

Module 9: Psychological Disorders and Treatment
Topic 2 Content: Anxiety Disorders Notes

Introduction



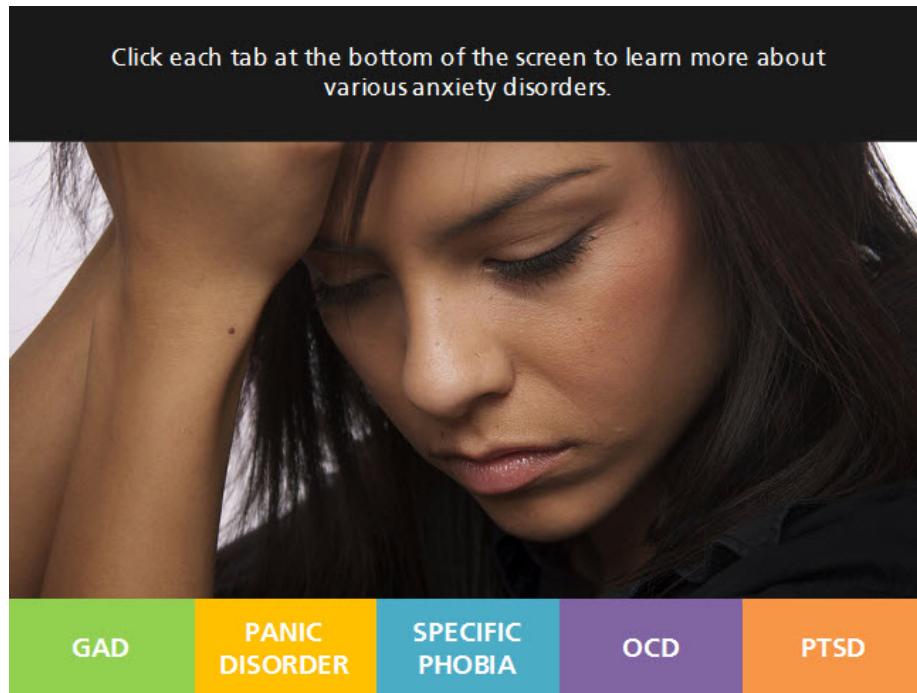
Anxiety Disorders

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Click each tab at the bottom of the screen to learn more about various anxiety disorders.

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General Anxiety Disorder

GENERAL ANXIETY DISORDER

- Chronic worry, concern, tension, inability to relax

Click each marker to learn more about this disorder.

- i* Causes
- i* Physical Symptoms
- i* Emotions
- i* Worries
- i* Gender

MENU

General Anxiety Disorder, or GAD, is marked by chronic worry, concern, tension, and an overall inability to relax. The worry is exaggerated and can be about everyday occurrences, including schedules, money, health, or relationships.

Causes

This worry is not necessarily the result of anything specific that has happened; thus, the term “generalized” is used. The cause of GAD cannot be determined or traced to a specific problem.

Physical Symptoms

The anxiety experienced with GAD creates a variety of physical symptoms like sleep difficulties, sweating, muscle tension, restlessness, fatigue, or headaches.

Emotions

Emotionally, a person with GAD can become irritable, have a tough time relaxing, and often feel on edge.

Worries

Someone experiencing this anxiety disorder will have a difficult time controlling worries that persist.

Gender

GAD is more common in women than men and usually first appears during childhood or adolescence. GAD often accompanies depression as well.

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Specific Phobias

SPECIFIC PHOBIAS

- Fears are learned
- Phobias are irrational fears, impact behavior, and remain over time

Click each marker to learn more phobias.

- [Common Examples](#)
- [Development](#)
- [Panic Attacks](#)

MENU

Are you afraid of spiders? What about heights or enclosed spaces? Most people fear something. Fears are learned due to experienced or observed associations. However, phobias go beyond everyday fears. They are irrational fears that affect a person's behavior and often persist over time.

Common Examples

Some of the most common phobias include social situations, heights, public speaking, snakes, and death.

Development

Most develop during adolescence or adulthood, and studies show that one in ten individuals has a phobia.

Panic Attacks

The fear associated with a phobia can trigger a panic attack.

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Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

- Obsessions - irrational thoughts
- Compulsions - irrational behavior

Click each marker to learn more about this disorder.

- i* Obsessions
- i* Compulsions
- i* Common Obsessions
- i* Brain Differences

MENU

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or OCD, is marked by reoccurring irrational thoughts called *obsessions*, and reoccurring irrational behaviors called *compulsions*.

Obsessions

Most people who suffer from OCD are aware their behavior does not make sense. Despite these distressing thoughts and behaviors, however, the cycle persists and can interfere with the sufferer's routine, activities, and relationships. In addition, many people struggle with more than one obsession and compulsion.

Compulsions

Typically, the compulsive thoughts are intrusive and recurring. Sufferers call it the "OCD voice," which does not subside until they carry out the irrational behavior. By completing the compulsive behavior, anxiety from the obsession becomes temporarily reduced.

Common Obsessions

Some common obsessions include cleanliness or fear of contamination, persistent thoughts about safety, religion, or harming another person. Common compulsions involve hoarding, excessive cleaning, counting, symmetry and order, and repeating a behavior a certain way or number of times.

Brain Differences

Recent studies reveal that specific brain differences exist in people diagnosed with OCD. It appears that a part of the brain necessary for the normal flow of thoughts gets "stuck," causing thoughts to repeat. Imagine a needle on an old record player that gets stuck.

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Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

- Traumatic event followed by flashbacks, persistent memories, scary thoughts, or recurring dreams

Click each marker to learn more about this disorder.

- [Effects](#)
- [Wars](#)
- [Other Causes](#)
- [Reoccurrence](#)



MENU

PTSD refers to a disorder marked by a traumatic event that is followed by flashbacks, persistent memories, frightening thoughts, and recurring dreams.

Effects

People suffering from PTSD also have a low tolerance for loud noises. They report feeling numb and detached emotionally toward those they love, and they may also suffer from depression, anxiety, or substance abuse.

Wars

During World War I, these symptoms were experienced by soldiers who fought in the trenches. Their condition was called “shell shock.” Soldiers returning from the Vietnam War also shared many similar symptoms. As a result, PTSD was studied in greater detail. It is estimated that 35% of Vietnam soldiers suffered from PTSD.

Other Causes

Although PTSD is usually associated with war, it can be the result of any type of traumatic experience, because trauma is not just confined to the battlefield. Non-combat sufferers can range from survivors of natural disasters, victims of violent crime, or witnesses to something upsetting.

Reoccurrence

Those suffering from PTSD find themselves reliving the trauma through nightmares or daily thoughts containing the memory of the event. Therefore, individuals diagnosed with this anxiety disorder might avoid a place or situation that reminds them of the trauma and brings back frightening memories. The nightmares might also affect sleep.

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Panic Disorder

PANIC DISORDER

- Fear of an impending panic attack

Click each marker to learn more phobias.

- i** Causes
- i** Time and Intensity
- i** Agoraphobia

MENU

Panic Disorder is marked by a fear of an impending panic attack

Causes

The attacks can come unexpectedly or be the result of a trigger. Sometimes even the fear of an impending attack can cause one to occur. One person in seven will experience a panic attack in his or her lifetime.

Time and Intensity

Although most panic attacks last a few minutes, they seem much longer to the sufferer. Since the symptoms are intense, some people believe they are having a heart attack instead of a panic attack, and thus fear becomes even further escalated. In fact, people may become so afraid of having a future attack, they begin to retreat and avoid unfamiliar or even everyday places like the park, grocery store, or mall.

Agoraphobia

Agoraphobia is when they eventually restrict themselves to their home. Panic attacks can be associated with other disorders such as depression.