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## Managing Anxiety

**SOCIAL ANXIETY:** The diagnostic criteria include a profound fear or anxiety about social situations in which the individual may be exposed to possible scrutiny

with this disorder must demonstrate fear of interacting in peer settings, not only in interactions with adults.

Morrison (2014) suggests

*It's when you're social enough to get invited to things, but so often find yourself standing in a room where it feels like no one knows you. It's being good at conversation and bad at making close friends because you only show up when you feel "well" enough... Having anxiety means constantly managing motion that can be productive or self-destructive, depending on how much sleep you got. Depending on the day. Depending on the Earth's alignment with Mars. Depending on...*

by others. The individual fears that he/she will be humiliated, rejected, or embarrassed and avoids these situations whenever possible. Situations that cannot be avoided are experienced with intense fear and/or anxiety. Children who are diagnosed

that onset of this disorder is typically in the middle teens. Children may also be diagnosed with this disorder, but the diagnosis should **rule out separation anxiety disorder**, where the emphasis is on being separated from a parent or

## Why Counselling Can Help...

...

Individuals who suffer with anxiety are just as likely to turn to a medical doctor for relief of physical ailments as they are to seek mental health treatment. Their anxiety may increase as they age, for, as the *DSM-5* (APA, 2013) points out, the advent of chronic physical disease in normal aging, can compound health-related worries (p. 224).

The **symptoms of muscle tension and sleep disturbance** bring many to the attention of their family doctors.

Behar and colleagues (2009) have noted the relationships among physiological response, beliefs, emotions, and avoidance thinking. Several models explain how these factors interact to increase anxiety. For example, the avoidance model of worry suggests that the thoughts (verbal-linguistic) that are involved in worrying, interfere with the emotional processing that is necessary for anxiety to abate. Treatment based on this approach involves:

(a) self-monitoring of external situations that trigger anxiety

attachment figure rather than on the fear of being embarrassed or rejected by others, including peers.

Individuals can receive a specifier of '**performance only**' when the anxiety pertains to their job related activities, such as public speaking.

## Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)

involves excessive anxiety and worry that occurs more days than not for at least 6 months about a number of events or activities.

**Other symptoms include at least six** of the following symptoms: feeling keyed up or restless, being easily fatigued, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, and some form of sleep disturbance.

While the DSM-5 (APA, 2013) suggests that the prevalence is 0.9% among adolescents and 2.9% in adults (p. 223), other studies suggest that the

incidence is higher (Kessler, et al., 1994). As Mennin, et al. (2005) point out, GAD leads to serious role impairment, increased healthcare utilization, and decreased productivity.

Generalized anxiety disorder may have a strong genetic component, as up to one third of diagnosed individuals have a genetic predisposition (APA, 2013, p. 224). Research with EEG and fMRI technology suggests weakened or irregular pathways around the amygdala, suggesting that individuals have “panic buttons” that don't shut off when they should.

**Please also consider that anyone who thinks they have anxiety, should seek the professional opinion of a professional qualified to diagnosis anxiety or any other mental health condition.**

## High Functioning Anxiety

What It's Like to Have 'High-Functioning' Anxiety

## Counselling... (continued)

...

(a) self-monitoring of external situations that trigger anxiety

(b) relaxation techniques such as progressive muscle relaxation, diaphragmatic breathing, and pleasant relaxing imagery;

(c) practice sessions to build coping responses, and

d) ways to increase the clients' flexibility in considering multiple perspectives, and learning to focus on the present moment.

Especially important is helping individuals learn to process and pay attention to positive as well as negative information, and to identify positive experiences each day. Muscle relaxation techniques are also helpful in letting go of the stress and relaxing. This may be accompanied by relaxing imagery and meditation.

Emotion regulation is also practiced where emotions are managed through education and belief framing.



By Sarah Shuster, The  
Mighty, 2016

High-functioning **anxiety**  
looks like...

Achievement. Busyness.  
Perfectionism.

When it sneaks out, it  
transforms into nervous habits.

Nail biting. Foot tapping.

Running my fingers through

High-functioning anxiety  
sounds like...

*You're not good enough.  
You're a bad friend. You're  
not good at your job. You're  
wasting time. You're a waste  
of time. Your boyfriend  
doesn't love you. You're so  
needy. What are you doing  
with yourself? Why would you  
say that? What if they hate it?  
Why can't you have your shit  
together? You're going to get  
anxious and because you're  
going to get anxious, you're  
going to mess everything up.  
You're a fraud. Just good at  
faking it. You're letting*

*It's when "living with it" means learning how to sit  
with it. Practicing staying in bed a little longer.  
Challenging the mean, unrelenting voices that  
say you're only worth what you produced that  
day.*

*It means learning how to say, "I need help." Trying  
to take care of yourself without the guilt.*

my hair.

If you look close enough, you  
can see it in unanswered text  
messages. Flakiness. Nervous  
laughter. The panic that  
flashes through my eyes when  
a plan changes. When  
anything changes.

High-functioning anxiety feels  
like...

A snake slithering up my  
back, clamping its jaws shut  
where my shoulders meet my  
neck. Punch-in-the-gut  
stomach aches, like my body  
is confusing answering an  
email with being attacked by a  
lion.

*everybody down. No one here  
likes you.*

All the while, it appears  
perfectly calm.

It's always looking for the  
next outlet, something to  
channel the never-ending  
energy. Writing. Running.  
List-making. Mindless tasks  
(whatever keeps you busy).  
Doing jumping jacks in the  
kitchen. Dancing in the living  
room, pretending it's for fun,  
when really it's a  
choreographed routine of  
desperation, trying to tire out  
the thoughts stuck in your  
head.

It's silent anxiety attacks,  
hidden by smiles.

It's always being busy but also  
always avoiding, so important  
things don't get done. It's  
letting things pile up rather  
than admitting you're  
overwhelmed or in need  
of help.

It's that sharp pang of saying  
the wrong thing, the one that  
starts the cycles of thoughts.  
Because you said too much,  
and nobody cares, and it  
makes you never want to  
speak up again.

It's going back and forth  
between *everyone else has it  
together but you*, and *so many  
people have it tougher than  
you*.

*Get your act together.*

*Suck it up.*

*You're not OK, you're  
messing everything up.*

*You're totally OK, stop being  
such a baby.*

It's waking up in the middle of  
the night sobbing because the  
worst-case-scenario that just  
went through your head at  
high speed seems so real, so  
vivid, that even when it's  
proven to be untrue, it takes  
hours for your heart to slow  
down, to feel calm again.  
Because how "OK" are you  
when a day without a plan is  
enough to make you crumble?  
When empty spaces make you  
spiral at the very anticipation  
of being alone with your  
thoughts? It's feeling  
unqualified to write this piece  
because I'm getting by. It's  
when you're social enough to  
get invited to things, but so  
often find yourself standing in  
a room where it feels like no  
one knows you. It's being

good at conversation and bad at making close friends because you only show up when you feel “well” enough. Only text back when you feel ready. Because you’re afraid they’d hate you if they really knew you. That the energy would overwhelm them, and you’d lose them.

So you learn to rein it in. Channel it. Even though sometimes you do everything right (exercise, sleep, one TV show, five emails, 10 pages...) and you’re still left with racing thoughts, the panic. The *not good enoughs*.

*When will it be enough?*

Having [anxiety](#) means constantly managing motion that can be productive or self-destructive, depending on how much sleep you got. Depending on the day. Depending on the Earth’s alignment with Mars. Depending on...

It’s when “living with it” means learning how to sit with it. Practicing staying in bed a little longer.

Challenging the mean, unrelenting voices that say you’re only worth what you produced that day.

It means learning how to say, “I need help.” Trying to take care of yourself without the guilt. It means every once in a while, confiding in a friend. It means sometimes showing up even when you’re scared.

It’s when answering a text impulsively and thoughtlessly is an act of bravery.

It’s fighting against your own need to constantly prove your right to exist in this world. It’s learning how to validate your own feelings. That even though you don’t feel like you’re *enough*, and you’ll never be *enough*, it’s knowing you’re at least anxious enough to benefit from help. That admitting you need it doesn’t confirm voices’ lies. That taking a break doesn’t mean you’re a failure.

It’s finding your own humanity in the anxiety, in your weaknesses. It’s trying to let the energy inspire you, instead of bring you down. It’s forgiving yourself when it wins.

It’s a way to live, with this constant companion. Your bullying twin. Collapsible luggage you can bury away at a moment’s notice. Shove it under the bed. Pretend it’s not there until you can’t fit anymore. Until you can no longer ignore it. Until you have to face it.

A first good step is staring at it straight on and calling it by its name.

High anxiety can be a natural consequence of a busy lifestyle, but its existence is akin to the chicken and the egg. Which came first, the anxiety or the busyness? Am I always moving because I’m anxious or am I anxious because I’m always moving? Either way, it’s not a noble way to suffer. It’s not a “better” way to be anxious. Just because you’re

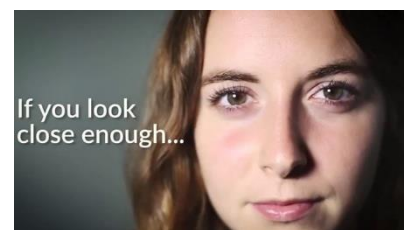
“functioning” doesn’t always mean you’re happy. And just because you’re functioning doesn’t mean you shouldn’t slow down, breathe and take one damn second to be happy the way things are.

In this very moment.

This quiet, short moment.

To remember the peace you found in that second of silence, until the electricity starts again, and you’re forced to move.

<https://themighty.com/2016/06/living-with-high-functioning-and-hidden-anxiety/>







## GUIDED AUDIO FILES TO PRACTICE MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION

THE UC SAN DIEGO CENTER FOR MINDFULNESS HAS  
PREPARED A NUMBER OF PRACTICES THAT ARE  
AVAILABLE HERE IN MP3 FORMAT.

[HTTPS://HEALTH.UCSD.EDU/SPECIALTIES/MINDFULNESS/PROGRAMS/MBSR/PAGES/AUDIO.ASPX](https://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/pages/audio.aspx)

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Niagara-area crisis services include: COAST NIAGARA Toll free 1-866-550-5205  
If you are in crisis, please call 911 or go to the nearest Hospital Emergency Room