction.org.uk

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stem4.org.uk

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supporting teenage mental health
Registered Charity No. 1144506

ANXIETY



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ANXIETY

Key facts:

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition people experience and is characterised by a range of anxious thoughts and behaviours.

Anxious thinking is almost always fear-based and anxious behaviour is often carried out to make the person feel less fearful. This behaviour is not generally positive. So, for example, someone who is anxious of flying may not get on a plane.

Anxiety can show itself in many forms, which include:

- **Generalised anxiety** – the anxiety is there most of the time, with times of excessive, uncontrollable, and often irrational worry and increased apprehension.
- **Panic attacks** – a sudden surge of overwhelming anxiety and fear which brings about a strong physical reaction.
- **Constant worry** – frequent, negative thoughts that a person goes over and over.
- **Phobias** – very strong, irrational fears.
- **Social anxiety** – a fear of social situations and interactions that often leads to avoidance.

How do I know if I'm anxious?

- Are you feeling worried and agitated?
- Are you feeling fearful about things that others are generally not fearful about?
- Do you constantly worry?
- Do you always predict a dramatic and negative outcome?

- Do you overthink and overcheck things always with a negative prediction?
- Do you have a range of physical symptoms that are consistent with a fear response such as your heart racing, increased breathing, and muscle tension?

People who are anxious are more likely to answer 'yes' to most of the above questions.



Why deal with anxiety?

Anxiety can be very unpleasant to experience and it can limit the things you want to do. Left untreated, anxiety can last a long time and may lead from one anxiety condition to another. For example, someone who has generalised anxiety might develop panic attacks. Anxiety can also have a significant physical impact. Some people may drink too much or misuse recreational drugs to deal with anxiety, which in turn will lead to further problems.

What can I try to do?

- **Face it**
If you are putting off either thinking or doing something because it makes you feel anxious, try and support yourself to face it, bit by bit.
- **Do less**
If your anxiety makes you think too much (e.g., you go over something again and again in your mind) or do too much (e.g., frequent hand washing) try and reduce the behaviour, one step at a time.
- **Accept it**
The thoughts and behaviours you experience are symptoms of anxiety. See if you can calm your breathing and just let go of your fears by accepting them for what they are.
- **Relax**
Have regular breaks, learn to relax, be mindful. Activities such as art, exercise, writing, acting, yoga, massages, and listening to music can help.

- **Monitor**
Keep a diary to work out triggers and patterns.
- **Seek help**
Visit your GP by phoning your local practice and booking an appointment (check if you can book it with their mental health lead). Go ready to discuss your concerns and the problems you are experiencing. You can always take your diary with you in order to help this process. If you have a lot to discuss, book a double appointment.

Clear Fear

Why not try the stem4 Clear Fear app?

Clear Fear is an app to help young people manage the symptoms of anxiety, developed by a clinician in collaboration with young people.

The Clear Fear app uses evidence-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

It is FREE to download from the Apple Store and Google Play.



Asking for help

stem4 has an Asking for help booklet available on our Resources page www.stem4.org.uk/resources



Take5

Try stem4's Take5 Controlled Breathing exercise.

