

THEME: ANXIETY AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Stroll down the street and about one in four of the people you walk by either has an anxiety disorder or will at some point in their lives experience one. And almost half of the people you encounter will struggle with anxiety to one degree or another, although they may not have a full-blown anxiety disorder. The rate of anxiety disorders has climbed for many decades, and no end is in sight. The world watches in fear as disasters, terrorism, financial collapse, pandemics, crime, and war threaten the security of home and family. Anxiety creates havoc in the home, destroys relationships, causes employees to lose time from work, and prevents people from living full, productive lives. Introduction, Affects of anxiety, finding anxiety in our body, Significance of anxiety, the seven types of Anxiety, Generalized anxiety disorder, Social phobia, Agoraphobia, Panic disorder of anxiety, Concept of Stress, The Effects of Stress, Warning signs of Stress, Stress and Panic affects on individuals, Some precaution while to dealing with panic attacks and anxiety include and Managing anxiety and stress Dealing with stress is not easy for anyone. However, you cannot allow it to control your life. Otherwise, you will end up with health issues and bruised feelings. Each person deals with stress differently. Some know how to get relief; others don't care to work it out. They would rather be stressed for the rest of their lives. . There's too much of life to see for you to be burdened with trivial issues that cause you to be stressed and frustrated. Keep yourself sane and happy by keeping the stress away.

KEYWORDS: Anxiety, Stress. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Social Phobia, Agoraphobia and Managing Anxiety and Stress

INTRODUCTION

Life has never been as complicated as it is today. The workweek has grown longer rather than shorter. Broken and blended families create increased stresses to manage. Computer screens and television news bring the latest horrors into your living room in real time. Newspapers, blogs, tweets, and magazines chronicle crime, war, and corruption. Terrorism has crossed the globe and escalated to new heights. The media's portrayal of these modern plagues includes full-color images with unprecedented, graphic detail. Let's face it, fear sells.

Unfortunately, as stressful and anxiety-arousing as the world is today, only a minority of those suffering from anxiety seek treatment. That's a problem, because anxiety causes not only emotional pain and distress but also physical strain and even death, given that anxiety extracts a serious toll on the body and sometimes even contributes to suicide. Furthermore, anxiety costs society as a whole, to the tune of billions of dollars.

AFFECTS OF ANXIETY

Obviously, if we have a problem with anxiety, we experience the cost of distressed, anxious feelings. Anxiety feels lousy. We don't need to read a book to know that. But did we know that untreated anxiety runs up a tab in other ways

as well? These costs include

- **A Physical Toll:** Higher blood pressure, tension headaches, and gastrointestinal symptoms can affect your body. In fact, recent research found that certain types of chronic anxiety disorders change the makeup of your brain's structures.
- **A Toll on your Kids:** Parents with anxiety more often have anxious children. This is due in part to genetics, but it's also because kids learn from observation. Anxious kids may be so stressed that they can't pay attention in school.
- **Fat!** Anxiety and stress increase the stress hormone known as cortisol. *Cortisol* causes fat storage in the abdominal area, thus increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Stress also leads to increased eating.
- **More Trips to the Doctor:** That's because those with anxiety frequently experience worrisome physical symptoms. In addition, anxious people often worry a great deal about their health.
- **Relationship Problems:** People with anxiety frequently feel irritable. Sometimes, they withdraw emotionally or do the opposite and dependently cling to their partners.
- **Downtime:** Those with anxiety disorders miss work more often than other people, usually as an effort to temporarily quell their distress.
- **Living in the Future and Predicting the Worst:** When you do this, you think about everything that lies ahead and assume the worst possible outcome.
- **Magnification:** People who magnify the importance of negative events usually feel more anxious than other people do.
- **Perfectionism:** If you're a perfectionist, you assume that any mistake means total failure.
- **Poor Concentration:** Anxious people routinely report that they struggle with focusing their thoughts. Short-term memory sometimes suffers as well.
- **Racing Thoughts:** Thoughts zip through your mind in a stream of almost uncontrollable worry and concern.

FINDING ANXIETY IN OUR BODY

Almost all people with severe anxiety experience a range of physical effects. These sensations don't simply occur in our head; they're as real as this book you're holding. The responses to anxiety vary considerably from person to person and include

- Accelerated heartbeat
- A spike in blood pressure
- Dizziness
- Fatigue

- Gastrointestinal upset
- General aches and pains
- Muscle tension or spasms
- Sweating

These are simply the temporary effects that anxiety exerts on your body. Chronic anxiety left untreated poses serious risks to your health as well

SIGNIFICANCE OF ANXIETY

Imagine a life with no anxiety at all. How wonderful! We awaken every morning anticipating nothing but pleasant experiences. We fear nothing. The future holds only sweet security and joy.

Think again. With no anxiety, when the guy in the car in front of me/you lams on the brakes, your response will be slower and you'll crash. With no worries about the future, your retirement may end up bleak. The total absence of anxiety may cause you to walk into a work presentation unprepared. Anxiety is good for you! It prepares you to take action. It mobilizes your body for emergencies. It warns you about danger. Be glad you have some anxiety. Your anxiety helps you stay out of trouble. Anxiety poses a problem for you when

- **It lasts uncomfortably long or occurs too often.** For example, if you have anxiety most days for more than a few weeks, you have reason for concern.
- **It interferes with doing what you want to do.** Thus, if anxiety wakes you up at night, cause you to make mistakes at work, or keeps you from going where you want to go, it's getting in the way.
- **It exceeds the level of actual danger or risk.** For example, if your body and mind feel like an avalanche is about to bury you but all you're doing is taking a test for school, your anxiety has gone too far.
- **You struggle to control your WORRIES, but they keep on coming.** Regardless of what you do, anxious thoughts pop up over and over.

THE SEVEN TYPES OF ANXIETY

Anxiety comes in various forms. The word "anxious" is a derivative of the Latin word *angere*, meaning to strangle or choke. A sense of choking or tightening in the throat or chest is a common symptom of anxiety. However, anxiety also involves other symptoms, such as sweating, trembling, nausea, and a racing heartbeat. Anxiety may also involve fears — fear of losing control and fear of illness or dying. In addition, people with excessive anxiety avoid various situations, people, animals, or objects to an unnecessary degree. Psychologists and psychiatrists have compiled a list of seven major categories of anxiety disorders as follows:

- Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Social phobia
- Panic disorder

- Agoraphobia
- Specific phobias
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

You don't need a full-blown diagnosis to feel that you have some trouble with anxiety. Many people have more anxiety than they want but don't completely fit the category of having an official anxiety disorder. In this article only three anxiety disorders were briefly discussed i.e. GAD, Social phobia and Agoraphobia disorders of anxiety as follows.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

The common cold of anxiety some people refer to *generalized anxiety disorder* (GAD) as the common cold of anxiety disorders because it afflicts more people throughout the world than any other anxiety disorder. GAD involves a long-lasting, almost constant state of tension and worry. Realistic worries don't mean you have GAD.

Social Phobia: Avoiding People

Those with social phobia fear exposure to public scrutiny. They frequently dread performing, speaking, going to parties, meeting new people, entering groups, using the telephone, writing a check in front of others, eating in public, and/or interacting with those in authority. They see these situations as painful because they expect to receive humiliating or shameful judgments from others. Social phobics believe they're somehow defective and inadequate; they assume they'll bungle their lines, spill their drinks, shake hands with clammy palms, or commit any number of social faux pas and thus embarrass themselves. They also worry about what others are thinking about them — so much that they don't listen well enough to keep a conversation going.

Everyone feels uncomfortable or nervous from time to time, especially in new situations.. However, you may have social phobia if you experience the following symptoms for a prolonged period:

- You fear situations with unfamiliar people or ones where you may be observed or evaluated in some way.
- When forced into an uncomfortable social situation, your anxiety increases powerfully. For example, if you fear public speaking, your voice shakes and your knees tremble the moment that you start your speech.
- You realize that your fear is greater than the situation really warrants. For example, if you fear meeting new people, logically you know nothing horrible will happen, but tidal waves of adrenaline and fearful anticipation course through your veins.
- You avoid fearful situations as much as you can or endure them only with great distress.

Panic Disorder of Anxiety

Of course, everyone feels a little panicked from time to time. People often say they feel panicked about an upcoming deadline, an impending presentation, or planning for a party. You're likely to hear the term used to describe concerns about rather mundane events such as these. But people who suffer with *panic disorder* are talking about entirely different phenomena. They have periods of stunningly intense fear and anxiety. If you've never had a panic attack, trust us,

you don't want one. The attacks usually last about ten minutes, and many people who have them fully believe that they will die during the attack. Not exactly the best ten minutes of their lives. Panic attacks normally include a range of robust, attention-grabbing symptoms, such as

- An irregular, rapid, or pounding heartbeat
- Perspiring
- A sense of choking, suffocation, or shortness of breath
- Vertigo or lightheadedness
- Pain or other discomfort in the chest
- A feeling that events are unreal or a sense of detachment
- Numbness or tingling
- Hot or cold flashes
- A fear of impending death, though without basis in fact
- Stomach nausea or upset
- Thoughts of going insane or completely losing control

Panic attacks begin with an event that triggers some kind of sensation, such as physical exertion or normal variations in physiological reactions. This triggering event induces physiological responses, such as increased levels of adrenaline. No problem so far.

Agoraphobia: Panic's Companion

Approximately half of those who suffer from a panic disorder have an accompanying problem: *agoraphobia*. Unlike most fears or phobias, this strange disorder usually begins in adulthood. Individuals with agoraphobia live in terror of being trapped. In addition, they worry about having a panic attack, throwing up, or having diarrhea in public. They desperately avoid situations from which they can't readily escape, and they also fear places where help may not be readily forthcoming should they need it. The agoraphobic may start with one fear, such as being in a crowd, but in many cases the feared situations multiply to the point that the person fears even leaving home. As agoraphobia teams up with panic, the double-barreled fears of not getting help and of feeling entombed with no way out can lead to paralyzing isolation.

CONCEPT OF STRESS

Stress is when your peace of mind is interrupted and your emotions are worked up. You can feel stress in your home, work or your child can feel stress at school. If not handled properly, it can mess with our minds and our health. Stress feels like you are carrying a large burden on your shoulders. You have a lot of responsibilities that seem like it all falls toward you and no one else. You have feelings of anxiety and frustration. There are times when you will get angry because so much has come upon you and it seems to be overwhelming. You feel overpowered to do anything so it's easy for you to get into worrying about things that you can't control. It doesn't have to be big things that will cause stress. It could be some of the smallest things that can set you off to get tense.

CAUSES OF STRESS

There are different things and events that can cause you to be stressed. What may cause stress for one person may not be the same for someone else. It's basically different strokes for different folks when it comes to stress. Stress can be physical, internal, emotional and external. They can be caused by a loss you've experienced, overworking yourself, sickness, arguments and other problems that you face.

You can also experience stress from office politics. This is not something that you should get involved in. It is not good for you mentally, especially if you're dealing with other problems. Office politics can be very brutal and you have to know how to deal with it. The last thing you want to do is to bring it home with you.

Another cause of stress is lack of finances. You or your spouse always seems to be at odds about the finances and budgeting. You like to save, while he likes to spend. The old saying is true about saving for a rainy day. However, your spouse likes to spend because the money is there. He could care less about saving money when he'll really need it. You on the other hand, are constantly after him about that. The interaction often ends up into a verbal argument.

If you or someone in your family has a chronic illness, you constantly have to take them to the doctor. That's more money out of your pocket because you have to pay the fee prior to the doctor visit. Then, the doctor may have to prescribe medicine, depending what the health issue is. That's another expense to dread.

For wealthy people, they have to deal with taking care of their large mass of money. Of course, there are those who know they have the money and are always looking to mooch from them. On the other hand, there are those who are not wealthy and work to keep what they have and bring in more money. It can be a struggle on both ends.

You could be stressed about being a people pleaser. You're the type of person that doesn't want anyone mad at you, so you work to keep everyone in your circle happy. That can stress you out because while you're struggling to keep them happy, you don't have time for yourself to do the things you need to do. That can be very frustrating.

If you have children, they may feel stressed from the pressure of working to keep their grades up so that they can get all A's. There are some parents that are obsessed with their children getting all A's that they constantly hound them and keep them in their schoolbooks. It seems as though they don't have a life out of school. That are beyond the scope of what they can do. Or they worry about things that they shouldn't be worried about. They're trivial and unnecessary. They invite stress in by complaining and murmuring. They think about the negative stuff and think that there's no way out. They allow too much tension to build up in their system. Here are some other things that can cause stress in your life:

- Job termination or layoff
- Illness
- Injury
- Separation from boyfriend or spouse
- Divorce
- Imprisonment

- Bereavement of a loved one
- Toxic relationships
- Great concern for others
- Rejection
- Pregnancy
- Retirement
- Daily traffic grind

THE EFFECTS OF STRESS

Stress can affect people physically if they don't learn to deal with it. It can really affect their health. They can experience headaches, ailments of the stomach and diabetes. In order for people to remain healthy, the immune system needs to be healthy and working properly. When people allow stress to affect them, they set themselves up for anything to happen. One of the more common health issues they face is ulcers. Ulcers can affect what you eat, which can cause weight gain or loss.

They can also experience the following:

- Backaches
- Pain in the neck
- Pain in the muscles
- High blood pressure
- Chest pains

If any of these problems persist, they should see a physician.

WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

There are some warning signs that tell on you. One is that your appetite changes. You may be stressed if you're not eating as much and have lost weight. Or you're eating more than usual and gaining weight. You start feeling tired or are experiencing anxiety. You feel drained and haven't gotten enough rest. You're more concerned about problems that you can't control or wondering how they're going to turn out. You're not sleeping well, if at all.

Your muscles are aching or your have headaches that won't stop. You can't concentrate on the item at hand and allow yourself to be constantly distracted. You start to drink alcohol heavily or get addicted to drugs. Once you realized that these things are affecting you, you should get help as soon as possible.

STRESS AND PANIC AFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS

Stress can cause you to have panic attacks. If you are the type of person that intensely worries about things, then you could be at risk. Panic attacks are born out of fear that something bad will happen. You start to stress out more than

you normally would. When you feel you're having a panic attack, you start to feel dizzy and your heart will accelerate.

Other signs that you may be having a panic attack include:

- Nausea
- Numb
- Feeling of paralysis (can't move)
- Breathing difficulties
- Sweaty hand and palms
- Increased Tension

SOME PRECAUTION WHILE TO DEALING WITH PANIC ATTACKS AND ANXIETY INCLUDE

Try to remain calm and relaxed; this can help to minimize the effects of panic attacks.

- Face the panic attacks head on; if you avoid them, it will be more difficult to deal with them in the future.
- Get a mindset of not letting the panic attacks get to you; meditate on words that can help you relieve your problems.
- Find some people that can depend on for support. You need people that have your back and will rally around you when the going gets tough.

If you have these symptoms consistently, you should consult with your physician to find out what's going on. More than likely, it can be due to stress levels that increase in intensity. If your physician finds out that's the case, then they may prescribe you with some medicine to get rid of the panic attacks. The sooner you get help for this, the better chance you have of being stress-free sooner than later.

LIVING WITH STRESS-FREE LIFE

Before you do anything, you have to realize what it is that is causing the stress to occur. Once you figure that out, you can start to deal with the triggers. Pay attention to what happens when the stress occurs. You may be affected by different stressors that affect you physically, emotionally and mentally.

There are many ways that people can learn to combat stress and learn to live stress-free. Here are some tips that people can use to help them reach stress-free status. These solutions are simple and ones that you can do every day:

MANAGING ANXIETY AND STRESS

The following are the few tips for managing anxiety and stressful situation

- If there are events or situations that constantly trigger your stress, you should try your best to avoid them, if possible. If you can't do that, decrease the amount of time that you involve yourself in that situation in order to decrease the stress.
- Focus your energy on positive things in your life. Or try to ignore it altogether if it's something insignificant. The

more focus you put on it, the more stressed you'll become.

- When you feel stress coming on, learn to control your emotions on how you deal with it. Everyone doesn't need to know what's going on. Besides, it's highly unlikely that they could or are willing to help you anyway.
- Learn to control your physical reactions when you're dealing with stress. When some people are under pressure, they look to physically striking out at others or at objects in order to release their stress. You may have to take medicine to keep your anger and actions under control and help to reduce your stress levels.
- You can't overly concern you with what will go on in the future. In doing so, you overlook what's going on now, which is important. Think about what's going on now and not stress yourself about the future.
- Don't get into a cycle of doubt and disbelief. If you're uncertain about something, then don't engage yourself in it. Make the most of what is going on with you and stay in a positive frame of mind.
- Don't add on to your worries and concerns. This will only add to the stress that you're already dealing with. Don't deal with things that you're not sure about and work on keeping your mind at peace.
- Start out with easy exercises such as walking and light aerobics. At first, do it at least three times a week. As your metabolism increases, add more days and increase your exercise time. This is one of the best ways that you can release stress and keep it away.
- It's important to have a well balanced and healthy diet in order to be stress -free. Eating what you want, including junk food will do nothing for you but help you gain weight. You should try to stick to a time frame where you can eat, especially the three basic meals.
- Drinking milk can help people relieve stress. Milk has plenty of antioxidants that help to combat stress. Drinking a cup everyday is a good way of effectively relieving your stress levels. You can also have milk when you're eating cereal.
- Meditation is a very good way to deal with stress. In order for it to be effective, you have to concentrate and keep your focus. It may be difficult at first because you're dealing with so much stress, pressure and frustration. Meditation can help you get rid of negative feelings, such as anger. The more you mediate, the quicker the stress can disappear.
- Relaxing your muscles is another way that you can relieve stress. When you're stress, your muscles will tighten. Concentrate on relaxing them and not being tensed up. One way you can do this is to sit in a quiet place and close your eyes.
- Give hugs to people every day. Tell them how much you appreciate them. This type of affection will do wonders for you and them.
- First, you must realize that having laughter in your life can increase your energy and take away any negative vibes that you may be feeling. When you laugh, you release the pent up anger and frustration that has been bottled up inside you from being stressed. You can find some good comedy shows on television that are really funny.
- Take a different approach about your job and your duties. Don't think of it as a chore. Be enthusiastic about what

you do. It may seem redundant, but you have to get the job done.

- Be nice and if possible, keep your conversation to a minimum. If they seem to be combative, or argumentative, then walk away. There have been workplace violence incidents that were the result of constant infighting between co-workers and bosses.
- Don't get stressed if you don't get the promotion that you thought you deserved. It can be difficult to deal with if you feel this way and you feel you have sacrificed a lot. It can be stressful to deal with rejection of that sort. Continue to work like you have been doing and eventually, the right promotion will come for you. What you think was meant for you may not have been after all. You may have ended up dealing with a more intense stressful situation than what you were dealing with. So look at the rejection with a grain of salt and a blessing in disguise.
- Time management is a big problem for most people to deal with. People have become so busy in their daily lives that they don't realize how important it is to effectively manage their time.
- Once time has elapsed, you cannot get it back. Nowadays, time has become precious commodity and once it's gone, that's it. You will need to set aside time to do things for yourself

CONCLUSIONS

Dealing with stress is not easy for anyone. However, you cannot allow it to control your life. Otherwise, you will end up with health issues and bruised feelings. Each person deals with stress differently. Some know how to get relief; others don't care to work it out. They would rather be stressed for the rest of their lives.

Stress can be used as a motivator to get rid of your problems as well as stress itself. Using some of these techniques listed in this guide can help you to a better and peaceful life. If you look at it from a positive standpoint, you will be able to tackle it with grace and keep moving. If not, you will continue to allow the stress demons invade your life. Continue to live a healthy lifestyle by eating right and eating healthy. Also, make sure to incorporate regular exercise in your daily schedule. These two things should be a priority, if nothing else. Go the other ways if you sense negativity going on? If you are in a toxic relationship which has been the same for a while, it's time to let go and move on. Toxic relationships are not healthy for anyone. They can bring more stress on you than you can imagine. You can't allow people to bring you down to their level. You have to work at becoming stress-free. It won't happen overnight. You cannot allow stress to suffocate you where you can't think straight. You will need to prioritize what's important in your life and stick with keeping those things in order. There's too much of life to see for you to be burdened with trivial issues that cause you to be stressed and frustrated. Keep yourself sane and happy by keeping the stress away.

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