

Anxiety can be a normal response to situations which we feel unsure about. When worry or anxiety becomes consistent, or when it interferes with your day-to-day life it can quickly become a problem. Anxiety comes in different levels, mild to moderate to severe, and can affect you in different ways. Anxiety can also come as sort of a package deal with other disorders. Determining where it comes from and learning how to manage it may bring a change in your perspective and help you better manage your anxiety.

Let's start with mild anxiety. Mild anxiety can be feeling nervous when your boss has scheduled a meeting to discuss productivity and you recognize you might not have been a good employee lately. This anxiety / worry is short lived and will likely go away when you find your boss just wanted to ask your opinion on productivity. Anxiety can be situational and still be a problem for you. It may also come with some physical symptoms. Moderate anxiety is more intense and may come with physical symptoms which do not go away quickly. Some of the symptoms can be feeling nauseated, fatigue, irritability, or difficulty sleeping; to name a few. You may also feel excessive worry or have a sense of fear, and you may not be able to figure out where it is coming from or why it is happening. Severe anxiety can be debilitating for you. The symptoms may make doing everyday activities difficult due to the severity of the physical symptoms combined with the constant and excessive worry or anxiety. Severe anxiety may also create panic attacks further complicating your ability to manage the symptoms.

The next question would be how can we manage the anxiety? It depends on the severity of the symptoms, how long you have had the anxiety, and what the root cause of the anxiety may be. Anxiety can be thought of as a thought processing disorder. You may have picked up a belief somewhere along the way and your brain logged it as a set in stone thought, and this thought is following you around today. Imagine being seven years old and needing a tooth pulled. You may decide right then that dentists are mean and painful, and you will never go to one again. As you grow into an adult that thought may have become an automatic thought process through the many years of reminders that the dentist is bad. You don't question it as it is now a normal red flag moment for you. But as adults we must go to the dentist. The seven-year-olds perspective is creating the anxiety you felt back at the original dentist's appointment combined with the reinforcement of your thoughts through the years. It doesn't make sense to let seven-year-old you make decisions for adult you. Recognizing where the thought originated and challenging adult you to reconsider the thought is important. Yes, the dentist can be painful and scary, but it's probably not as bad as seven-year-old you remembers it as being.

The type of treatment is dependent upon the level of anxiety you are experiencing. The goals and treatments for mild anxiety can be different from severe anxiety. But just to give you an idea some of the treatment goals might be: Gaining the tools you need to manage your anxiety. Recognizing cognitive distortions may play a part in your anxiety and learning to challenge those thoughts. Or processing your automatic thoughts to make changes to your internal dialogue leading to a more beneficial perspective. Can you imagine a life without the interference from your anxiety? Ask for a consultation with a therapist to begin to work on managing your anxiety.

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*Accepting clients in the League city, Webster, Friendswood, Clear lake and Seabrook areas