

# ANXIETY

TALK TO US

OFF  
THE RECORD

## WHAT IS ANXIETY?

*I constantly feel worried*

We can all feel worried from time to time and most people can relate to feeling nervous or stressed at the thought of sitting an exam or going to an interview. However, when these feelings build up and you experience anxiety on an ongoing basis, it can affect your sleep, appetite and ability to concentrate.

Anxiety can be experienced in different ways:

**Generalised Anxiety Disorder** causes a lot of worry which makes day to day life difficult to cope with.

**Panic Attacks** are feelings of extreme anxiety that cause attacks; making it difficult to breathe and usually last for about ten minutes.

**Phobias** can cause you to feel nervous and panicky when faced with a specific situation or object.

**Social Anxiety** is a feeling of nervousness in social situations.

## HOW DO I KNOW ITS ANXIETY?

If you are feeling anxious, you are likely to have a few of the following symptoms:

**Physical symptoms:** fast or irregular heartbeats; stomach cramps; feeling sick or queasy –like you have ‘butterflies in your stomach’; feeling shaky; faint or wobbly; feeling weak; as though you might pass out and struggling to breathe.

**Psychological symptoms:** Feeling worried all the time; feeling irritable; unable to concentrate and worried you are ‘losing your mind’.

*I don't feel in control*

## CAUSES

There are many different factors which can cause anxiety, which include:

- Relationship or family problems
- Death or loss of a loved one
- Experiences that occurred in childhood
- Experiencing a major emotional shock following a stressful or traumatic event
- Asthma, diabetes and hormonal issues

## THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP MANAGE YOUR ANXIETY BETTER

If you are feeling anxious, the good news is that it is treatable and there are things that can be done to help reduce your feelings of anxiety.

- Taking part in a physical activity helps to release some tension stored in the body; this could be stretching, dancing in your room or going for a jog.
- Reduce and/or avoid caffeine intake, including energy drinks and fizzy drinks
- Talk to someone you trust who will listen to you talk about your worries. Sharing your worries with someone can be a relief. Whilst asking for help can be hard because talking about feeling anxious can make these feelings more real, telling someone what's going on can help to reduce the pressure of anxiety and stress, as well as help you to feel less alone in how you are feeling.
- Practice simple breathing exercises to help you feel calmer.
- When you're feeling worried or anxious, mindfulness exercises can help bring your attention and focus to present moment and away from your worries.
- Another way to take your focus away from worrying thoughts is to try distracting yourself – phone games, fidget spinner, counting your breath.
- Schedule in worry-free time; this can be an hour per day to immerse yourself in a task or hobby.
- Visualisation exercises can be useful in creating positive images in the mind and can keep you calm.
- Phone apps such as SAM can help you monitor your anxiety using self-help techniques.
- If you're feeling overwhelmed with your worries and need someone to talk to, you can get in touch with 24/7 support services such as Samaritans (116 123) and Childline (0800 1111).