

Anxiety Disorders

Definition: While anxiety is a normal reaction to stress and can be beneficial in some situations, an Anxiety Disorder involves excessive fear or anxiety that is out of proportion to the situation and hinders ability to function normally. The term includes generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia, social anxiety disorder, separation anxiety, and specific phobias.

What symptoms of your anxiety disorder might be:

- Ongoing worry and tension
- Restlessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Physical symptoms such as palpitations, sweating, trembling or shaking, chest pain, nausea (these symptoms can be so severe that a person may believe they are having a heart attack)
- Persistent fear of a specific situation or activity, such as an exam
- Extreme fear of public speaking or meeting new people

How to be successful in college:

- Don't avoid or procrastinate over situations that cause anxiety (skipping class, staying in bed, putting off homework, etc.) because this increases anxiety over time
- Practice taking small steps to approach anxiety-provoking situations
- Approach your instructor about your anxiety (even if it's by email)—they may be able to help alleviate some of the fear
- Desensitize yourself to spaces where you will have to function by showing up early when there is no one there
- Practice self-care: healthy eating habits, consistent exercise, regular sleep
- Meditate—there are numerous phone apps that can guide you in this
- Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation
- Practice positive self-talk and visualization
- Find resources on campus such as Counseling and DSP
- If you've been diagnosed with an Anxiety Disorder, continue to seek medical help from a mental health provider