



## Family Centre Information Package

### Anxiety in Adults



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#### WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by worrying or being fearful or nervous.

#### SYMPTOMS/SIGNS

Some common signs or symptoms of anxiety include:

- Excessive and uncontrollable worrying about daily activities and/or events
- Nausea or an upset stomach
- Sweaty or shaking hands
- Rapid heartbeat or breathing
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Muscle tension or restlessness
- Being irritable or “on-edge”

Additionally, other symptoms may be present, depending on the type of anxiety you are facing. The websites listed under [Resources](#) at the end of this document can provide more details on specific anxiety disorders.

#### IS ANXIETY ALWAYS A PROBLEM?

It is perfectly normal to feel anxious sometimes. Anxiety can even be helpful during times of stress, helping us to solve problems or to escape a dangerous situation. Anxiety triggers a “fight or flight” response, which is why we experience the physical and mental symptoms mentioned above. This response was useful when humans had to face saber-tooth tigers and other threats; however, the stresses we face in our modern world usually do not require this kind of reaction, making anxiety more of a problem than a help for some people.

#### HOW DO I KNOW IF ANXIETY IS A PROBLEM?

Anxiety becomes a problem when:

- You worry or are nervous/fearful most of the time.
- You worry excessively or find it difficult to control the worry, even if everything is okay.

- These feelings begin to interfere with your day-to-day life.
- Other people may tell you that you worry too much.

## FACTS

- Anxiety is one of the more common mental health issues among adults.
- There are many different reasons why someone might become anxious, and different people may experience different symptoms.
- Anyone can get anxiety – you don't have to be a natural “worry wart” or a nervous person.
- Worrying itself does not cause anxiety disorders. It is normal to worry sometimes. It becomes a problem if there is *excessive* worrying.
- Our thoughts can make us feel more anxious at times of stress. The good news is we can learn to change those thoughts to help us feel less anxious!
- Anxiety is treatable, and medication is not the only treatment.

## FAMILY CENTRE SERVICES

Family Centre offers individual and family counselling services (ages 7+). If you are interested in scheduling a counselling session, please call Family Centre (403) 320-4232 extension 240, to speak to an intake counsellor.

Family Centre offers the Kin Family Resource Library. Visitors to the library have access to books, videos, DVDs, and magazines that cover a variety of topics, including anxiety. There is no cost for accessing the library; all that is required is a Family Centre library card, which is available at reception. To search and reserve available resources click [here](#).

At this time, Family Centre does not offer therapeutic anxiety groups for adults. Please feel free to contact us if you think you would find a support group for adults experiencing anxiety beneficial to you. New groups are always in development.

## HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

Research on anxiety and experience from people with anxiety suggest that the following activities may be helpful for dealing with anxiety. You may find them helpful, too. These are not intended as a “cure” or a substitute for therapy.

- Relaxation, such as [progressive muscle relaxation](#)
- [Breathing exercises](#)
- Yoga

- Exercise, such as going for a walk, dancing to music, swimming, karate, etc.
- Laughter – watch a funny movie or read a funny book
- Take a bubble bath or a long shower
- Write a letter to a friend
- Play with kids or pets
- [Meditation](#)
- Talk to someone



## RESOURCES

### LOCAL RESOURCES

- Lethbridge Family Services Counselling 403-327-5724
  - 1107 2A Avenue N., Lethbridge, AB T1H 0E6
  - LFS provides counselling services to individuals who are experiencing difficulties in their lives, including anxiety. Subsidies may be available.
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Lethbridge) 403-329-4775
  - 426 6 Street S., Lethbridge, AB T1J 2C9
  - The local office of CMHA provides crisis intervention, education and training in mental health issues, and peer support and self-help programs.
- Community Mental Health (Alberta Health Services) 403-381-5260
  - 200 5 Avenue S., Lethbridge, AB, T1J 4L1 (Provincial Building)
  - Customer focussed services include crisis intervention and stabilization, prevention, community support, intervention services.
- Associates Counselling Services 403-381-6000
  - 239 12B Street N., Lethbridge, AB, T1H 2K8
  - Associates is an association of independent professionals and offers a wide range of counselling services, including family and child/youth counselling. Subsidies may be available.
- Crossroads Counselling Centre 403-327-7080
  - 202 – 542 7 St. S, Lethbridge, AB, T1J 2H1
  - Crossroads offers counselling to individuals, couples, and families for a variety of concerns. Subsidies may be available.

### WEBSITES

- Anxiety BC: <http://www.anxietybc.com/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://lethbridge.cmha.ca/> (local) or <http://www.cmha.ca/> (national)
- Help Guide: <http://helpguide.org>
- Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada: <http://www.anxietycanada.ca>

## VIDEO

- *Analyze This* (1999): A crime comedy about a psychiatrist (Billy Crystal) who is forced to treat a mob boss (Robert De Niro) who is suffering from generalized anxiety disorder. Rated 14A.
- *What About Bob?* (1991): A classic comedy starring Bill Murray as Bob, a character with many phobias and anxiety disorders, who tracks down his psychiatrist (who is on a family vacation). Rated PG.
- *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004): A man (Jim Carrey) dealing with social anxiety elects to have his memories of an ex-girlfriend (Kate Winslet) erased, but fights to keep the memories as they are slowly lost. Rated R.

## BOOKS

- *The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook* by Edmund Bourne: Readers will learn effective skills (e.g. relaxation techniques) for dealing with anxiety and phobias.
- *The Feeling Good Handbook* by David Burns: This book contains techniques and exercises that will help readers learn to cope with anxiety and phobias.
- *Mind Over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think* by Greenberger and Padesky: This workbook helps readers to improve their lives through applying cognitive behaviour techniques, and is applicable to a variety of mental health issues including anxiety, panic attacks, self-esteem, and depression.
- *The Worry Cure* by Robert L. Leahy: This book provides a systematic approach to managing anxiety, including a 7 step worry-reduction plan.

## OTHER

- Access Mental Health 403-943-1500
  - Assists community members in accessing appropriate, non-emergency, services for mental health and addiction issues
- AHS Mental Health Help Line 1-877-303-2642
  - Provides confidential crisis intervention, mental health information, and referrals when necessary
- Distress Line 403-327-7905
  - Crisis intervention. Listeners are available 24 hours a day

## REFERENCES

- <http://www.anxietybc.com/>
- [http://www.helpguide.org/mental/anxiety\\_types\\_symptoms\\_treatment.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/anxiety_types_symptoms_treatment.htm)
- <http://www.media-match.com/usa/blog/index.php/offbeat/10-film-tv-show-anxiety-disorders/>
- [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.