



Performance Management Resources

Live Better Tip of the Month

Identifying and Treating Anxiety Disorder

What is anxiety?

Everyone experiences anxiety now and again. Challenging situations naturally trigger fight-or-flight responses, such as rapid heartbeat, sweaty hands, cool extremities, and increased alertness. However, anxiety disorders cause more intense emotional and psychological discomfort. Anxiety disorder, on the other hand, is a medical disorder that strikes without warning and can hinder daily activities. People who suffer anxiety disorder feel inexplicably overwhelmed by fear and physical distress. Efforts to reduce these symptoms often disrupt daily routines, and personal and business relationships.

What are some symptoms of anxiety disorder?

- Physical: Headaches or muscle tension, fatigue, trouble sleeping, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath
- Emotional: Frustration, depression, irritability, feeling on edge and fearful
- Behavioral: Difficulty concentrating, racing thoughts or obsessions, biting fingernails and scratching, increased use of drugs or alcohol (unfortunately this may increase frequency and severity of panic attacks), avoiding situations associated with panic attacks, leading to an increasingly restricted life

What causes anxiety disorder?

Anxiety disorder is frequently triggered by a sudden crisis or troubling event. Otherwise, the disorder may be caused by a more permanent aspect of life, such as:

- *Stress*, especially long-term.
- *Genetics or biological predisposition*. People who have relatives with an anxiety disorder are more likely to develop one themselves. Studies suggest that those who suffer have a chemical imbalance in the brain, causing the fight-or-flight response to be out of order.
- *Personality traits*. Certain qualities, such as low self-esteem and poor coping skills contribute to the development of anxiety problems.

How is anxiety treated?

- *Psychotherapy and/or Medication*: along with medication, psychotherapy is the most common and effective treatment for anxiety disorder. Therapists provide clients an opportunity to talk about uncomfortable feelings, stay in touch with emotions, and learn how to reduce anxiety. By investigating the cause of anxiety, a client is better able to overcome his/her disorder.

If you think you may have an anxiety disorder, call your EAP at 912-692-0988

WE ARE HERE TO HELP