

Anxiety and young people

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Anxiety is becoming a problem when it becomes intense or continual, and when it starts to get in the way of everyday life and interferes with family and friend relationships.

anxiety is common

Everyone feels anxious at times. Anxiety is a normal response when we encounter a threatening or stressful situation such as writing an exam, public speaking or demanding schedules.

When we experience anxiety, our bodies produce more adrenaline and our blood flow and heart rate increase. This puts the body into a “fight or flight” response to help us deal with physical or environmental threats.

Anxiety can be useful and can motivate us to do well. However, too much anxiety can interfere with successful learning and functioning.

what to look for

Characteristics that might suggest anxiety is becoming a problem:

Change in how you think and feel:

- Extreme worry about routine life events/activities, more days than not.
- Worry that something terrible will happen to self or others.
- Excessive concern about social embarrassment or humiliation.
- Fear of social events or performing in public.
- Feelings of terror or intense fear that occur without warning or cause.
- Fear of dying or fear of losing control.
- Feelings of unreality.
- Repeated unwanted thoughts that cannot be stopped.
- Poor concentration.
- Abdominal discomfort.
- Chest pain, irregular/rapid heart beat, shortness of breath.
- Feelings of anger or irritability.
- Having intense flashbacks.
- Experiencing depression.
- Specific fears i.e. heights, spiders, tunnels, bridges.

Change in how you act and behave:

- Getting easily tired.
- Having nightmares.
- Having problems sleeping.
- Feeling restless.
- Tension or being easily startled.
- Blushing.
- Trembling, sweating or dizziness.
- Avoiding social activities such as parties, performing at recitals, school events.
- Excessive washing, checking or counting.
- Rigid routines and rituals.

Learn more at mindcheck.ca.

Since starting her new school last year, Jenny has become even more shy than usual and has made only one friend. She would really like to make more friends but is scared she'll do or say something embarrassing when she's around others.

Although Jenny's schoolwork is okay, she rarely says a word in class and becomes incredibly nervous, trembles, blushes and seems like she might throw up if she has to answer a question or speak in front of the class. At home, Jenny is quite talkative with her family, but is quiet around anyone she doesn't know well. She never answers the phone and refuses to attend social gatherings. She knows her fears are unreasonable but she can't seem to control them. This really upsets her.

Jenny has social anxiety.

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mindcheck.ca encourages the early detection and intervention of mental health and substance use issues in British Columbian teens and young adults.



common types of anxiety disorders

- Generalized anxiety
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Phobias
- Social anxiety
- Panic disorder

Having anxiety does not need to be a barrier to achievement.

DID YOU KNOW?

- *Anxiety and depression are commonly found together.*
- *Anxiety and depression often occur in high school.*
- *Anxiety and depression commonly appear with anorexia or bulimia.*
- *Anxiety and depression can be associated with health conditions.*
- *Anxiety may resolve when the other existing condition is dealt with or treated successfully.*

don't wait to get help

The consequences of untreated anxiety are serious. They include:

- Poor school performance
- Problems socializing
- Not getting as much done as usual
- Employment difficulties
- Reduced quality of life
- Not being able to function as well as usual

Anxiety can place a great burden on a young person and their families and friends. If you recognize that a problem might exist and need more information about how to get help yourself or others, visit mindcheck.ca.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nicholas Cage, Barbara Streisand and Oprah Winfrey have been affected by an anxiety disorder.

anxiety is reversible

Learning all you can about anxiety will help determine what will work for you. Visit mindcheck.ca if you think a problem might exist and to find out how to get help for yourself or others.

Check it out... Act now!

Information and resources: mindcheck.ca