



What is anxiety?

Fear is a normal human response to a threat or perceived danger. It involves a physiological response preparing the body to deal with the threat. When we feel threatened, the body releases adrenaline (the fight and flight response) causing the heart beat to increase and muscles to tense, blood is diverted from the digestive tract, increasing blood pressure. When we are facing a genuine threat, this response is helpful. For example, if an angry bull is heading towards you, your body is prepared for you to run to the gate. A small amount of anxiety can be beneficial, for example, at an interview or when giving a presentation. The extra adrenaline can help us focus and give extra energy for the task.

When we become anxious about possible future or imaginary danger then this adrenaline response is not helpful. A sufferer can experience an increased heart-beat, sweaty palms, headaches, restlessness, nausea, problems sleeping and other unpleasant symptoms. When anxiety becomes part of our everyday life, it can steal our joy and cause us to withdraw from others. Some studies suggest that chronic anxiety is physically bad for us too, causing an increased risk of long-term health problems including heart problems and diabetes.



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TYPES OF ANXIETY

Social anxiety: This is a common form of anxiety, in which the sufferer finds interacting with other people frightening, particularly large groups. The person may try to avoid mixing with others and become isolated and lonely.

Generalised anxiety disorder: A person with generalised anxiety will find everyday life difficult and everything can feel risky and unsettling.

Phobias: Phobias are fears of particular things or situations, for example being afraid of dogs, flying or open spaces.

Panic attacks: Panic attacks occur when the physical symptoms of anxiety become overwhelming and this can lead the sufferer to panic even more. They can experience shortness of breath, chest pain, shaking and generalised distress.

Health anxiety Some people become obsessively concerned with their health and are constantly on the lookout for potential risks such as infectious diseases or road traffic accidents.

Dealing with anxiety

Breathing: The physical symptoms of anxiety can be eased by simple deep breathing. Sitting comfortably and taking slow deep breaths, particularly slowing the outbreath resets our nervous system and enables us to steady our thoughts.

Grounding: Taking a moment to be aware of your surroundings, focusing on your senses -what you can feel, hear and see, can help

Reality check: Ask yourself "how real is this fear?" Often when we are anxious, we start with a relatively small worry and then imaging all sorts of possible scenarios that compound our worry. We call this catastrophising. Try to bring your thoughts back to a more rational level.

Take small steps: In the case of phobias, gradually exposing yourself to the threat can help overcome your fear. If, for example, you are frightened of dogs, looking at pictures of dogs might be a first step. If you suffer from social anxiety you might want to start with seeing a small group of friends or only plan to stay for a short time, in order to manage your fear.

Keeping a journal: It may be helpful to keep a note of what triggers your anxiety and what has helped. Also writing your fears down can be useful.

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[SOURCES OF HELP](#)

Talk to someone: If you have someone you can trust (perhaps a partner, relative or friend), you may find it helpful to talk about your problems.

Talk to God Do bring your anxiety to God in prayer, if you would like us to pray for you, please send an email to administrator@unionbaptist.org.uk

Your GP: If your anxiety is constant or causing you problems, do seek advice and support from your GP. Your GP may be able to refer you to a counselling service if appropriate, although there may be a long waiting list. There are also various services and organisations which offer help and support directly to people with mental health problems without need for a referral.

[Minds Bucks](#)

Healthy Minds is a fast-acting NHS service offering talking therapies, practical support and employment advice to people with a GP in Buckinghamshire. Contact details are listed below:

Website: <http://www.healthymindsbucks.nhs.uk/> Email: healthy.minds@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Location: Across Buckinghamshire

Telephone: 01865 901600

Text: Text "Talk" and your name to 07798 667169

Address: Floor 2, Prospect House, Crendon Street, High Wycombe, HP13 6LA

[Wycombe Mind](#)

Wycombe Mind is a local mental health charity, offering information, advice and day services.

16-18 Easton St, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 1NR.

Tel. 01494 448279

email: enquiries@wycombemind.org.uk

website: www.wycombemind.org.uk

[Talk to The Samaritans](#)

The Samaritans offer emotional support 24 hours a day - in full confidence.

Call 116 123 - it's FREE

Or email jo@samaritans.org.uk

[Shout Crisis Text Line](#)

If you're experiencing a personal crisis and need support, Shout can help with urgent issues such as: suicidal thoughts; abuse or assault; self-harm; bullying; relationship challenges.

For support in a crisis, Text [Shout](#) to [85258](#)

[Counselling Services](#)

The Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC) is the only Christian UK-wide counselling organisation holding an Accredited Register with the Professional Standards Authority. For further details see their website: <https://www.acc-uk.org/>

The website of the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists may also be helpful: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/>

ANXIETY AND FAITH

Christians are not immune to anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders can affect a person's spiritual life, but are not a sign of spiritual failure. Hold on to the fact that God wants much more for us than a life full of worry, fear and anxiety. If you are suffering from crippling anxiety, do seek help, whether from your GP or another source. It may well be that medication or counselling will be of help to you; you may find a Christian counsellor particularly helpful.

If your anxiety is less severe, perhaps characterised by a tendency to worry and constant anxious thoughts, there are positive steps you can take to redirect your thinking. We are specifically instructed not to worry (Matt 6:25-27 & 31-33). We may not be able to stop anxious thoughts arising, but we have some control over how we respond to them, for example by treating them as a reminder to turn to God in prayer. You might try writing them down, shutting them in an envelope, and committing them to God.

For the Christian, worry and anxiety can distract from the relationship with God. Do not be ashamed to share your difficulties with fellow Christians for prayer and support. If you are struggling with social anxiety, consider asking a friend to accompany you to church and fellowship activities. If you don't know who to ask, seek advice from your pastor. The verses overleaf may be helpful to Christians, but do be sensitive in using them to support others:

VERSES FROM THE BIBLE

Matthew 6:34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." If you have specific worries about the day or week ahead, commit them to the Lord in prayer; if the worry returns, take it back to the Lord, and try to leave it with Him.

Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." As anxious thoughts intrude, take them to the Lord in prayer and try to leave them with Him.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Anxiety can make even the smallest task seem impossible. Look to Christ to give you the strength you need throughout the day.

Matthew 6:27 "Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

2 Corinthians 10:5 "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." When anxious thoughts intrude, recognise that they are not of God. Try mentally to take them captive. Picture your hand seizing hold of the thought and crushing it.

Hebrews 13:6 "So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?'" If your worries focus on a particular individual (perhaps in a work situation or relationship) put your confidence in the Lord; remember that He is greater than any mortal.

Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Try to refocus your thoughts by actively dwelling on positive things.

The Psalms may also be a source of comfort and reassurance. **Psa 27 & 118** may be particularly helpful.