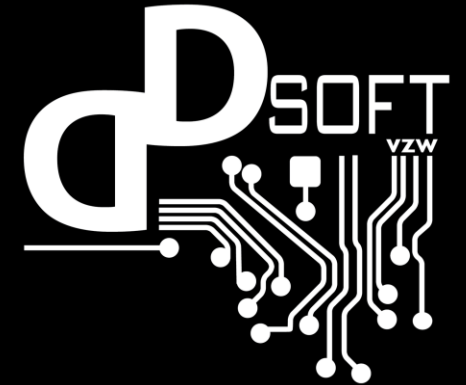# Anxiety in Tech

Dennie Declercq // 2023

Intro

Content

- Intro
- Introduction to Anxiety
- Anxiety in Tech Tasks
- Anxiety in Tech Roles
- Indirect Anxiety in Tech
- How to cope anxiety
- Outro

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Who am I?

- Dennie Declercq
- President& IT-coach DDSoft
- Microsoft MVP
- @DennieDeclercq
- **Mr. DreamingIsBelieving**

Travel lover

People lover

Modern Eastern Spirituality

How my history impacts my anxiety today

- As child I was bullied a lot.

- Big traumatic experience when I was 13yo (Child Psychiatry).

- The teachers didn't believe my programmers knowledge & abilities.

- My parents are not in tech.

- Recognition, Acceptance, Permission, Allowance always fighting points.
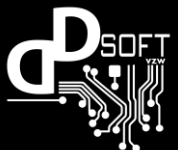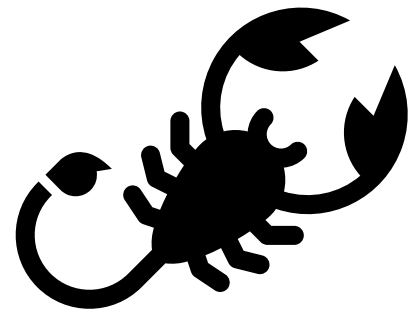
Introduction to Anxiety

Positive (High)	Joy		Amazement	
Negative (Low)	**Anxiety**	Rage	Grief	Aversion

What is Anxiety

- Prime Emotion
- Ancient Surviving **instinct** in danger
- Negative (Low Engergy)

Types of Anxiety
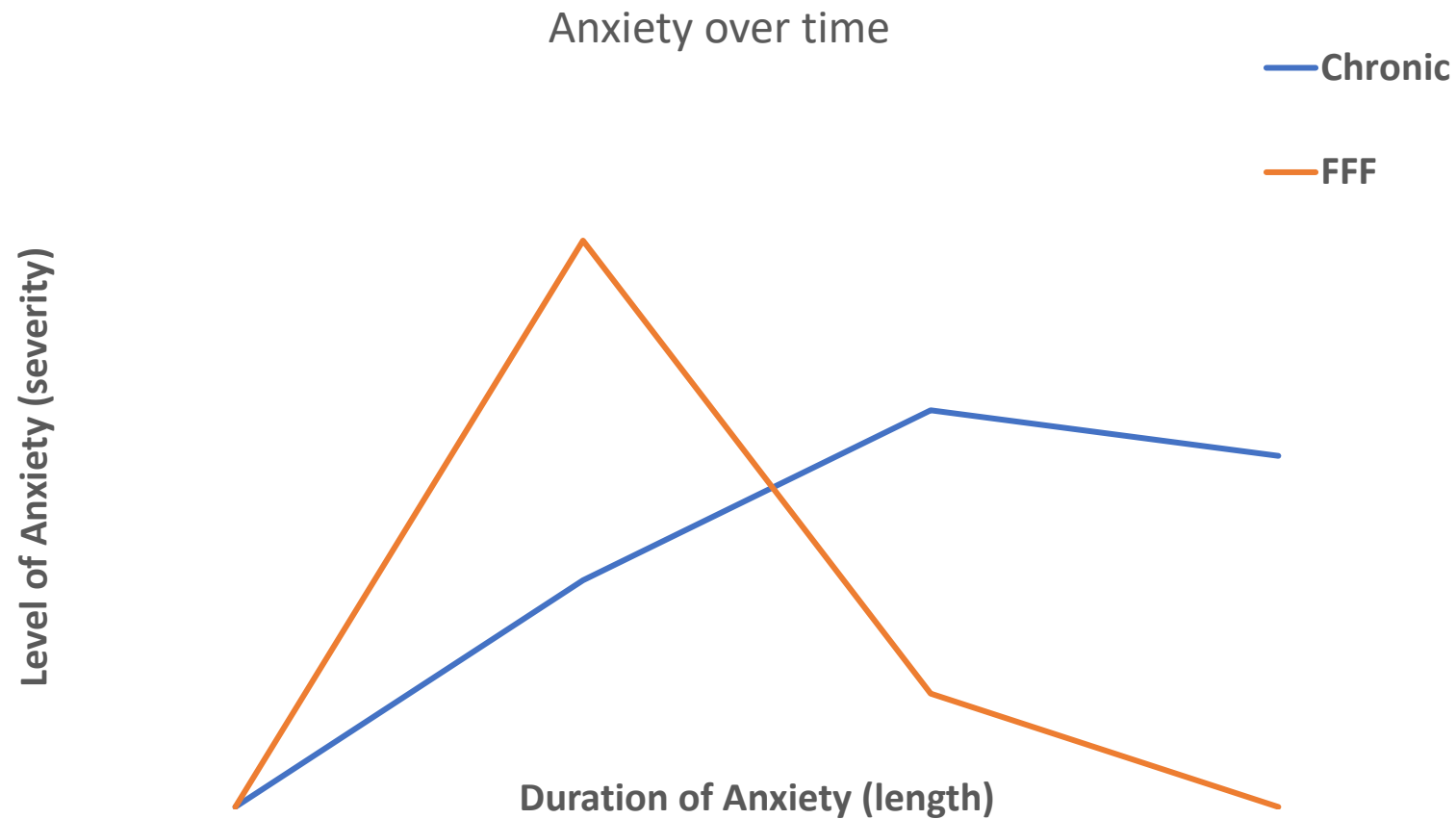
Separation anxiety

Fear of rejection

Fear of failure

Fear of accusation

Fear of dying

Duration of Anxiety

Anxiety over time

Level of Anxiety (severity)

Duration of Anxiety (length)

Chronic

FFF

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Fight, Flight, Freeze

- Basic instinct (Ancient animals)
- Real Fears
  - Car Crash
  - System Failure
  - Risk of bad choice
  - Risk of disastrous consequences
  - Unexpected bad customer call
- Panic

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Chronic Anxiety

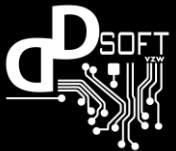|	
Long term	Long periods of discomfort
Bad sleep/ Insomnia	Mulling/ fretting
Hyper alert	Physical tension

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Your Mental Back-pack

- Direct impact on:
  - Feelings
  - Thoughts
  - Experiences
  - Circumstances happening right now
  - Brain wires
  - Physical body structure/ Muscles

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Good vs Bad Anxiety

Good
- Can safe you!
- Is short!

Bad
- All the rest

Anxiety in Tech Tasks

It works, Keep it (the legacy way)!

- It works, it's not perfect
- A rebuild can trigger new problems
- Low self-esteem causes anxiety
- What if a customer need it when it's broken?
- What if I can't fix it?

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Bad Git Branches

- A lack of Git usage is a major trigger

- Good Git knowledge definitely helps

- A solid branching strategy provide enough backups

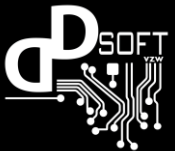- A roll-back strategy leads to safety
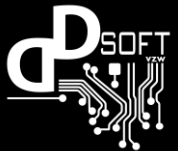
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Unclear Package documentation

- Let's talk Maven, Gradle, NuGet, NPM

- What about package minor updates?

- What about package major updates?

- Are breaking changes announced?

- When is a version deprecated?

- Major changes & learning a complete new package is hell.

DD SOFT vzw
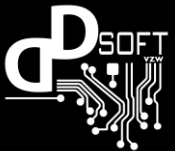
Unannounced breaking changes

- Breaking changes are not only in packages!

- Software (IDE's, Editors).

- Languages (Java, C, C#) versions.

- Frameworks (Angular, React, Node, .NET).

DDSOFT vzw

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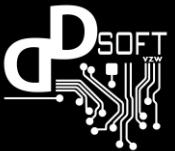# Announced breaking changes but deadlines & workload issues

Announced breaking change with:

- Short due date
- A lot of work to do

In combination with:

- A lot of customer work
- Small team

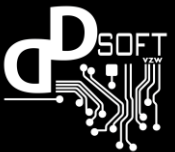**Then, it can trigger loads of Anxiety!**

Alfa, Beta, Prod

You are using a Beta version from a 3rd party for your production...?

- You know you shouldn't.
- At first you saw only benefits.

And now you own production is broken?

- Are you scared for guilt feeling?
- How do you communicate with you customers?
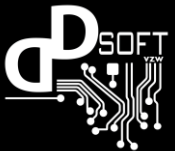- And/ or 3rd Party?

Left behind if too slow to pivot

- You missed too many iterations of software (or a package) you are using:
  - Oh my God!
  - You procrastinated!
  - And you have only a very short time to fix...

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Cloud Architecture

- Your cloud Application works. It works, but it's too slow.

- You have paid customers/ users. Some complain. Some are OK (price).

- And there's a new Cloud Architecture that will solve your needs!

- Are you?
  - Scared to move and left the old project behind?
  - Brave enough to build it in a short timespan? Is it possible?
  - Do you mail your customers for an announced service stop (During Holidays)?
  - Just keep working the legacy way? With its trade-offs?

Security and Blaming

- Does security feels like safety? Of like danger?
- Is making your apps/systems secure stressfull?
- Will you get blamed even for good intent?
- Is good intent enough?
- Of do you put your dream project in a wintersleep?
  - Just for your security/ safety?
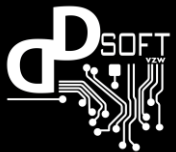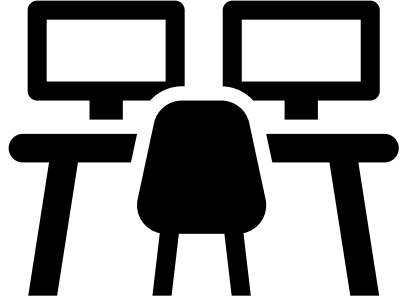
Anxiety in Tech Roles

There's no Single Point of Contact

- For your customer you need:
  - 3rd Party hosting;
  - Personal contact is difficult, they are hard to reach.
- But your customer don't understand:
  - What 's your part;
  - What's the 3rd Party's part?
- How do you cope this?
- Are you frustrated?
- Are you anxious to lose your customer/money?

Customer Expectations

- Customer needs feature;
    - Customer 'need' it urgent;
    - You know you don't have capacity;
    - Are you promising for over-delivery?
    - Will you be anxious if you fail?
    - Is failure an option?
- Or are you saying: "It isn't possible"?
    - Is customer King?
    - Can a King do everything?
    - Will the customer leave? Anxious?

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Say: NO!

- Dare to say NO!

- X is not possible in x amount of time!

- X is not possible with only x amount of people!

- X is too much!

- I need to charge X or need X to make an exception!
  - BUT be aware if people step by for your requirements;
    - Will this make the solution realistic?
    - Or cause additional anxiety?
    - Know what YOU WANT/NEED

Anxious for Scarcity

- You are asking too little money.

- You are overdelivering.

- You are sacreficing family life.

- You are stressed if you look your bank account.

- Are you scared for running low?

- Is this realistic or only a falsehood feeling?

They don't believe in me!

- If I ask a 'stupid' question on Stack Overflow…
- If I don't know each datatype of the language that I use, even the lesser know ones…
- If I don't find the right terminology to Google it…
- If I make a typo in a GitHub repo…
- G*D D*mn I will mess up another's GitHub Repo…
- If I raise my hand to ask a stupid question at a session at this conference…

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I am not professional!

- If I don't know everything...

- If I ask a beginner questions...

- If all my sessions I choose are beginner sessions (Level 100)...

- If I don't have a current job/ employer...

Indirect Anxiety in Tech

Too many screens

- At your work; Or a virtual conference:
  - Multiple monitors (2+, 3+)
  - Your dev work takes 1 or 2
- What about the other?
- Power off?
- Let it on?
- Sneaky following the news?
- Doomscrolling on Social Media?
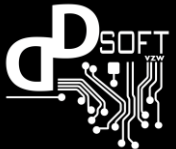
dP Soft vzw

Virtual blah, blah & Newspapers

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Social Media

- Doomscrolling all day?
- Are you frustraded for bad reactions?
  - On your company or personal choices?
  - Do you need to react?
- Are people toxic?
- Are you sometimes toxic?
- Can you unplug?
- Can you only follow the positive stuff?

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How to Cope Anxiety?

Take a break

THE ANSWER CAN COME OUT OF THE BOX

THE PROBLEM CAN LOOK LESS SEVERE AS YOU THOUGHT

REPLACE FOCUS AWAY FROM THE PROBLEM

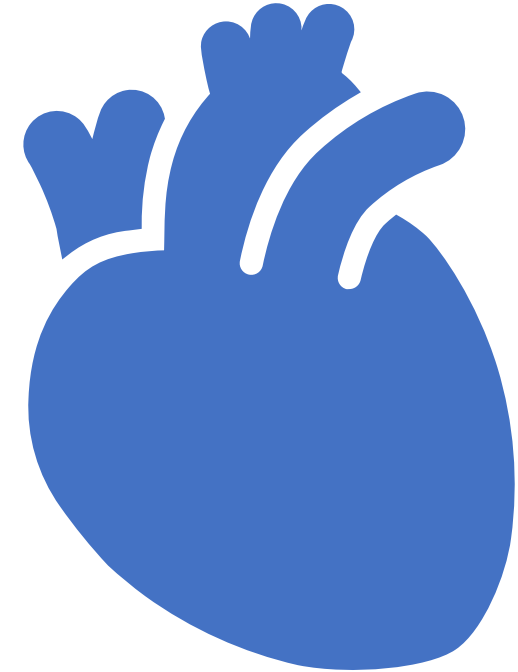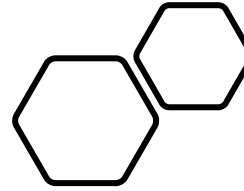TAKE A WALK

BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF BEING UNPRODUCTIVE

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COMMUNICATION!!!

- Open & Honest
- Trust the good ones
- Be vulnerable
- Indicate your limits & borders
- You are not alone

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dDsoft

Breathing Exercises

- Based on Heart-Brain-Coherance

- Apps

- Physiotherapist

- Some formulas:
  - 4'-4'-4'-4'
  - 4'-7'-8'-0'

Medical help

- My GP is needed
- Trust in GP is key
- The patient has rights!
- You CAN say: I don't want...
- Medication is no taboo

  - "Your brain is part of your body, medication can heal the body"
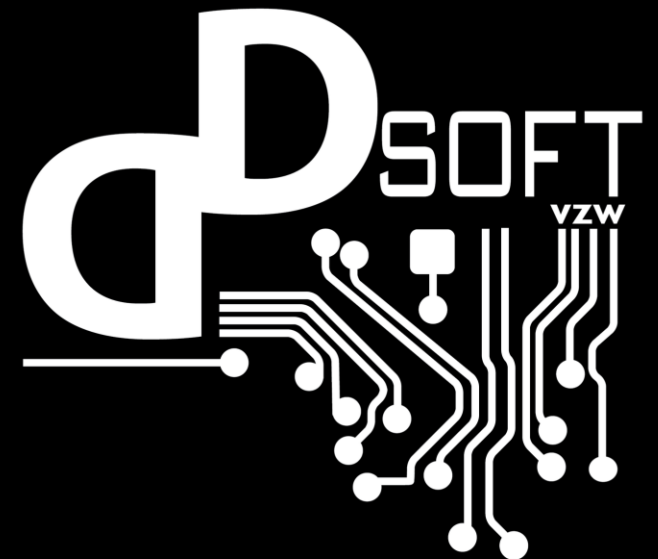
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Outro

Recap

- I explained the emotion Anxiety
- I told about Anxiety in Tech Tasks
  - You can ask help!
- I told about Anxiety in Tech Roles
  - You need to follow your limit & borders!
- I told about Indirect Anxiety in Tech
  - Less is more!
- I gave tips to handle anxiety
  - COMMUNICATION = KEY!

Thanks // Q&A

- @DennieDeclercq
- #DreamingIsBelieving
- dennie@ddsoft.be