

# Lecture #6

## Anxiety Disorders

### **Instructor:**

Selin Philip (Oommen), B.Th., M.Ed, LLPC  
Professional Counselor – Michigan Tech University  
PhD (Student) – Regent University

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# Outline

- ❑ Anxiety and types of Anxiety
- ❑ Anxiety Disorder
- ❑ Different types of anxiety disorders
- ❑ Causes of Anxiety/Anxiety disorders
- ❑ Anxiety from a Biblical perspective
- ❑ Anxiety and Christian counseling – “Agents of Hope”
- ❑ Case Study

## The Bible Says:

“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul” (Psalm 94:19)



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# What is Anxiety?



- ⌘ An inner feeling of apprehension, uneasiness, concern, worry, and/or dread that is accompanied by heightened physical arousal
- ⌘ Provides a fight-flight stress response
- ⌘ Moderate intensity
- ⌘ “the official emotion of our age”
- ⌘ “Unavoidable emotion of post-modern society”

In that case, how do we recognize anxiety disorders?



# What is Anxiety Disorder?



- ⌘ Anxious most of the time
- ⌘ Intense Anxiety
- ⌘ Terrifying, immobilizing, chronic, irrational, interferes with life functions

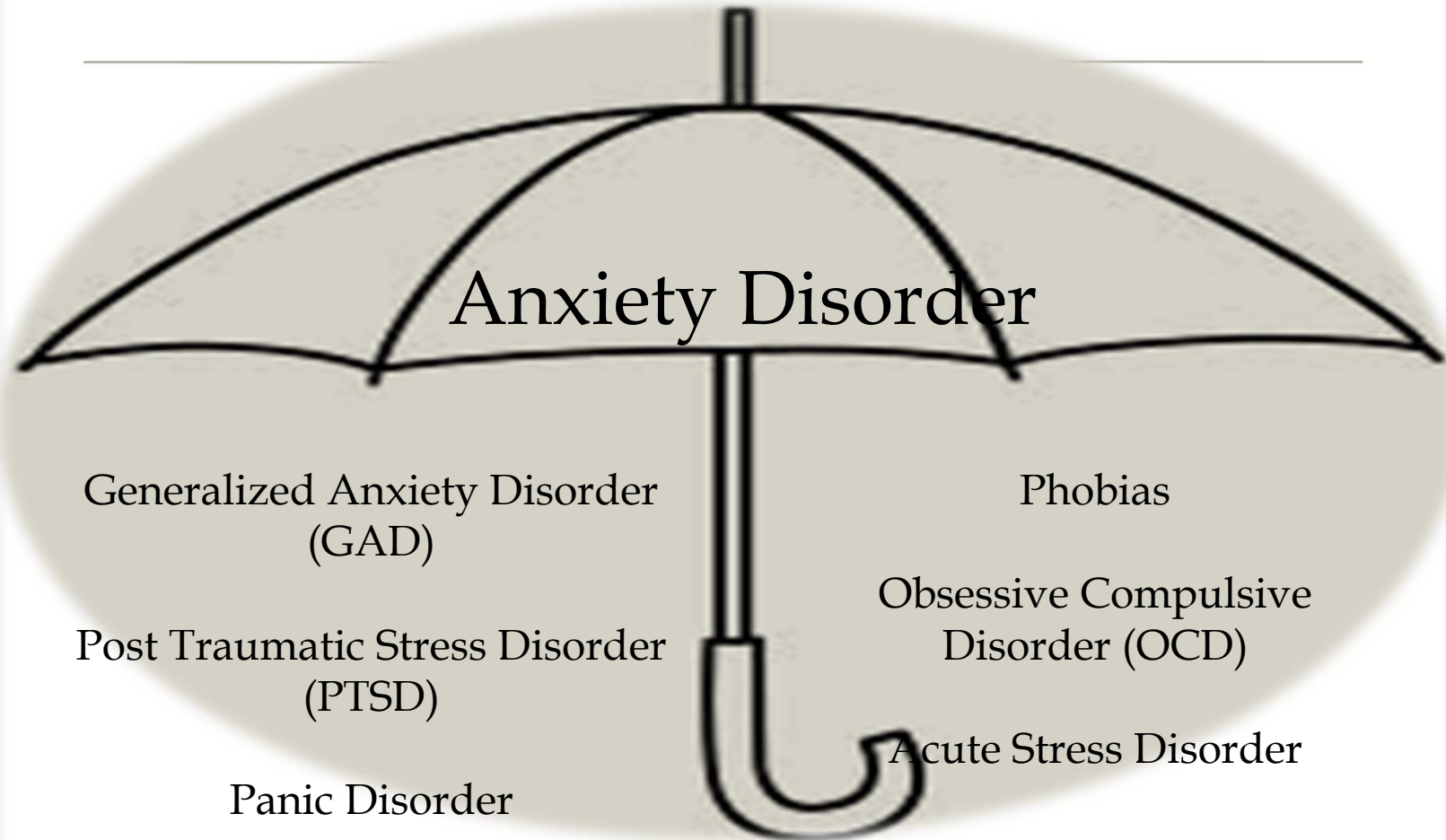


Therefore,

Two Types of Anxiety:

- ⌘ Normal Anxiety - Proportional to the danger
- ⌘ Neurotic Anxiety - Disproportional to the danger

# Types of Anxiety Disorder



# Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)



- ⌘ Chronic , persistent, and uncontrollable worry about any kind of circumstance or activity and affects 3 -4 % of the population.
- ⌘ Living on the “what if’s” - For e.g. Parents constantly terrorized by the possibility that something terrible may happen to their children
- ⌘ Somatic (Physiological) symptoms: Sweating, feeling flushed, nausea, diarrhea, cold sensation, dry mouth etc.
- ⌘ Other symptoms: easily agitated, restless, impatience, irritability, explosion of anger, insomnia (lack of sleep) etc.

# Post- traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



Symptoms: Nightmares, insomnia, difficulty to concentrate, hyper-vigilance etc.



- œ Occurs when a person has experienced strong trauma
- œ For eg; intense fear, horror and a sense of hopelessness after experiencing directly or witnessing an event that involved death, a threat of death, serious injury or a person's physical integrity
- œ Commonly experienced by soldiers from war zones, people who have experienced or witnessed physical, emotional and sexual abuse/violence



# Panic Disorder



- ∞ Feelings of terror that strike suddenly and repeatedly with no warning.
- ∞ Repeated attacks of intense fear that something bad will occur when not expected.
- ∞ People hit by panic attacks believe they are having a heart attack, losing their mind, or on the verge of death.
- ∞ Feel sweaty, weak, faint, dizzy



# Phobias



- ∞ Specific Phobia: Fear of a particular object or situation
- ∞ Social Phobia: A constant fear of being criticized and judged by others.
- ∞ Agoraphobia: Usually comes with panic disorder – Fear of being in a situation that might provoke a panic attack, or from which escape might be difficult if one occurred
- ∞ Not extreme fear, but irrational fear. For e.g; You may be able to ski the world's tallest mountains with ease but feel panic going above the 10th floor of an office building

# Obsessive – Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



❖ Anxious thoughts (Obsessions) or rituals (Compulsions) people feel they can't control

❖ For e.g. washing hands, checking stove repeatedly – But the disorder is diagnosed only when such activities consume at least an hour/day, are very distressing, interfere with daily life.

# Acute Stress Disorder



- ∞ Similar to PTSD with regard to causes and symptoms
- ∞ The duration of the symptoms is different from PTSD - Acute Stress Disorder symptoms vary from a few days to one month, whereas PTSD lasts longer
- ∞ People with Acute Stress Disorder are unable to recall important personal data, including a traumatic event.

# The Common Causes of Anxiety / Anxiety Disorders



- ∞ Threat: People , more often, feel threatened by:
- Danger (unexpected illness, war, applying for job etc.)
  - low self-esteem (any harm to self-image?),
  - separation (Death, moving away, divorce - What do I do now?),
  - values (Indian traditional/Christian values are being challenged by children),
  - unconscious influences (fear of the spiritual warfare).



# The Common Causes of Anxiety / Anxiety Disorders



☞ Conflict: Making decision of uncertain consequences

- Two Types of conflict

- Approach-Avoidance Conflict: A desire to do something and not to do it. For e.g. accepting a job offer (Approach) vs. relocating the whole family overseas (Avoidance)
- Avoidance - Avoidance Conflict: Two alternatives, but are unpleasant. For eg. Living with a chronic illness (avoidance) vs. having a surgery that is highly risky.

Anxiety persists until the choice is made, and sometimes even after the decision is made, wondering if the decision was right.

# The Common Causes of Anxiety / Anxiety Disorders



## ∞ Fear :

- Irrational beliefs ➡ Fear ➡ Anxiety
    - “Everything is sure to get worse”, “whatever I do cannot change my circumstances, “
    - Different types of fears – fear of failure, the future, war, rejection, intimacy, success, conflict, sickness, death etc.
- BUT
- Anxiety can arise even in the absence of any danger

# The Common Causes of Anxiety / Anxiety Disorders



∞ Unmet needs : What are the basic needs of human beings?

- Survival (the need to have continued existence)
- Security (the need for emotional, economic & spiritual stability)
- Social (the need for intimacy/friendship)
- Significance (the need to amount to something & be worthwhile)
- Self-fulfillment (the need to achieve fulfilling goals)
- Selfhood (the need for a sense of identity)



# The Common Causes of Anxiety / Anxiety Disorders

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## ∞ Individual differences :

- ❖ Some are easily anxious
- ❖ Some do not feel anxious at all
- ❖ Others are in between

### Why do these differences exist?

- ❖ Past learning
- ❖ Personality
- ❖ Social environment
- ❖ Physiology
- ❖ Theology

# Anxiety & the Bible



∞ In the Bible, Anxiety is used in two ways:

- Healthy Concern :
  - Paul was NOT anxious about the possibility of being persecuted for the gospel, but he was anxious (concerned) about the welfare of the churches (2 Corinthians 11:28). Timothy – “genuinely anxious” (Phil. 2:20, RSV) or concerned
- Fret & Worry:
  - the Psalmist : “anxiety was great within me”;
  - Sermon on the mount –
  - “Do not be anxious about anything” (Phil. 4: 6-7)

# Anxiety & Christian Counselor



- ☞ Recognizing the counselor's own anxieties: Not to confuse our own fears or anxiety with those of the counselee
- ☞ Calming tension: Help people feel more relaxed and in control, and ensure that we are calm, caring and reassuring
- ☞ Showing love: "the greatest therapeutic force of all"  
- Love can drive out fear and anxiety from counselees

# Anxiety & Christian Counselor



- ∞ Identifying causes: Uncover the sources of anxiety, rather than telling the counselee, “buck up” or “stop being anxious”.
- Observation : Does the counselee show evidence of added anxiety (shifting position, deep breathing, perspiration) when certain topics are discussed?
  - Reflection: Ask questions, such as, “when are you most anxious?, when are you not anxious? Etc.
  - Contemplation: Remind ourselves the causes of anxiety we discussed before. Use loving patience, never hurry in knowing what is causing anxiety.

# Anxiety & Christian Counselor



∞ Making interventions: Anxiety differs from person to person, therefore, intervention will need to be different

- Biological Intervention – medication if the causes and needs to be treated medically
- Behavioral Intervention – teaching counselees how to be more relaxed in the midst of anxiety-producing situations
- Environmental Intervention – help change counselee's life style, career direction etc.

# Anxiety & Christian Counselor



## ∞ Encouraging Action:

- The goal is NOT to eliminate all anxiety, but to assist counselees in discovering the sources of anxiety and how to cope
- Teaching that real courage involves a willingness to move ahead even when they are fearful and anxious.

## ∞ Giving Support:

- Provide a caring support of a warm relationship

# Anxiety & Christian Counselor



In all the above.....

- Provide a Christian response: Focus on activities and thoughts that reduce anxiety
  - Encourage to rejoice: This is a command, repeated twice in Phil 4:4
  - Be gentle: A negative condemning perspective on life builds anxiety
  - Pray: Phil. 4:6 – pray about everything
  - Think: Phil. 4:8 – encourage positive, biblically based thinking
  - Act: “put it into practice” – anxiety reduction involves obedience & godly behavior in the midst of anxiety

# Conclusion

*"The Counselor, the Holy Spirit,  
whom the Father will send in  
my name, will teach you all  
things and will remind you of  
everything I have said to you."*

- John 14:26

- ∞ Anxiety – a basic part of all psychological problems
- ∞ Warns people of danger, but harmful when it immobilizes people
- ∞ Teach Prevention : Trust in God, learn to cope, keep things in perspective, & reach out to others

## Why Christian Counseling is unique?

- ∞ Teaches counselees to give God first priority and rest assured that their needs will be supplied, and will be no need to worry.



# Case Study – Jacob & Ancy



☞ Jacob is a 40 year old married Indian man who works as a sales manager for a shipping company in the US. In an effort to succeed at his job, he spends long hours at work. This, however, affects his family life. His absence at home aggravates his wife Ancy, adding more stress to his already stressful job. In addition, his 13 year old son Sammy is becoming more aggressive, getting lower grades than usual, doesn't even talk to his parents anymore, and is constantly on the internet, which makes Jacob and his wife worried. His wife believes it's a result of Jacob not being home as often and enforcing basic home rules such as getting homework done and disciplining him. On the other hand, Jacob feels that he is working hard to support his family, and that his wife should have more control over their son and be more understanding of the hard work Jacob is putting into his job. As a result of the family's situation, there is a lot of tension at home, and Jacob is becoming more and more stressed out each day.

# Case Study – Jacob & Ancy



☞ One night, Ancy walks past Sammy's room and sees the lights on. She walks in to see him on the computer at 3 am. In shock and anger, she yells at him for being online so late at night, but Sammy tells his mom to calm down and says he's doing homework. Every night, for the next few days, Ancy secretly walks past Sammy's room at night and finds that he's always on the internet late at night. One day, when he leaves to go to school, she finds his computer on and checks his internet history to find nothing related to school, and she is shocked that he's been wasting his time on the internet so late and lying to her about it.

Ancy doesn't want to tell Jacob about the problem in an effort to prevent further problems; she decides that she should contact their local pastor to help their son. She explains Sammy's issue to their pastor, who was surprised to hear about the changes in Sammy's life, and he himself became worried about Sammy's condition as well the family as a whole. He assured the family that he would remember them in his prayers. The pastor told his wife about this family. She told one of her closest friends who was also a member of the church.

# Case Study – Jacob & Ancy



- ∞ Is this family struggling with anxiety? If yes / no, why?
- ∞ How will you work with them in light of what we learned about Christian lay counselor should do to help people with anxiety issues?

# References



American Psychiatric Association. (2000). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-IV-TR. Washington, DC.

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# CONTACT INFORMATION



∞ Agape Partners International  
P.O. Box 550141  
Waltham, MA 02452

∞ Phone: **781-330-0569** | **516-855-8093**  
Email: [counsel@agapepartners.org](mailto:counsel@agapepartners.org)  
Web: [www.agapepartners.org](http://www.agapepartners.org)

∞ Technical Support: [support@agapepartners.org](mailto:support@agapepartners.org)  
∞ **717-546-4144**