

Women's Health

Anxiety Disorders—A Treatment Guide

(NAPSA)—Millions of women suffer from persistent, intense and uncontrollable anxiety that hinders their daily lives. They may have an “anxiety disorder”—five disorders which involve extreme, irrational fear or worry: generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias and posttraumatic stress disorder. Women are twice as likely to suffer from an anxiety disorder.

“If you think you have an anxiety disorder,” said Jerilyn Ross, president of the Anxiety Disorders Association of America, the only national organization dedicated to



the prevention, treatment and cure of anxiety disorders. “Treatment can significantly improve the quality of your life and lead to recovery.”

Finding Professional Care

The first step is to visit your primary care physician. Some anxiety disorders mimic signs of physical conditions, so it is important to rule out an underlying physical illness.

Your physician can refer you to a mental health professional who is trained to treat anxiety disorders such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor or clinical social worker.

Asking the Right Questions

It's important to select a professional with whom you feel comfortable. This may mean speaking with more than one person. A

professional should be willing to answer your questions.

Questions to Ask

- What training and experience do you have in treating anxiety disorders?
- What is your approach to treatment and will we review a treatment plan together?
- What are the goals of treatment and how will I know if I am getting better?
- How frequent are treatment sessions and how long do they last?
- Can you prescribe medication or refer me to someone who can?

Identifying the Right Treatment

A combination of therapies may be used to develop a tailored treatment program for you. Scientifically proven therapies include:

- **Cognitive Therapy.** Helps individuals identify, modify or change how they view themselves, their fears and their worries.
- **Behavior Therapy.** Helps individuals gain control over unwanted behavior, often through controlled exposure to anxiety-provoking situations.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).** Combines cognitive and behavior therapy and is the most widely accepted treatment option.
- **Medication.** Several medications can help control symptoms and are often used with other therapies.

In addition to proven therapies, acupuncture, yoga, diet, exercise or relaxation training can help manage everyday stresses that contribute to anxiety.

Anxiety disorders are real, serious and treatable. For a listing of mental health professionals who specialize in treating anxiety disorders or for more information on anxiety disorders, visit the Anxiety Disorders Association of America at www.adaa.org.