



Evolving Minds Counselling

Guiding You Through Life's Challenges

Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health conditions, affecting millions of people worldwide. These disorders go beyond occasional worry or fear and can significantly impact daily life. Understanding the different types of anxiety disorders is crucial in recognising symptoms and seeking appropriate help.

Types of Anxiety Disorders

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

GAD is characterised by persistent, excessive worry about various aspects of life, such as work, health, or social interactions. This worry is often disproportionate to the actual situation.

Common Symptoms:

- Restlessness or feeling on edge
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Sleep disturbances

Treatment Options:

Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness practices, medication, and stress management techniques.

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)

Social anxiety disorder, also known as social phobia, involves intense fear of social situations where one may be judged, embarrassed, or scrutinised.

Common Symptoms:

- Fear of speaking in public
- Avoidance of social gatherings
- Excessive worry about upcoming social events
- Sweating, trembling, or nausea in social situations

Treatment Options:

CBT, exposure therapy, medication, social skills training, and relaxation techniques.

Panic Disorder

Overview:

Panic disorder is marked by recurrent, unexpected panic attacks—sudden periods of intense fear that may include palpitations, sweating, and feelings of impending doom.

Common Symptoms:

- Rapid heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Fear of losing control or dying

Treatment Options:

CBT, medication, relaxation techniques, and lifestyle changes such as regular exercise and avoiding caffeine.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

OCD is characterised by unwanted, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviours or compulsions performed to alleviate the anxiety caused by these thoughts.

Common Symptoms:

- Repetitive hand washing, checking, or counting
- Fear of contamination
- Excessive concern with order or symmetry
- Distress when compulsive behaviours are not completed

Treatment Options:

CBT, specifically Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), medication, and mindfulness strategies.

Seeking Help

If you or someone you know is struggling with anxiety, it's important to seek help. Anxiety disorders are treatable, and with the right support, individuals can manage their symptoms and lead fulfilling lives.