

Anxiety Encyclopedia Article

Anxiety

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Anxiety

Anxiety refers to an unpleasant, but normal, emotional state. If you are suffering from anxiety, you may feel nervous or fearful. You may even notice physical symptoms such as shortness of breath, sweating, and diarrhea. Anxiety is also a specific category of psychiatric disorder. In this case, the feelings and physical symptoms of anxiety overwhelm your ability to function normally. Specific anxiety disorders include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social or other phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Alcohol, caffeine, and stimulant drugs such as amphetamines can contribute to feelings of anxiety. Some people with severe anxiety may drink alcohol or take nonprescribed **sedative-hypnotics** (such as Valium) in an attempt to relieve their symptoms, but these substances may worsen the condition.

See Also

Alcohol: Complications of Problem Drinking; Prescription Drug Abuse; Risk Factors for Substance Abuse; Sedative and Sedative-Hypnotic Drugs.