

# Anxiety, Low Mood and Stress Fact Sheet



## Anxiety

Anxiety is experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations. It is a natural human response. Anxiety can range from a mild nervous feeling to a severe feeling of dread. It can cause people to avoid situations and miss out on opportunities.

Anxiety may cause a person to sweat, tremble and feel restless, and it can cause muscles to tense up. It can also cause nausea and stomach problems. Feeling anxious can affect a person's appetite, their ability to concentrate and their sleep quality.

Some people experience panic attacks. Their heartbeat increases and breathing can feel difficult. They may feel shaky, dizzy, sick or faint, and may experience pain in their chest or abdomen. Anxiety disorders can impact a person's ability to control their emotional responses to situations.

Some ways to manage anxiety include mindfulness, self-care and breathing techniques, spending time in nature and exercise, therapy and support groups.

Some people are prescribed medication.

## Low Mood

Low mood is feeling sad and lacking motivation. It can be brought on by difficult, life-changing events but people can also experience low mood for no obvious reason.

Low mood leads to a loss of interest in things that are usually enjoyable and a feeling of hopelessness. Some people cut themselves off from family and friends and reduce communications.

Symptoms can include feeling constantly tired, sleeping badly and a loss of appetite. Some people experience headaches and other aches and pains. People with low mood may also experience symptoms of anxiety.

Treatments for low mood include lifestyle changes, exercise, therapy and mindfulness. Low mood over a long period of time can lead to depression and should be addressed with a health professional.

## Stress

Stress is our body's response to pressure and can be brought on by many everyday experiences. Small amounts of positive stress can help us perform better, but acute or prolonged stress makes us ill. It can cause people to avoid situations.

Stress can affect the body's memory, metabolism and immune system. It can cause an elevated heart rate, fast and heavy breathing and perspiration. Some people may feel tension in their muscles and experience headaches, including migraines. Some have difficulty sleeping and experience changes in their weight. Stress can cause stomach problems, nausea and dizziness. It can also cause rashes on the skin.

Stress can also cause emotional ups and downs and outbursts of anger.

Suggestions for managing stress include taking time to rest, connecting with others, spending time in nature or focusing on a hobby. Exercise and eating a healthy, balanced diet can also help stabilise mood. Therapy can help with planning and managing tasks.