

# ANXIETY:

there is help out there

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## local expert



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Life can be tough at times, but for someone with anxiety, it can quickly become overwhelming and unmanageable. Nearly everyone experiences anxiety from time to time: feeling nervous before public speaking or taking an exam is considered normal. However, when mild to moderate anxiety turns into excessive worry, stress, and a tendency to obsess over past events, the future, and everyday activities, then it is considered an “anxiety disorder.”

Anxiety is the number one reason that brings a person into counseling. Yes, it is that common. The majority of my clients (both children and adults) are dealing with some form of anxiety. Some, sadly, may have been struggling with it for years.

There is no simple reason to explain why people develop anxiety. For most, there is a combination of reasons that include personality type (the people pleaser, the peacemaker, and the sensitive personality being the most vulnerable), negative thought patterns, difficult life experiences, and physical health. Anxiety rarely travels alone. Many people with anxiety also struggle with other issues such as depression, ADD, and relationships difficulties.

Someone with anxiety is likely feeling ashamed, hoping their anxiety will just disappear on its own or go unnoticed. More often than not, though, anxiety lingers as an unwanted guest. It's common for an individual struggling with anxiety to also struggle with negative thinking patterns. Sadly, so many are extremely self critical for having anxiety and not being able to "fix" themselves. Anxiety is something to be understood, not something to be judged.

A medical doctor or a mental health professional should be the one to diagnose anxiety. Reach out to someone you trust. If you feel you cannot manage your anxiety independently, then there is no shame in talking to your physician or a mental health professional about different options to better manage the problem. Seeking professional care

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when struggling with a mental health issue is just as important as going to a doctor for a physical illness.

The good news is that anxiety is treatable. Treatment options can include medication but should also include counseling and mindfulness training for maximum benefit. You must face your anxiety and learn to deal with it to get better. When you push your difficult emotions into the subconscious, they only grow stronger and will eventually resurface. Partner with a licensed counselor who will help you to explore the root of your anxiety and develop a customized plan for anxiety management. Counseling does not have to be a long term investment; even a couple of sessions can make a big difference in helping individuals understand and manage their anxiety. There are some great counselors in and around the Warrenton area. Look for someone who has a speciality in anxiety and remember to interview a potential counselor to ensure a good fit. ♦

### TYPES OF ANXIETY

Anxiety is different for everyone but there are common types:

**GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD):** feeling anxious most of the time on most days, worrying about a lot of different things for at least 6 months.

**SOCIAL ANXIETY:** having an intense fear of being criticized, embarrassed or humiliated. This can occur in everyday situations, speaking in public, eating in public or making small talk.

**PANIC DISORDER:** experiencing intense, overwhelming and uncontrollable feelings of anxiety combined with physical symptoms. Someone experiencing a panic attack may have shortness of breath, chest pains, and excessive perspiration.

### TIPS FOR MANAGING ANXIETY

- Challenge your negative self talk. Anxiety feeds off irrational thinking.
- Cultivate mindfulness - with mindfulness practice, you are made aware of the stress and anxiety occupying your mind and body. Practicing mindfulness creates a healthy distance between you and your stressful and anxious feelings. The use of mindfulness is supported by a copious amount of neuroscientific research demonstrating actual changes to neurons following mindfulness practice.
- Take small steps of bravery. Any small step toward facing and dealing with your anxiety should be celebrated.
- Get to know your anxiety - don't run from it. Face it with compassion and support.
- Include a regular exercise routine. According to some studies, regular exercise works as well as medication in helping to reduce symptoms of anxiety.
- Nutritional support: The right food choices can help ease the symptoms of anxiety.
- Connecting with others who also struggle with anxiety can help you feel less alone.

### DIET AND ANXIETY

Local Warrenton nutrition expert, Natalia Schroeder, PhD, RDN believes nutritious food can play an important role in managing anxious thoughts and improve one's mood and sense of well being. "Food has a powerful effect on our body, mind, and spirit because we really are what we eat," says Dr. Schroeder. For more information on how diet modification can help with managing anxiety, contact Natalia at [natalia@authentichealth78.com](mailto:natalia@authentichealth78.com) or visit [www.authentichealth78.com](http://www.authentichealth78.com).