

ANXIETY DISORDERS

Anxiety disorders are mental illnesses characterized by fear and apprehension that appear without apparent reason. These fears can reach overwhelming levels, dramatically diminishing the person's ability to function. Anxiety disorders include:

PHOBIA

A persistent, intense and irrational fear associated with a particular object or situation that leads to avoidance of that object or situation. It is the most common anxiety disorder, affecting 14.2 million Americans.

SOCIAL PHOBIA

A persistent fear of one or more situations in which the person is exposed to possible scrutiny by others and fears that he or she may do something or act in some way that will be humiliating.

GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER (G.A.D.)

A constant, unrealistic worry about two or more everyday occurrences which impact an individual's ability to complete daily activities. GAD is associated with physical symptoms such as muscle aches, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, sweating, dizziness, and nausea.

PANIC DISORDER

A repeated, unprovoked attack of terror, accompanied by physical symptoms including chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, weakness and sweating. Panic disorder affects approximately three million people.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (O.C.D.)

Repeated, unwanted and intrusive thoughts (obsessions) that cause anxiety, often accompanied by ritualized behaviors (compulsions) that may relieve this anxiety. Common obsessions include fear of dirt, germs or contamination, or fear of harming someone.

Common compulsions are excessive cleaning, counting, double checking or hoarding. OCD sufferers recognize their behavior as irrational, but are unable to control it.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

Caused when someone experiences a severely distressing or traumatic event. Individuals with PTSD become so preoccupied with this experience that they are unable to lead a normal life. Recurring nightmares and/or flashbacks, avoidance of people and/or items associated with the trauma, unprovoked anger, jumpiness, inability to concentrate and insomnia are common PTSD symptoms.