



What is Anxiety?



What Does It Mean To Be Anxious?

Anxiety is a normal, natural response mechanism that our body uses in stressful situations. The response mechanism is often referred to our 'Fight/Flight' response and is designed to keep us safe.

However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming, lasts for extended periods, causes physical symptoms and behaviour changes, we need to find strategies to help.

Anxiety can manifest in different ways as explored below.

Common Types of Anxiety

There are different types of anxiety disorders:

General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) - is where the person suffers excessively from worrying about different things in life. This may include: work; health; finance.

Panic Disorder - is where a person has an intense fear that comes with physical symptoms such as a racing heart, shaking or difficulty breathing.

Phobia - is where a person has an intense fear of an object/environment/situation that they will go out of their way to avoid.

Common Symptoms of Anxiety

Psychological

Excessive worrying

Feeling Restless

Lack of Concentration

Feeling Fearful

Intrusive Thoughts

Sense of Dread

Behavioural

Avoiding People

Avoiding Places

Changing Routine

Avoiding Situations

Seeking Reassurance

Physical

Racing Heart or Palpitations

Breathing Changes

Tension in Muscles

Dizziness or Lightheaded

Stomach Issues or Nausea

Sleep Issues

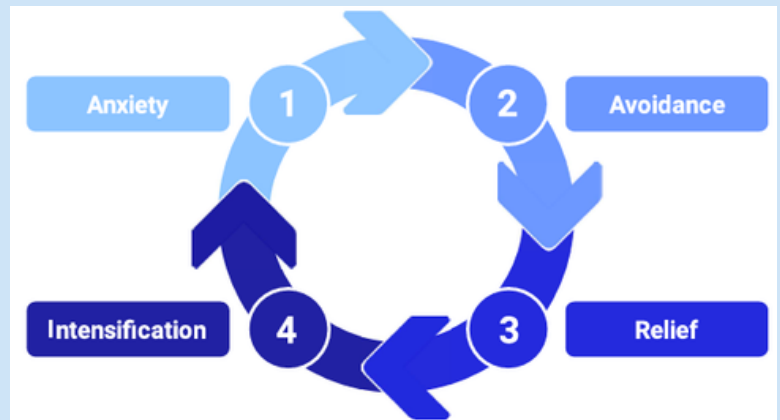
Cycle of Avoidance

Anxiety - We experience uncomfortable feelings including worry and fear.

Avoidance - Uncomfortable feelings are avoided by staying away from the situation, which reduces the anxiety.

Relief - This provides a short term, temporary relief from the anxiety. However, it is not a solution that will work long term.

Intensification - The next time the threat arises, the anxiety symptoms will intensify and worsen. Which in turn leads to more avoidance.



Solution - We need to find strategies and support to help manage our anxieties.

When To Seek Support

Seeking support is advisable when your worries and anxieties are impacting on your daily routine and wellbeing.

If you feel anxious for long periods of time and your worries are persistent, then help is available.

If you are avoiding certain situations or are no longer engaging in activities that you once enjoyed, then anxiety is impacting you.

If you are continually worrying about things then ask for help.

There is a risk that untreated anxiety can lead to other conditions such as stress and depression.

More Information

If you would like more information or support with anxiety:

- Speak to your GP;
- Find a counsellor such as myself. You can do this through searching websites such as the BACP so that you know you are getting a trained and registered therapist;
- Seek support from your friends and family, whoever you feel most comfortable with;
- Know that you are not alone;
- Look for more information on websites such as NHS; Mind; Anxiety UK.