



Generalised Anxiety Disorder

What is it?

People with Generalised Anxiety Disorder tend to worry more than others and often recognise their worry as excessive. Worries usually revolve around not one but lots of different things, like finances, relationships, work, health or upcoming events.

As the worries can be very difficult to stop and consume concentration, people with generalised anxiety often have difficulties focusing at work or going to sleep in the evening. Other effects of excessive worry include feelings of apprehension, muscle tension or restlessness.

Worry can be an attempt to avoid uncertainty by trying to think through every contingency however, often there are too many unknowns for this to be successful and people can have difficulties tolerating this uncertainty.

"What if ...?" worries can undermine problem-solving and prevent people from facing the underlying fear driving the anxiety, thus reducing a person's confidence to be able to cope with the worst case scenario.

People also report that they worry about the effects of worrying (e.g. they believe that worry is harmful or dangerous) which increases the intensity of worry. People often make attempts to suppress or avoid their worries but often report a difficulty stopping this style thinking. Worriers often report insight that worrying does not help their anxiety but continue to do so because it provides them a sense of trying to do something about the problem.

How common is it?

According to the 2007 Australian National Survey of Mental Health, it is estimated that 1 in 37 Australians experienced Generalised Anxiety Disorder in the 12 months before the survey.

Individuals with Generalised Anxiety Disorder frequently also experience symptoms of other disorders, most commonly other anxiety disorders and unipolar depressive disorder.

What can I do about it?

If you are concerned about your symptoms, particularly if they are affecting your quality of life, we recommend to make an appointment to discuss your concerns with a qualified mental health professional, like a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist.

In some cases, a combined approach of seeing a psychiatrist and a clinical psychologist has been found to be most helpful.

Professional help

There are a number of different approaches to treating generalised anxiety. Usually this involves teaching people to obtain greater control over their worry through a variety of specific cognitive therapy skills. Problem solving is then applied to help manage stressors more effectively and to shift attention towards meaningful life activities.

Contact Us

The Lawson Clinic
748 Pacific Highway
Gordon NSW 2072
Phone: (02) 9418 4488
61 + 2 + 9418 4488