What is an Anxiety Disorder?

Most common of all mental disorders and frequently run in families

Fear: feeling that arises from real danger
Anxiety: arises from unspecific cause, develop during adolescence
Women are more likely than men to have anxiety occurrences.
Signs and symptoms of panic attack:
sudden, spontaneous episodes accompanied by symptoms such as: dyspnea, dizziness or faintness, palpitations, tachycardia, trembling or shaking, sweating, choking, abdominal distress or nausea, surrealization, numbness or tingling sensation, flushes or chills, chest pain or pressure in chest, feeling of impending death, fear of going crazy or doing something uncontrolled.
Types of Anxiety and Related Disorders
Panic Disorder
Differentiation from panic attack.
Increased frequency and redundancy of attacks.
At least four panic attack symptoms develop abruptly, crescendo within 10 minutes and typically last another 10 minutes.
Two main subtypes of panic disorder:
A. panic disorder without agoraphobia
B. panic disorder with agoraphobia
Agoraphobia

Ancient Greek term - fear of an open marketplace

Agoraphobia today describes severe and pervasive anxiety about being in situations from which escape might be difficult.

Avoidance of situations such as being alone outside of the home.

Paralyzing fear of traveling in car, bus, or airplane

Usually (but not always) a secondary occurrence of unexpected, reoccurring panic attacks (Individuals may begin to avoid places or situations in anticipation of a dreaded, spontaneous panic attack).

Agoraphobic individuals often require presence of companion in order to avoid anxiety.

Fears typically consistent with agoraphobia include:

Fear of being outside home alone

Fear of being in a crowd or standing in line

Fear of being on a bridge or other high places

Fear of traveling on bus, train, or in automobile

Fear of being “trapped” in room full of people (church, restaurant, office, etc.)
Social Phobia
Persistent fear of one or more social or performance situations in which a person is exposed to unfamiliar people or to possible scrutiny by others
Fears he/she will act in a way (or show anxiety) that will be humiliating or embarrassing.
Fear of fainting, losing control of bowel or bladder function.
Fear of having one’s mind go blank when faced with dreaded social situation.
Exposure to feared social situation invariably provokes anxiety, which may take form of situationally bound panic attack.
Children may express fear by crying or exhibiting tantrum-like behavior.
Adults either avoid dreaded social situation or tolerate it with great discomfort.
Social phobia typically begins in childhood or adolescence and, for many it is associated with the traits of shyness and social inhibition.
Public humiliation, severe embarrassment, or other stressful experience may initiate or provoke a social phobia.
Social Phobia is more common in women than in men.
Once established, complete remissions are uncommon without treatment.
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Anxiety and behavioral disturbances that develop during or shortly following extreme trauma and lasts more than one month

Features: hyperarousal, emotional detachment, avoidance of situations that elicit memories of trauma
**Acute Stress Disorder** follows a traumatic event but symptoms last from two days to one month. Psychological trauma initially keeps individual from pursuing some necessary task (i.e. obtaining necessary medical or legal assistance).
Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Symptoms may include muscle tension, fatigue, insomnia, irritability. Accompanying symptoms: easy fatigability, poor concentration and restlessness. Excessive worries pertain to many areas including work, relationships, money matters, well-being of one’s family, potential misfortunes, and impending deadlines. GAD occurs more often in women.
Obsessive-compulsive disorder

Typically begins in adolescence to young adulthood.

An anxiety disorder in which people have unwanted and repeated thoughts, feelings, ideas (obsessions) or behaviors that make them feel driven to do something (compulsions).

Often the person carries out the behaviors to get rid of the obsessive thoughts, but this only provides temporary relief. Not performing the obsessive rituals can cause great anxiety.
Examples: germ contamination, doubts, unbending order or symmetry
Compulsions

Repetitive behaviors that reduce anxiety that accompanies an obsession or 'prevent' a dreaded event from happening

Examples: overt behaviors (hand washing, counting, etc)
Rituals take long periods of time
Resources and References

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
Source: Help Guide, a trusted non-profit resource
Symptoms and treatment of compulsive behavior and obsessive thoughts
http://www.helpguide.org/mental/obsessive-compulsive_disorder_ocd.htm

Employment Statistics
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics
United States Department of Labor
http://www.bls.gov

Anxiety Disorders
Source: National Institute of Mental Health
Transforming the understanding and treatment of mental illness
http://www.nimh.nih.gov

Panic Disorder and Agoraphobia
Source: Anxiety Disorders Association of America
Anxiety disorders are real, serious and treatable
http://www.adaa.org

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