

**Anxiety:** What is anxiety? It is normal to feel anxiety from time to time. It is when anxiety and worry become an impairment for your daily living that it may be time to do something about your excessive anxiety and worry. It is however important to note that anxiety helps you increase your performance when you find yourself in stressful situations. Too little anxiety, and you underperform, too much anxiety and you underperform - just right and you outperform.

More than one third of the adult population will feel excessive anxiety sometime in their lives.

According to the VA, symptoms of anxiety include:

*Feeling restless, jumpy, or on edge*

*Excessive worrying about everyday decisions*

*Difficulty concentrating*

*A racing heart or cold, clammy hands*

*Trembling or twitching*

*Having trouble catching your breath*

*Feeling dizzy, nauseous, or lightheaded*

*Difficulty sleeping*

Anxiety is typically grouped into general anxiety, social anxiety, panic attacks, and specific phobias. DSM-5 (APA, 2013) lists the following anxiety disorders: separation anxiety disorder, selective mutism, specific phobia, social anxiety disorder (social phobia), panic disorder, agoraphobia, generalized anxiety disorder, substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder, and anxiety disorder due to another medical condition.

Those with general anxiety have ongoing anxious thoughts about everyday life, but do not generally experience panic attacks. Social anxiety is marked with a persistent feeling of anxiety when they find themselves in social situations. Panic attack symptoms are re-occurrent feelings of intense fear or discomfort. Specific phobias include fear of flying, fear of snakes, fear of spiders, fear of needles, and many others.

The VA recommends Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, CBT, treatment for anxiety. CBT is a short-term treatment that helps individuals understand the anxiety that they experience and how to manage distressful thoughts and emotions.

Resources: The VA provides the following checklists:

[Download the screening checklist for generalized anxiety.](#)

[Download the screening checklist for social anxiety disorder or social phobia.](#)

[Download the screening checklist for panic disorder.](#)

[Download the screening checklist for specific phobias.](#)

Dr. Olav Opedal NCC LMHC

Psychologist & Data Scientist

[olav@opedalconsulting.com](mailto:olav@opedalconsulting.com)

WDVA Veteran or Service-member Owned Business Certification Number: OPC628rt

