



# Generalized Anxiety Disorder

## Did you know?

- The symptoms of anxiety include:
  - \* unrealistic or excessive worry or fears
  - \* exaggerated startle reactions
  - \* sleep disturbances
  - \* ritualistic behaviors (i.e. excessive hand washing, counting things)
  - \* shakiness and trembling
  - \* racing and pounding heart
  - \* high pulse and/or breathing rate
  - \* muscle aches and/or tension
- Generalized anxiety (GAD) affects about **4 million adults** in America; about twice as many women as men.
- The disorder comes on gradually and can begin across the life cycle, though **the risk is highest between childhood and middle age.**
- It is diagnosed when someone spends at least 6 months worrying excessively about a number of everyday problems. There is evidence that genes play a modest role.
- GAD is **commonly treated with psychotherapy and medication**
- GAD rarely occurs alone; however; it is **usually accompanied by another anxiety disorder, depression, or substance abuse.**

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# Clinical Depression

## Did you know?

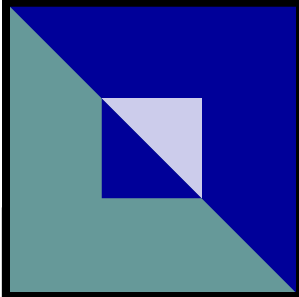
- Depression is diagnosed if a person experiences 1) persistent feelings of sadness or anxiety or 2) loss of pleasure or interest in usual activities in addition to five or more of the following symptoms for at least 2 consecutive weeks:
  - \* Changes in appetite that result in weight losses or gains not related to dieting
  - \*Insomnia or oversleeping
  - \*Loss of energy or increased fatigue
  - \*Restlessness or irritability
  - \*Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
  - \*Difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
- **Sadness and depression are not the same.** While feelings of sadness will lessen with time, **the disorder of depression can continue for months, or even years.**
- Clinical depression **affects twice as many women as men.**
- **Half of all adults with depression report onset before age 20.**
- It is estimated that **1 out of 4 women and 1 out of 10 men** will suffer from depression in their lifetime, and each year it affects nearly 1 in 10 (17 million) Americans.
- Depression is **among the most treatable** of mental disorders. The majority (**80%-90%**) of people who receive treatment experience **significant improvement**, and almost all individuals gain some relief from their symptoms.

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# Reducing Negative Thoughts

**STOP:** **STOP** before you “react.” Instead think about your response.  
**STOP** before you begin to “awfulize” and “catastrophize.”  
**STOP** breaks the old negative stress cycle or pattern.

**BREATHE:** Breathe diaphragmatically to keep from tensing or holding your breath.  
It is *impossible* to be tense and relaxed at the same time.

**REFLECT:** Appraise the situation.  
What is the concern? Am I threatened?  
What are your automatic thoughts and exaggerated beliefs?  
What’s the worse that could happen?  
Can I handle it?  
What is the practical problem? Am I jumping to conclusions?  
Is there another way to look at the situation?  
**AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS OR NEGATIVE THINKING**  
Identify your automatic thoughts in specific situations.  
Do your thoughts have a customary inclination, pattern, style?  
Do your thoughts consistently seem to exaggerate or distort the situation?  
Do you usually blame yourself?

**CHOOSE:** What do I want?  
What can I do...what coping behaviors work here?  
Do I have the time, skills, and desire to achieve a solution?  
What am I avoiding?

*Situation:* Briefly describe a situation that caused you stress this week.  
*Physical Response:* Describe how you felt physically in the situation.  
*Automatic Thoughts:* Write down your automatic thoughts in this situation.  
*Moods and emotions:* Describe how you felt emotionally in the situation.  
*Exaggerated Beliefs:* Describe the exaggerated beliefs behind your automatic thoughts.  
*Behavior:* Describe how you behaved during or immediately after the situation.