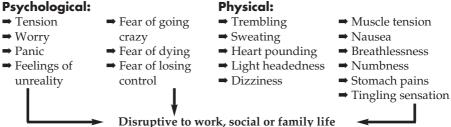
## **Anxiety**

# Common symptoms Psychological:



### Anxiety disorders are common and treatable

Anxiety *does not* mean weakness
Anxiety *does not* mean losing the mind
Anxiety *does not* mean personality problems
Severe anxiety *does* mean a disorder which requires treatment.

### Common forms of anxiety

Generalized anxiety

disorder:

- → Persistent/ excessive worry→ Physical
- → Physical symptoms.

Panic disorder:

- → Sudden intense fear
- → Physical symptoms
- → Psychological symptoms.

Social phobia:

- → Fear/avoidance social situations
- → Fear of being criticized
- → Physical symptoms
- → Psychological symptoms.

Agoraphobia:

- → Fear/avoidance of situations where escape is difficult
- → Leaving familiar places alone
- → Physical symptoms
- → Psychological symptoms.

### What treatments can help?

Both therapies are most often needed:

### Supportive therapy for:

- → slow breathing/relaxation
- → exposure to feared situations
- → realistic/positive thinking
- ⇒ problem solving.

#### Medication:

- **⇒** for severe anxiety
- → for panic attacks.

#### **About medication**

#### Short term

- ⇒ use for severe anxiety
- ⇒ can be addictive and ineffective when used in the long term

#### Side-effects

**⇒** are important to report

### Ongoing review

of medication use is recommended.

#### Counselling

→ (emotional support and problem-solving) is always recommended with medication

### Slow breathing to reduce physical symptoms of anxiety

- ➡ Breath in for three seconds and out for three seconds, and pause for three seconds before breathing in again.
- → Practise 10 minutes morning or night (five minutes is better than nothing).
- Use before and during situations that make you anxious.
- → Regularly check and slow down breathing throughout the day.

### Change attitudes and ways of thinking

'My chest is hurting and I can't breathe, I must be having a

heart attack.'

'I hope they don't ask me a question, I won't know what

to say.'

'My partner has not called as planned. Something terrible must have happened.'

Instead:

Instead:

'I am having a panic attack, I should slow my breathing down and I will feel better.'

'Whatever I say will be OK, I am not being judged. Others are not being judged, why should

I be?'

Instead: 'They might not have been able

to get to a phone. It is very unlikely that something terrible has happened.'

### Exposure to overcome anxiety and avoidance

Easy stage Moderate stage Hard stage (eg walking on own) (eg lunch with a friend) (eg shopping with a friend)

- **→** Use slow breathing to control anxiety
- → Do not move to the next stage until anxiety decreases to an acceptable level.