

# Overview of Common Types of Anxiety Disorders

## Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

- Excessive and persistent worry surrounding circumstances found in everyday routine life that is out of proportion for the event. These individual's fear and worry significantly impact their daily life and functioning.
- Can occur along with other anxiety disorders, depression, substance use, and more.
- GAD affects more than 6.8 million adults in the United States according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America
- Symptoms can include:
  - Restlessness and tension
  - Feeling on-edge and uneasy
  - Fatigue or irritability
  - Difficulty concentrating and controlling feelings of worry
  - Trouble sleeping

## Specific Phobias

- A specific phobia is a specific object or situation that an individual excessively fears and may avoid.
- Common specific phobias are flying, heights, enclosed spaces, and spiders or snakes
- Specific phobias may evoke panic attacks in some individuals.
- Specific phobias affect around 19 million adults in the United States according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.
- Symptoms include:
  - Irrational or persistent worry about encountering feared object or situation
  - Actively avoids feared object or situation
  - Experiences intense anxiety upon encountering feared object of situation

## Panic Disorder

- Individuals with panic disorder have reoccurring, unexpected attacks of intense fear or terror called panic attacks.
- Panic attacks happen quickly and reach their peak within minutes. They can occur at random or be triggered by a situation or feared object.
- During a panic attack, several symptoms may occur together:
  - Chest pain, heart palpitations, and shortness of breath
  - Sweating, trembling, and dizziness or light-headed
  - Numbness or tingling
  - Chills or hot flashes
  - Nausea or abdominal pain
  - Feelings of impending doom, detachment, losing control, or dying
- Due to the nature of panic attacks, experiencing an attack may lead to a fear of an attack happening again, leading to an avoidance of situations or locations in which an attack occurred.
- Panic disorder affects around 6 million adults in the United States according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

## Agoraphobia

- The fear of experiencing situations where escape may be difficult and make the individuals feel embarrassed or helpless.
- Individuals with agoraphobia experience fear in two or more of the following situations:
  - Using public transportation
  - Being in open spaces or enclosed places
  - Standing in line or being in a crowd
  - Being outside their home alone
- Some agoraphobic individuals may develop a fixed route or territory as a safety zone, and to travel outside of it induces intense anxiety or a panic attack.
- In severe cases, individuals experiencing agoraphobia may become home-bound.

## Separation Anxiety Disorder

- An individual with separation anxiety disorder experiences excessive fear or anxiety about separation from those whom the individual is attached.
- Individuals with separation anxiety disorder worry that their attachment figures may come to harm or that they may lose their attachment figure.
- Because of this fear, individuals experiencing separation anxiety disorder may have nightmares about separation and trouble being without their attachment figure. They may also experience physical, anxiety symptoms when separation occurs or is anticipated to occur.
- The fear or anxiety persists longer than what is appropriate for the individual's age and interferes with daily functioning.
- Separation anxiety disorder can affect children and adults.

## Social Anxiety Disorder

- The intense fear of, or anxiety around, social and performance situations.
- Individuals with social anxiety disorder fear being judged, or negatively evaluated by others, and feeling embarrassed or self-conscious in social situations.
- Situations that may induce fear or anxiety is meeting new people, public speaking, or eating/drinking in public.
- Social Anxiety Disorder affects around 15 million adults according to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

## Selective Mutism

- When an individual fails to speak in specific social situations, such as school, despite having the capability and normal language skills.
- Selective mutism often occurs in children and before the age of 5.
- Selective mutism is linked to shyness, fear of social embarrassment, withdrawal, clingy behavior, and temper tantrums.