



Family Centre Information Package

Anxiety in Adults



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WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is an emotional state characterized by worrying, 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. In the past this response was useful for human survival when faced with a threat; however, the stressors we face in our modern world usually do not require a flight or fight response. In a situation where a flight or fight response is not appropriate anxiety is no longer helpful.

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 concerns 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 can help you connect to resources in our community through our Family Connector. They are knowledgeable about the agencies and resources available in Lethbridge and surrounding area and can help get you to the right service.

We also offer parent support, where parent educators support you in supporting your children.

Please leave a message for our Family Connector at (403) 320-4232 extension 240.

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 library card, which is available at reception.

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

WEBSITES

- Anxiety BC: <http://www.anxietybc.com/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association: <http://lethbridge.cmha.ca/> (local)
- Help Guide: <https://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/anxiety.htm>
- Anxiety Canada: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/learn-about-anxiety/anxiety-in-adults/>

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.

REFERENCES

- <http://www.anxietybc.com/>
- 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
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.