

## FACT SHEET

# Anxiety

Anxiety is part of being human, but it becomes a problem when fear, worry, or alertness stay high, feel hard to control, and start to interfere with daily life.



clear, practical, supportive

## WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE

- Persistent worry, dread, or feeling like something bad is about to happen
- Restlessness, racing heart, muscle tension, shaking, or trouble breathing
- Avoiding situations that feel uncertain, exposed, or overwhelming
- Difficulty concentrating, poor sleep, or constant scanning for threat
- Needing reassurance, overplanning, or replaying scenarios repeatedly

## WHAT CAN CONTRIBUTE

- Stress, uncertainty, trauma, or significant life changes
- A nervous system that is already running on high alert
- Avoidance patterns that temporarily relieve anxiety but keep it going
- Perfectionism, self-criticism, or intolerance of uncertainty
- Poor sleep, burnout, caffeine, or other physical stressors

## Why it matters

- Anxiety can make safe situations feel dangerous and ordinary tasks feel harder.
- It often narrows your attention toward threat and away from the full picture.
- Avoidance can bring relief in the moment but often expands the fear over time.
- Support helps when anxiety is frequent, intense, or limiting your life.

## Helpful reminders

- Anxiety is not always a reliable predictor of danger.
- Calming down is not the only goal; building confidence to cope matters too.
- You can feel anxious and still take a useful step.

## PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

Choose the ideas that feel realistic for you. Small consistent changes usually work better than trying to change everything at once.

- Slow the body first. Use longer exhalations, grounding, and unclenching to reduce the physical surge of anxiety.
- Name the worry story. Ask what your mind is predicting and whether that prediction is a fact, a fear, or a habit.
- Reduce avoidance gradually. Choose small steps that let you practice staying present without escaping too quickly.
- Limit reassurance loops. Too much checking can keep anxiety active rather than settling it.
- Bring attention back to the present. Notice five things you can see, four you can feel, and one next task.
- Protect the basics. Sleep, nutrition, movement, and steady routines make anxiety easier to carry.
- Set boundaries around worry time. Contain rumination rather than letting it spread through the whole day.
- Seek support if panic, avoidance, or constant worry are reducing your quality of life.
- Track what makes the problem better or worse. A short note in your phone or diary can reveal patterns you can actually use.
- Aim for steady progress, not perfection. Review what helped this week and keep the plan realistic enough to repeat.



## TRY THIS TODAY

Start with one small, achievable step.

- Take one slow exhale that is longer than your inhale, then repeat five times.
- Write down the feared outcome and one more balanced possibility.
- Choose one small avoided task and stay with it slightly longer than usual.

## WHEN TO GET EXTRA SUPPORT

- Worry, panic, or avoidance is interfering with daily life.
- You are losing sleep, confidence, or functioning because of anxiety.
- You rely on constant reassurance, checking, or avoidance to cope.
- You want help learning practical tools and reducing fear.