

Young People & Anxiety

Problems with anxiety are really common in children and young people, 1 in 6 will experience an anxiety problem at some time.

Anxiety is the feeling of fear or panic. Anyone can feel anxious, panicky or scared about things in life, such as friendship problems or exams but often once this difficult time is over, the feelings can disappear. For some, the feelings of fear or anxiety continue or even feeling overwhelmed by fear more than other people. This is when anxiety becomes a problem and can affect you doing everyday things. Symptoms of anxiety can include:

- feeling scared or panicky all the time
- feeling down or depressed
- difficulty sleeping
- difficulty eating
- unable to concentrate on things
- feeling tired and irritable
- palpitations or racing heartbeat
- dry mouth
- trembling
- feeling lightheaded
- upset tummy

Young people with anxiety usually experience anxiety in three ways:

- generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)
- panic attacks
- phobias

Anxiety may exist due to your family history or genetics or it could be down to something else early childhood experiences. Physical or mental health problems can make you anxious, for example, around half of people with depression have panic attacks at some point. It can be a mixture of things or part of your personality.

GAD

GAD affects many people and young people with GAD worry lots of the time. Anxiety creates difficulty every day.

Panic attacks

Feelings of extreme anxiety that happen unexpectedly. They can last for about ten minutes. With panic attacks, you can have difficulties breathing and feel panicky and feeling out of control. You gradually calm down and feelings go away after about ten minutes but can leave you feeling quite shaken and vulnerable.



Phobias

These are when someone feels very worried or panicky about one thing in particular. The thing that worries you might not be dangerous or threatening to others but can make you feel really scared and upset. Types of phobia can vary from agoraphobia: a fear of going outside, or a social phobia of meeting people to arachnophobia: a phobia of spiders. 10% of people experience anxiety or phobias at some point in their life. You can get help through your GP and learn to manage this effectively.

