



GLASGOW ANXIETY & DEPRESSION
COUNSELLING SERVICE

GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER

What is Generalised Anxiety Disorder?

We all experience anxious periods now and again. Like Everyday Anxiety Information Sheet highlighted, some anxiety, worry and/or nervousness is 'normal' and can even act as a motivator sometimes (e.g. deadlines at work).

However, when we begin experiencing excessive, continuous and/or distressing levels of constant anxiety worry and/or nervousness, it is possible that we may be experiencing a condition called Generalised Anxiety Disorder or GAD. What distinguishes GAD from 'normal' everyday levels of anxiety or worry? Well, individual's experiencing problematic, and often severe, anxiety can experience high levels of stress, nervousness and anxiety and worry about a wide range of things over a long period of time.

Anxiety symptoms can be persistent, continuous, and pervasive and affect many areas of the individual's life and wellbeing, often with serious health, psychological, emotional, social and even occupational consequences.

Signs and Symptoms of Generalised Anxiety Disorder

Some of the signs and symptoms to look out for include:

- Persistent worrying or anxiety about a number of areas that are out of proportion to the impact of the events/situations
- Difficulty controlling worrying/worrying thoughts
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Trembling, shaking or twitching
- Restlessness, irritation, agitation, feeling pumped up or on edge

- Tiring easily/fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing or feeling your mind is a blank
- Impending sense of doom or sense of dread
- Muscle tension, aches and pains
- Difficulty/inability to relax
- Difficulty handling uncertainty, unknown or unpredictability
- Once you start worrying, it's difficult to stop
- Worrying about worrying
- Dry mouth
- Nervousness or being easily startled
- Perceiving situations or events as threatening even when they aren't
- A noticeable strong, fast and/or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)
- Impaired daily functioning e.g. at home, work, relationships, social/family life, hobbies etc.
- Disturbed sleeping patterns (e.g. difficulty falling asleep/staying asleep, feeling un-refreshed in the morning)
- Headaches, migraines or visual disturbances
- Stomach aches, nausea, feeling sick, digestive problems or IBS symptoms
- Using drugs/cigarettes/alcohol/other substances/other unhelpful behaviours or habits to manage stress, anxiety, worry or nervousness

Remember, we are all different and some of us will notice the physical symptoms more while others might be more bothered by the emotional or cognitive effects of Generalised Anxiety Disorder.

Whatever your symptoms might be, anxiety over a long period of time can lead to many other problems and have a significant impact on our physical and mental health. Take action before it's too late and you become ill with anxiety. If you recognise elements of these signs and symptoms in yourself, it might be time to talk to someone about it. We are here to support you.