



FACT SHEET:

## Men and Anxiety

### How is Anxiety Different From Just Feeling Stress and Worry?

Anxious feelings are normal reactions to a high-pressure situation such as a job interview, sitting exams, or a public speaking engagement. However, some people experience anxious feelings for no obvious reason or the feelings continue long after the stressful event has passed. These feelings can seem uncontrollable and can interfere with a person's ability to cope with daily life.

### What Are The Common Symptoms of Anxiety?

The symptoms of anxiety are not always that obvious. They often emerge gradually and, because everybody experiences the feelings of anxiety, it can be hard to know how much is too much. However, common symptoms include:

- Hot and cold flushes
- Racing heart
- Tightening of the chest
- Snowballing worries
- Obsessive thinking and compulsive behaviour

### Four Common Mistakes Men Make with Anxiety

1

Men attempt to fight their feelings and tough it out, hoping their feelings will go away. Meanwhile they fail to accept the effect this can have on their mental health and their relationship with their loved ones.

2

Men seek out ways to dull, numb or distract from their feelings with potentially addictive behaviour such as heavy drinking or gambling.

3

Men who are less likely to seek out support risk becoming significantly isolated.

4

Men's focus on pursuing success can create unrealistic expectations and negative self-talk, which can increase feelings of anxiety.



## Tips to Overcome Anxiety

### Acceptance and Willingness

The first step is to accept you have a struggle with anxiety and be willing to seek out support. Finding a professional counsellor or psychologist will enable you to learn new ways to cope.

### Friendships

'Bottling things up' can be a specifically male way of coping and is likely to keep anxiety levels high. Utilizing a social network of supportive and understanding friends reduces isolation and increases acceptance and validation.

### Be Active and Healthy

Regular exercise and staying busy with things you enjoy can help to reduce the overactive mind. Exercise and eating a healthy diet will improve your overall health and wellbeing.

### Relaxation

Often anxiety is associated with over thinking or a wandering mind. Learning or taking part in relaxation activities such as meditation, yoga, listening to a relaxation CD, or having a massage are all great ways to slow the mind and the body.

### Learning

Do some reading and research about anxiety. Learn about the fight-flight response, which is the way the body deals with danger. Educating yourself is an important way to deal with symptoms.

## Fast Facts



- ✓ Anxiety is a normal reaction
- ✓ Anxiety that is uncontrollable can interfere with your life
- ✓ Anxiety often emerges gradually but then doesn't subside
- ✓ Anxiety in men can result in addictive behaviour or mental health issues
- ✓ Anxiety can be overcome by exercise, friendships + relaxation together with counselling



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