

# Stress, Anxiety & Depression



## What is stress?

Stress is a problem when a person feels they cannot cope with life pressures

A variety of factors can contribute to a person feeling 'stressed'. This may include:

- Environment (work, home, school etc)
- Lifestyle
- Emotional issues.

### Types of stress

- **Reactive stress:** This occurs when a person perceives that they do not have the capacity to cope with the demands placed upon them.
- **Cumulative stress:** A condition brought about by a number of stressful factors.
- **Critical Incident stress:** A reaction to sudden, unanticipated demands of specific incident(s).

## Contributing factors to Work Stress

- Absence of autonomy.
- Poor physical work environment
- Workload factors.
- Repetitive or meaningless tasks.
- Role ambiguity.
- Work conflict.
- Occupational mismatch.
- Taking work home regularly can create conflict with family members.
- Job satisfaction, security and career prospects may not meet expectations.



## How to manage Stress

The old adage, 'prevention is better than cure' is certainly true for stress management. It will help if you:

- **Exercise regularly** - regular exercise is a great way to manage stress. You should do some form of exercise that causes you to feel puffed afterwards. A leisurely stroll to the bus stop is not enough! Have at least 20 minutes of exercise three times a week.
- **Avoid conflict** - avoid situations that make you feel stressed as much as you can. Avoid unnecessary arguments and conflict if you find them stressful (although ignoring a problem is not always the best way to reduce stress).
- **Relax** - make sure you give yourself some time to relax each day and try to spend time with people who make you feel good about yourself.
- **Eat well** - a nutritious diet is important. Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and avoid sweet and fatty foods.
- **Sleep** - a good sleep routine is essential. Do something calm and relaxing before you go to bed, like listening to music or reading, if you have difficulty falling asleep.



## What is depression?

*Depression is characterised by severe and prolonged feelings of sadness, dejection and hopelessness.*

One in four women and one in six men will suffer from depression at some point in their lives. Depression is a complicated illness, which can involve a number of contributing factors - genes, environment, diet, lifestyle, brain chemicals, psychology and personality.

## Depressive Symptoms

Generally, the symptoms of depression include:

- Feeling sad, hopeless and despairing
- A loss of interest and pleasure in normal activities
- Loss of appetite or weight
- Loss of sex drive
- Sleeping problems, such as an inability to get to sleep or early waking
- Feeling physically tired all the time
- Concentration difficulties

• Feeling guilty and worthless

• Feeling that life isn't worth living

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling people experience when faced with a task that they don't feel comfortable in performing.

Anxiety is the most common mental health problem in Australia, with nearly 10% of the population experiencing it's affects in their daily lives.

There are six groups of anxiety disorders:

- OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)
- PANIC DISORDER
- SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER
- SPECIFIC PHOBIAS
- POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
- GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD)

Anxiety disorders can be distressing and debilitating. They may contribute to loss

## Depression Treatment

Treatment for depression by the type, cause and severity may include:

- Medications including mood stabilising drugs, such as lithium carbonate.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or interpersonal relationship therapy.
- Regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet.
- Stress management techniques.
- Natural therapies.
- Counselling, including psychotherapy.
- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), in cases of severe, life threatening depression that don't respond to other forms of treatment.

## Seeking Help

Local community groups are a great way to find out if there are similar people in your community suffering from anxiety. The first step though, is to SEE YOUR DOCTOR!

Phone Assistance:

- |                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Lifeline (local call cost) | 13 11 14      |
| 2. Kids Help Line             | 1800 55 18 00 |
| 3. Just Ask Infoline          | 1300 13 11 14 |
| 4. SANE Australia             | 1800 68 83 82 |
| 5. Mensline                   | 1300 78 99 78 |
| 6. Mental Health Direct       | 1800 22 04 00 |