



Anxiety Mode: How to Cope

School and work deadlines are looming, and the pressure is on. Feeling anxious is pretty normal when you're a graduate or professional student. But how do you know when it's time to get help for an anxiety problem?

What's Normal?

"It's important to recognize that some anxiety is normal and healthy," says Jerilyn Ross, co-founder, president and CEO of the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA).

"When your heart races or you get knots in your stomach before an exam or a job interview, that's normal anxiety," says Ross. "But when symptoms become intense, pervasive and irrational—far greater than any real threat—that may indicate an anxiety disorder."

Ross also directs The Ross Center for Anxiety & Related Disorders in Washington, D.C. "Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health problem in the nation," she notes. "They can affect people in different ways. Some people may experience panic attacks, obsessive thoughts or compulsions, sleeplessness or physiological symptoms such as chest pain. When symptoms become extreme, accompanied by irrational fear and dread, or there's a feeling of

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losing control, it's time to seek help."

"It's important for students to realize that anxiety disorders are real, serious and treatable," says Ross emphatically.

Why Help is Essential

College students across the country are needing and using mental health services in increasing numbers, according to a

study released in March 2007 by the ADAA.

The dangers of untreated anxiety disorder include a greater risk of depression, suicide and substance abuse.

Left untreated, anxiety disorders can interfere significantly in a student's personal life and academic success.

Treatment for anxiety disorders can be very

Anxiety Disorders: Real, Serious and Treatable

Anxiety disorders are a unique group of illnesses that fill people's lives with persistent, excessive and unreasonable anxiety, worry and fear. They include:

- Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Panic disorder
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Social anxiety disorder (SAD)
- Specific phobias

Left untreated, anxiety disorders can interfere significantly in a student's personal life and academic success as well as increase an individual's risk for depression and suicide.¹

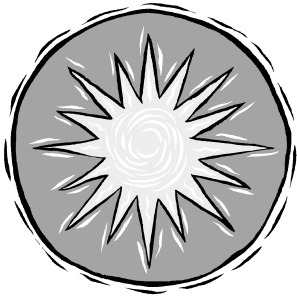
The site www.gotanxiety.org, offered by the Anxiety Disorders Association of America offers a wealth of information including self-assessment tests, printable brochures, exercises to help ease stress and anxiety, and tips on how to help a friend with an anxiety disorder.

¹ ADAA news release 3/27/2007

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not just survive, at USF***

The Health Enhancement for Lifelong Professional Students program can assist when you're not sure where to turn.

*HELPS is available for you
24/7: 813-870-0184*



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HELPS is administered by:

Wood & Associates, P.A.
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Tampa, Florida 33614

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successful. It may involve therapy, medication or a combination of the two.

A Personal Triumph

Ross knows from personal experience how disruptive an anxiety disorder can be. While a graduate student in her mid-20s, she developed a fear of tall buildings. She would panic just thinking about going beyond the tenth floor of a high-rise, and the phobia began to

interfere with her life in New York City.

"I felt embarrassed and alone, unable to share this problem with anyone," says Ross.

"Even though I was taking courses in abnormal psychology, I didn't find anything that described what I was going through."

Ross then came across an article on phobias, and realized she wasn't alone. She entered therapy, conquered her phobia,

and went on to write "Triumph Over Fear," a book which offers facts and techniques to help others with anxiety, panic attacks and phobias.

There is good news for those who seek and get help for an anxiety disorder. The ADAA reports that up to 90 percent of people who obtain proper care from a health professional will recover and go on to live full and productive lives. ■

Resources

- "Triumph Over Fear: A Book of Help and Hope for People with Anxiety, Panic Attacks, and Phobias," Jerilyn Ross (Bantam Books, 1994)
- "Healing Anxiety and Depression," Daniel G. Amen, M.D. and Lisa C. Routh, M.D. (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003)
- "Peace of Mind Prescription," Dennis S. Charney, M.D. and Charles B. Nemeroff, M.D., Ph.D., with Stephen Braun (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004)
- Anxiety Disorders Association of America www.adaa.org
- National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov

Financial Aid Tips Online

FinAid! The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid

The free, award-winning FinAid site, established in 1994 as a public service, offers comprehensive student financial aid information, advice and tools. www.finaid.org

Sallie Mae

One of the features of the student loan section of the Sallie Mae site lets you compare various graduate student loan options, including Stafford and Grad PLUS loans. www.salliemae.com/get_student_loan

Access Group, Inc.

The nonprofit organization Access Group, Inc. offers basic and advanced calculators online to help you compare loan interest rates, estimate monthly loan payments and project your future income and living expenses. Access Group products include federally guaranteed (FFELP) loans and private loans for students financing their law, business, medical, dental, health, and other graduate degrees. www.accessgroup.org/calculators