



Canberra  
Hypnotherapy  
Clinic

# UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY VS DEPRESSION

A Practical Guide to Recognising the Difference

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is your body's natural alarm system. It's designed to protect you from danger by triggering the 'fight-or-flight' response.

When anxiety becomes a disorder, this alarm system fires even when there's no real danger. Your brain can't tell the difference between a genuine threat and everyday stress.

## COMMON ANXIETY SYMPTOMS:



### PHYSICAL

- Racing heart
- Chest tightness
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea



### MENTAL

- Constant worry
- Overthinking
- "What if" thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Racing thoughts
- Catastrophic thinking



### EMOTIONAL

- Fear or dread
- Feeling on edge
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Panic

## What Is Depression?

Depression is more than just feeling sad. It's a persistent state of low mood, loss of interest, and hopelessness that lasts for weeks or months.

While everyone feels down sometimes, depression is different. It affects how you think, feel, and function in daily life.

## COMMON DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS:



### EMOTIONAL

- Persistent sadness
- Feeling empty or numb
- Hopelessness
- Worthlessness
- Excessive guilt
- Loss of pleasure



### PHYSICAL

- Fatigue or low energy
- Sleep problems
- Appetite changes
- Unexplained aches
- Slowed movements
- Changes in weight



### BEHAVIOURAL

- Withdrawing from others
- Losing interest in hobbies
- Neglecting responsibilities
- Difficulty completing tasks
- Avoiding social activities
- Poor self-care

## CAN YOU HAVE BOTH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION?

Yes, absolutely. Nearly half of people diagnosed with depression also have an anxiety disorder. This is called comorbid anxiety and depression.

## SEEK IMMEDIATE HELP IF:

- You're having thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- You feel you might hurt yourself or others
- You're experiencing severe panic attacks
- You can't complete basic daily tasks

Having both conditions doesn't mean recovery is impossible. It just means your treatment may need to address both aspects. Many therapies, including hypnotherapy, can help with both anxiety and depression simultaneously.

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## What You Can Do Right Now

01

### Talk to your GP :

They can help determine what's happening and suggest treatments.

02

### Consider therapy:

CBT, hypnotherapy, and other approaches can help.

03

### Build support:

Tell trusted people what you're experiencing.

04

### Track symptoms:

Note when they occur and what might trigger them.

## Treatment Options That Can Help

### Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT):

Helps identify and change negative thought patterns. Effective for both anxiety and depression.

### Hypnotherapy:

Works at a subconscious level to address underlying patterns. Can help with anxiety, depression, or both. Often combined with other therapies.

### Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT):

Focuses on accepting difficult emotions while committing to values-based actions.

### Interpersonal Therapy:

Addresses relationship issues and communication patterns.

## FOR ANXIETY



### Breathing Exercise:

Breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4, breathe out for 6. Repeat 5 times.



### Grounding:

Name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.



### Movement:

Take a 10-minute walk. Physical activity helps burn stress hormones.



### Limit caffeine:

It can increase anxiety symptoms.



### Sleep routine:

Aim for consistent bed and wake times.

## FOR DEPRESSION



### Small tasks:

Set one achievable goal each day, even if it's just getting dressed.



### Connect:

Reach out to one person, even if it's just a text message.



### Sunlight:

Spend 10-15 minutes outside daily if possible.



### Routine:

Try to eat and sleep at regular times.



### Be kind to yourself:

Depression is an illness, not a personal failing.

## Your Personal Action Plan

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**Complete this section to create your own plan:**

1. My main symptoms are:

2. These symptoms most affect my:

☐ Work/study   ☐ Relationships   ☐ Sleep   ☐ Physical health   ☐ Self-care

3. I will contact my GP by (date):

4. One small thing I can do today:

5. Someone I can talk to for support:

**You've taken an important step by reading this guide.**

Understanding the difference between anxiety and depression is the first step toward getting the right help.

Whether you're experiencing anxiety, depression, or both, effective treatments are available. Your symptoms are real. Your experiences are valid. And help is available.

**For more information about how hypnotherapy can help with anxiety and depression, visit our website or book a free consultation.**