



Sharpen Your Coping Skills to Better Manage Your Anxiety

Learning Objectives

- Describe anxiety and generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Recognize signs and symptoms of GAD
- Compare “normal” worry vs. GAD
- Discuss causes and risk factors for developing anxiety
- Describe treatment options and strategies to manage GAD

Anxiety

- Reaction to real or imagined threat
- General feeling of uneasiness or dread
- Normal response to danger, threat, or extreme stress



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Characterized by persistent, excessive, and unrealistic worry about everyday things



Source: Anxiety and Depression Association of America

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Symptoms

Emotional

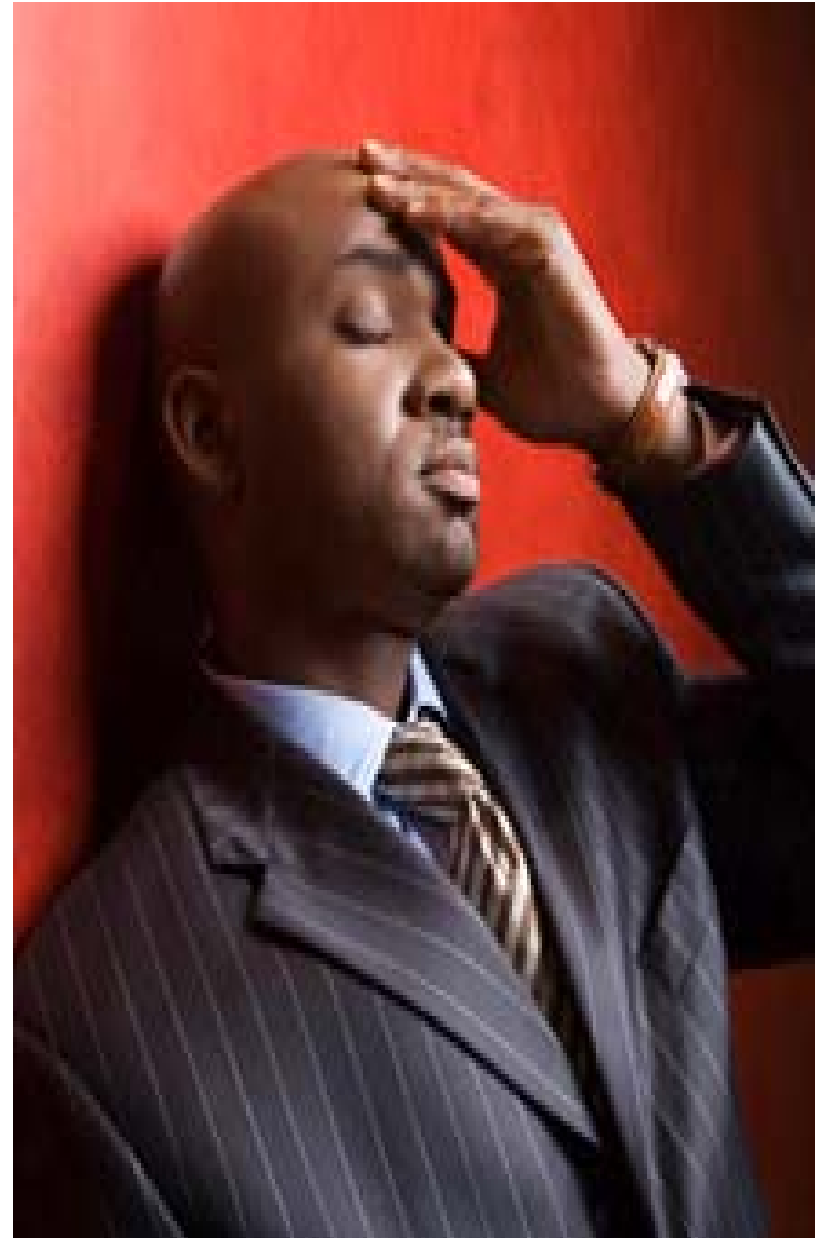
- Uncontrollable/constant worry
- Persistent feeling of dread or nervousness
- Excessive or uncontrollable crying

Behavioral

- Difficulty concentrating
- Avoiding situations that make you anxious
- Restlessness or becoming easily fatigued

Physical

- Stomach issues
- Muscle tightness or tension
- Sleep problems



“Normal” Worry vs. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

| “Normal” Worry: | Generalized Anxiety Disorder: |
|---|--|
| Your worrying doesn’t get in the way of your daily activities and responsibilities. | Your worrying significantly disrupts your job, activities, or social life. |
| You’re able to control your worrying. | Your worrying is uncontrollable. |
| Your worries, while unpleasant, don’t cause significant distress. | Your worries are extremely upsetting and stressful. |
| Your worries are limited to a specific, small number of realistic concerns. | You worry about all sorts of things, and tend to expect the worst. |
| Your bouts of worrying last for only a short time period. | You’ve been worrying almost every day for at least six months. |

Source: <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad.htm>

Causes and Risk Factors for Developing Anxiety

- Genetics or family history of mental health issues
- Biochemistry
- Environmental factors
- Physical health problems
- Ongoing stressful events or life experiences (e.g., relationship problems or job stress)
- Substance use
- Poor coping skills

Question

If you have an anxiety disorder, you should completely avoid stress and situations that make you feel “stressed.”

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Maybe
- D. Not sure



Treatment Options



Cognitive-behavioral Therapy

- Short-term, goal-oriented and common type of talk therapy treatment
- Helps one to differentiate between thoughts and feelings
- Goal is to make a person recognize inaccurate or negative patterns of thinking in order to view challenging situations more clearly and respond to them in a healthier way.

Treatment Options (cont'd)

Medications

- Benzodiazepines
- Antidepressants

Relaxation techniques

- Guided imagery
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Calm breathing
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Mindfulness



Strategies to Manage GAD

- Learn what triggers your anxiety.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine.
- Improve your problem solving ability.
- Live a healthy lifestyle by exercising daily, eating nutritious foods, and getting adequate sleep.
- Accept that you cannot control everything.



Strategies to Manage GAD (cont'd)

- Practice stress reduction techniques.
- Challenge anxious thoughts.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Talk to a physician or mental health provider.



Conclusion

- As with other mental health disorders, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is ***highly treatable***! Treatment options may include: psychotherapy or talk therapy, lifestyle changes and/or medications.
- Both children and adults can develop GAD, and symptoms can vary from person to person. Symptoms may include: irritability, difficulty concentrating, worrying about excessively worrying, and trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Learning new strategies to better cope with anxiety can take time. Practice! Practice! Practice! Even if you start to feel better, continue using these techniques to maintain your progress and to prevent relapses.

Achieve Solutions Website

Articles

- Traditional Treatment of Anxiety Disorders
- What is Generalized Anxiety Disorder?
- Anxiety and Health Problems
- Complementary Therapies for Anxiety Disorders

Videos

- Thinking Positive

Webinars

- Become a Better You
- Distracted? Practice Mindfulness for Better Well-being

What Types of Concerns Are Addressed by the EAP?

- Planning for significant life events such as marriage or birth of a child
- Depression, anxiety, stress, grief and loss
- Strengthening relationships
- Achieving personal and professional goals
- Addiction assessment and treatment recommendations
- Work/life balance
- Planning for a strong financial future
- Sorting through legal matters

Contact Your EAP

Contact your EAP for any personal issue:

- Available 24/7/365
- Free
- Confidential
- Toll free: (800) xxx-xxxx
- Achieve Solutions website: www.achievesolutions.net/xxx



Thank you for participating in today's training!