

## Anxiety

### Introduction

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health problem in Australia, even more common than depression. There are many different types of anxiety disorder and people often have more than one disorder. The main difference between an anxiety disorder and normal anxiety or stress is the degree of irrational worry about the problem and the related avoidance of situations. Anxiety disorders severely disrupt a person's life.

Generalised anxiety disorder is characterized by prolonged periods of:

- excessive worry about health, work, finances, relationships, etc
- irritability
- physical problems such as headaches, tiredness, indigestion, heart palpitations and dizziness
- feelings of extreme fear and/or pending disaster
- worry about the future
- disturbance in appetite
- concentration is also reduced
- sleep is usually disturbed
- marked reduction in self-esteem and confidence

### Impact on Study

Students with anxiety

- have difficulty with concentration and staying focused
- appear overly concerned about getting work perfectly right/correct
- appear overly concerned about simple tasks/instructions
- may find it difficult to attend class or meetings with teachers

### What is helpful:

- collaborate with parents, other school staff, physicians and other medical practitioners - they may already have developed a treatment plan
- engage in a positive and supportive relationship with the student. Most students need a positive adult relationship
- encourage the student to access the Counselling Centre (take them to make their first appointment)
- be flexible about work expectations (allow extensions for exams and assignments)
- allow the student to do assessment tasks and exams in a quiet environment that may reduce anxiety

### What is not helpful:

- putting unnecessary pressure on the student
- getting frustrated with the student due to their worries about what might seem like minor issues to you
- lack of flexibility regarding assessments

### Links:

[www.reconnexion.org.au](http://www.reconnexion.org.au)

<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

<http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/anxiety>

[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Anxiety\\_treatment\\_options](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Anxiety_treatment_options)