Fear and Anxiety and their Signs, Symptoms, and Resolution

Chad Reynolds

Central Christian College of the Bible

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Professor Jason Leinbaugh

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According to the ADAA over 40 million adults that is 19.1% in America experience anxiety/fear disorders.(Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2022) With that statistic only about 37% of those actually receive treatment for these disorders. (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2022) Also, with children and adolescents the percentage that is affected is approximately 32%. People whether adults or adolescents going through these disorders are often more succeptable to depression, substance abuse, becoming anti-social and introverted and at times face suicidal thoughts. In this paper I am going to be breaking down what exactly is anxiety and fear and how we can treat and overcome the symptoms.

# Anxiety

## Types of Anxiety Disorders

In my research I have found there are eight most common types of anxiety disorders; agoraphobia, anxiety due to medical conditions, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, selective mutism, seperation anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, and substance-induced anxiety disorder. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2018) I am going to speak on three of the eight disorders. Before I go into each disorder to describe them lets define anxiety. Anxiety is an apprehensive uneasiness or nervousness usually over an impending or anticipated ill. (Merriam-Webster, 2019)

The first type of anxiety disorder is agoraphobia. Agoraphobia is where a person will fear and often avoid places or situations that might cause them to panic or feel trapped, helpless or embarrassed. This disorder brings to mind veterans that are affected by PTSD. We will often times avoid situations or gatherings we know will retrigger the trauma that we faced while away at war.

Another common type of anxiety disorder is one that is caused by a medical condition. People who suffer from physical medical issues or their health is drastically affected by an ailment can have anxiety about the condition itself or of things getting worse. I had a friend while in grade school that during football practice broke his leg. Once it had healed and he was able to walk on it again he never could bring himself to play football again. Now I know this probably wasn’t a huge issue, but for him he faced enough anxiety about that past experience that he allowed it to affect his life from then on.

Generalized anxiety disorder affects people who overly worry about activites and events which are often part of their daily routine. Most of the time the anxiety and worry the person will face is out of proportion to the circumstance, but they are unable to control how they physically feel when they experience the anxiety. With this disorder the person affected is often suffering from other anxiety disorders as well. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2018)

**Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders**

Each anxiety disorder comes with their own types of symptoms or physical/mental signs, but most share these twelve common symptoms. They are the feeling of nervousness, restlessness and tension, impending danger panic or doom, increased heart rate, hyperventilation, sweating, trembling, feelings of fatigue, trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry, insomnia, gastrointenstinal problems, difficulty controlling worry, and the overwhelming urge to avoid things that trigger the anxiety.

Each one of these symptoms are things that we need to not only access in the people we help, but in ourselves as well. Knowing when to get help ourselves I very important. If you ever feel like your worrying too much or your anxiety is making you avoid situations or affecting your relationships at work and at home you need to be able to reach out to someone and get the help needed.

**Treatments and Diagnosis for Anxiety Disorders**

There are two main ways to diagnose someone with an anxiety disorder. The first is the old school talk counseling method. While speaking with someone there are times that you will see the symptoms I have mentioned above in that person. This will allow you to know you may need to refer this person to a licensed counselor to get further help. The second way that a counselor will be able to diagnose someone with an anxiety disorder is the use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders or DSM-5 for short.

As for treatments, there are two avenues one can undergo. (Mayo Clinic, 2018)The first avenue would be psychotherapy or sometimes referred to as talk therapy. There a counselor can assist you through “talking it out”, or in a lot of cases can begin cognitive behavior therapy with the client. With the use of CBT the therapist teaches the client specific skills to improve the symptoms allowing them to gradually return to the normal activities that they once performed. CBT uses a type of therapy called exposure therapy in which the counselor will gradually reintroduce the client to situations that would have often caused the client anxiety.

The second method of treatment is through medication. This method is highly dependant on the type of anxiety disorder the client is experiencing. The most common types of medication given to clients are antidepressants, buspirone which is an anti-anxiety medication, and sedatives such as beta blockers or benzodiazepines. With the use of sedatives though they are usually only for a short term control if a client experiences an attack. (Mayo Clinic, 2018)

**Biblical teachings on Anxiety and how to Overcome them with God’s help**

Billy Graham said in his book “How to Overcome Fear, Anxiety and Worry”, “Anxiety is the natural result when our hopes are centered in anything short of God and His will for us.”(How to Overcome Fear, Anxiety and Worry, 2022) In faith I believe God has given us all the tools to overcome fear and anxiety. We are told in Philippians 4:6, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” (Crossway, 2008) You see God has our backs! He wants us to hand over those fears and anxiety’s that we all face during our lives. Another great passage is also from Philippians. In Philippians 2:3-4 it states, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant that yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Crossway, 2008) This passage also gives us a great tool to combat the anxiety and fear we face each day. In this passage it tells us to help each other and serve each other. A lot of times when we help another person it also helps sooth the stress and anxiety we face as well.

**Fear**

**Types of Fear**

First, lets define what fear is. Fear is the often strong and unpleasant emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger. (Definition of Fear, 2019) There are four types of fear; situation-specific fear which is often fleeting and occuring usually when someone is startled or surprised, there are social anxiety disorders which often use fear to cripple the person affected, panic disorders which cause the individual to experience panic attacks, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which affects anyone who has either experienced wartime trauma or physical/sexual abuse, and the last one are phobias for example arachniphobia which is the fear of spiders. (Signs of Fear, 2022) A lot of times the signs and symptoms of fear mirror or reflect the same signs that a person going through an anxiety disorder will be experiencing, but there are a few that differ in a few ways.

**Signs of Fear**

There are five signs of fear that are pretty specific to someone feeling that emotion. Increased heart rate, faster breathing or shortness of breath, butterflies in your stomach or digestive issues, profuse sweating or chills, and trembling muscles. The causes for most of these signs or symptoms is because when a person is struck by a fear their body anticipating for the need of a flight or fight response will start producing a excess amount of adrenaline. This excess adrenaline will cause your heart rate to increase, the shortness of breath and the excess sweating or getting the chills. Another hormone that is released at the time is called cortisol. Cortisol is responsible for making the person experience butterflies in their stomach or digestive issues.(Signs of Fear, 2022) This is why a lot of people whom when they are fearful throw up.

**How to Deal with Fear**

There are many ways for a person to deal with and overcome their fears. While no one wants to experience prolonged fear short-term feelings of fear are actually good. When we feel fearful our body is trying to tell us that something is wrong or our brain senses a perceived threat to ourselves or others. (Signs of Fear, 2022) In an article I found in Very Well Health it states ten exercises one can do to help mitigate and control the fear they are experiencing. They are deep breathing, teddy bear breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, mindful breathing, diaphragmatic breathing, slow breathing, pursed-lip breathing, resonance breathing, yoga breathing, and alternate nostril breathing.(Kelly, 2022) Now while some of these methods may seem a little silly to us when going through a fearful event we should be aware that this may help us get through them. Finally, if none of the deep breathing techniques assist you in controling or coping with your fear you can always turn to a psychologist and have them assist you through the use of talk therapy.

**Biblical Teachings on Fear**

There are surprisingly a lot of bible passages that speak to us about fear. This is probably because God knew that throughout our lives we are going to be faced with many trials that will test our resolve and courage. To ensure that we are able to face those challenges He left guidance for all of use to follow. The six passages that stood out to me were, 2 Timothy 1:7, Isaiah 41:10, 1 John 4:18, Psalm 34:4, Joshua 1:9, and Proverbs 29:25. The one passage that stood out to me the most would be Joshua 1:9, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”(Crossway, 2008) This passage I feel encompasses God’s love and dedication to all of us. No matter what we face our faith and love for God will keep Him by our side no matter what.

**Conclusion**

I am going to end this with a prayer written by Neil Anderson in his book “Walking Through the Darkness”. “Dear Heavenly Father, You are the fortress, shield and strength of my life. I refuse to be intimidated by any fear object. I choose to sanctify Christ as the Lord of my life. You are the only omnipotent, omnipresent God. You have not given me a spirit of fear. By Your presence in my life I have power, love and a sound mind. Your power enables me to live a responsible life. Your presence in my life has made me a partaker of Your divine nature so I can love others as You love them. You are my sanctuary, and I ask You to protect my family … Amen.” (Anderson, 1991)

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