

Anxiety in Adolescents

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Overview

Anxiety is a common feeling that everyone experiences at some stage in their life, whether it be anxiety toward sitting an exam, going on a date, or starting a new job

It is a completely natural emotional response that often helps us face certain challenges in life

However, at times one may experience symptoms of anxiety when there are no apparent reasons for it, leading to high levels of stress and every day activities becoming increasingly difficult

This is what is known as an anxiety disorder

Signs of Anxiety

Feelings of restlessness, along with excessive fears and worries without any apparent reason as to why.

Not wanting to interact with others at a social event (or having a feeling of nervousness at the thought of going).

A range of physical symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches, pains in one's limbs and back, along with muscle tension. One may also experience, shakiness, sweating, hyperventilation, rapid heartbeat, and shortness of breath.

Difficulty sleeping, and experiencing nightmares when sleeping

Changes in eating pattern (eating more/less).

Concentration difficulties, and poor school performance.

Causes

High expectations from others (parents, teachers, etc.)

Brain development and hormones

Peer pressure

Alcohol and drug use

Depression

Traumatic life experience

Anxiety does not define you

It is a feeling. It will come, but it will always go

It is human



Treatment Options

Finding the right treatment is the first step to conquering and reducing anxiety

These treatment options can range from seeing a psychologist, a social worker, or a psychiatrist, to the use of medications, and the use of various relaxation techniques, or a combination of all three

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

In this form of therapy, a therapist will help you identify what thoughts and behaviours interact to create your anxiety

The therapist will then help change this negative pattern of thinking with the aim of reducing the symptoms of anxiety

Medications

Your GP will work with you and help you find the right medication that works best for you in helping to reduce the symptoms of anxiety

Various relaxation techniques have also been shown to aid in reducing the severity of anxiety symptoms and reduce stress

These can include deep breathing exercises, meditation, and activities such as yoga

Prevention

While there is no guaranteed way to prevent the symptoms of anxiety from manifesting, there are various strategies that may be helpful in reducing the risk

Try to get approximately eight hours of sleep a night

Maintain a healthy diet and regular exercise

Find ways to reduce stress in your life

Seek help at the earliest opportunity



Relaxation Techniques