THAT IS MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE U.S. WHO SUBSCRIBED TO Netflix™ IN 2015.¹

OVER 21 PERCENT OF AMERICAN ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-64 WILL HAVE DIAGNOSABLE ANXIETY DISORDERS IN A GIVEN YEAR (THAT’S OVER 42.5 MILLION)²

#mentalillnessfeelslike

▶ Speak up about your own experiences
▶ Help others who may be struggling to explain what they are going through to figure out if they are showing signs of a mental illness
▶ Break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illnesses
▶ Show others that they are not alone in their feelings and their symptoms

ANXIETY DISORDERS ARE REAL ILLNESSES THAT ARE BASED ON EXTREME FEAR. THEY AFFECT:

THE BODY
Causing: chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, stomach discomfort, nausea, fatigue, trembling, muscle tension, headaches, tingling in the hands and feet, or trouble sleeping.

THOUGHTS
Causing: exaggerated worry about everyday life, fear of dying, repeated unwanted thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks, irritability, anger, trouble focusing, numbing of emotions, or anticipating the worst outcome to a situation even though it is unlikely.

BEHAVIORS
Causing: rituals that seem impossible to control, being easily startled, avoidance of people, places and/or things, limiting life experiences, inability to sit still, easily losing one’s temper, or being snappy with others.

HAVING AN ANXIETY DISORDER IS NOT:
▶ Just stressing out
▶ Being a “neat freak”
▶ Being excitable
▶ Having feelings of anticipation before a big event
▶ An excuse to get attention
▶ Being nervous with good reason
▶ Fear in a dangerous situation
▶ Being shy
▶ A choice
▶ A sign of weakness
▶ A character flaw
**SCREENING CAN HELP TREAT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES EARLY**

If you think you may be showing signs of an anxiety disorder, take a screen at WWW.MHAGEORGIA.ORG.

A screening is not a diagnosis, but it can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.

**SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS INCLUDE:**

- Panic Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Phobias
- General Anxiety Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder

To learn more visit: www.mhageorgia.org

**TIPS FOR TACKLING ANXIETY**

1. **Call someone you trust.** Let them know that your anxiety has gotten the best of you and that you need their support. That may mean asking them to stay on the line with you until you’ve worked through your symptoms, or coming over to keep you company and help put your mind at ease.

2. **Do something physical.** Take a brisk walk, go up and down the stairs, or do some jumping jacks. Give your body a way to physically use up some of its excess energy.

3. **Distract yourself—try an adult coloring book, knit or crochet, draw.** Repetitive activities can have a calming effect similar to meditation. For free, printable coloring pages, visit www.coloring-pages-adults.com.

4. **Go somewhere safe and quiet, and challenge yourself to have a full-blown anxiety attack.** Many people find that directly challenging themselves to have an anxiety attack actually has the opposite effect.

5. **Deep breathing can help.** One popular technique is belly breathing: Lay on your back and breathe in through your nose, watching your belly rise as you inhale. Hold your breath for a few seconds then exhale deeply through your mouth, watching your belly fall as you exhale. Repeat until you notice yourself feeling more relaxed. Alternatively, singing can also regulate your breathing if you find yourself starting to hyperventilate.

6. **Write it down.** Getting thoughts out of your head and onto paper can be helpful. This could be making a to-do list to organize your thoughts if your mind is racing and it’s hard to focus, or writing in a journal to express what is bothering you.

7. **Focus on things you can control and take action.** Pick out your clothes for the week, plan your meals for the next couple days, organize your desk—taking care of small things empowers you to take charge when it comes to larger tasks.

**Sources**


**Mental Health America of Georgia (MHA of GA) strives to be an innovative leader in mental health system transformation. MHA of GA is dedicated to enhancing mental health and wellness of Georgians through education, outreach and advocacy. We envision that Georgians will have access to mental wellness resources and thrive in compassionate communities.**