

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

SCU Mental Health Awareness Series

Stress What is Anxiety?



- Worry: repetitive negative thoughts
- Stress: bodily reaction to a threat
- Anxiety: reaction to potential threats
- Worry: reaction to real threats

Experiencing occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. However, people with anxiety disorders frequently have intense, excessive, and persistent **worry** and **fear** about everyday situations.

An Anxiety Disorder is triggered when there is an **overestimation** of perceived threat or an erroneous danger appraisal of a situation which leads to excessive and inappropriate responses.

Common Signs & Symptoms

- Feeling nervous, restless, or tense
- An increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly
- (hyperventilation) Sweating
- Trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Having difficulty controlling worry
- Having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety

How to Manage Anxiety

- When you are anxious, your breathing becomes faster. Use breathing exercises to **help take slow and deep breaths.**
- Tune into your senses: what can you see, hear, feel, and smell? This helps to ground you.
- Be aware of unhelpful thoughts and learn how to challenge them.
- **Create a plan and work through possible solutions.**
- Figure out what is bothering you. **Get out of your head: try journaling.**
- Get enough sleep.



It's okay to ask for help.

For more info or self-help resources, check the Student Counselling Unit website: <https://www.up.ac.za/student-counselling>

Speak to the SCU-B ChatBot on your student portal.

Download an App to help with mindfulness, meditation, or tracking your mood

For Academic Support, consult with your Student Faculty Advisor

For 24 hour support, call the UP Careline on 0800 747 747

For therapy/counselling, email studentcounselling@up.ac.za

REFERENCES

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- 2.National Institute of Mental Health. (2018, July). Anxiety Disorders. Retrieved February 4, 2022, from National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders>



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