

Anxiety Disorders: What Are the 5 Major Types?

Description

There are five main types of anxiety disorders, and what may be even more surprising is that over 19% of the American population suffer from one or more of them. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., but luckily they are highly treatable. Let's take a look at how the five major types of anxiety disorders are distinguished.

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Generalized [Anxiety Disorder](#) is quite common and it often presents as excessive worry and tension and chronic anxiety in patients. There doesn't have to be anything particularly foreboding to cause the feelings of anxiousness. It's normal to feel anxious from time to time, but when benign things occur, going into an anxiety ridden spiral that prevents you from enjoying life, there may be something deeper going on.

2. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Due to reality television, obsessive compulsive disorder has gotten a lot of attention. What most people think of is OCD sufferers doing repetitive tasks for no apparent reason. But OCD is more than that. Patients have patterns of unwanted thoughts and fears that grow into obsessions. The fears and thoughts are usually unreasonable and excessive, taking over and preventing patients from living their lives comfortably. The repetitive tasks are an attempt at controlling the anxiety caused by the obsessions.

3. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

We often hear about PTSD and veterans, but it affects a diverse group of people. Post-traumatic stress disorder is usually triggered by a traumatic event, either witnessed or experienced. Some of the more common PTSD triggers include violent personal assaults, natural disasters, accidents and military combat, however, triggers could be any terrifying ordeal. Those who suffer often have trouble maintaining personal relationships, difficulty experiencing positive emotions, trouble sleeping, and more.

4. Panic Disorder

Panic disorder sufferers will often be plagued by sudden and unexpected episodes of intense terror or fear. The fear will usually be coupled with physical responses like chest pain, shortness of breath,

racing heartbeat and excessive sweating. It's very alarming to the patient and those who witness the panic attack that seems to come out of nowhere. Although these symptoms can mimic a [heart attack](#), these episodes aren't typically life threatening.

5. Social Anxiety Disorder

Humans are social by nature, but for some of us engaging in social ways causes severe discomfort, fear and anxiety. Social anxiety disorder can look like an excessive fear of speaking in front of people or eating in public spaces. It can also be so severe that any type of social interaction brings on an overwhelming sense of panic and fear. Social [phobias](#) can cause sufferers to avoid doing things and experiencing a full life. They often feel so self-conscious that they're unable to maintain relationships, employment and more.

Coping with an anxiety disorder is very difficult to do alone. If you or someone you know are suffering from an anxiety disorder, please reach out to a licensed therapist for treatment. Learning how to incorporate the skills necessary to live life more comfortably and fully is going to greatly improve your quality of life.

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