



Coping With Anxiety

Our Depression Initiative may be able to assist you.

Everyone experiences symptoms of anxiety, but they are generally occasional and short-lived, and do not cause significant problems. But when the symptoms of anxiety are persistent and severe, and anxiety causes distress in your life to the point that it negatively affects your Ability to work or study, socialize and manage daily tasks, it may be beyond the normal range.

The following examples of anxiety symptoms may indicate that you are experiencing severe anxiety:

- Anxious thoughts (ie, "I'm losing control"), anxious predictions (ie, "I'm going to fumble my words and humiliate myself") and anxious beliefs (ie, "Only weak people get anxious")
- Excessive physical reactions relative to the context (ie, heart racing and feeling short of breath in response to being at the mall)
- Avoidance of feared situations (ie, driving), avoidance of activities that elicit sensations similar to those experienced when anxious (ie, exercise), subtle avoidances (behaviours that aim to distract the person, e.g., talking more during periods of anxiety) and safety behaviours (habits to minimize anxiety and feel "safer," ie, always having a cell phone on hand to call for help).

It is important for you to consider:

- The degree of distress caused by your anxiety symptoms
- The level of effect your anxiety symptoms have on your ability to work or study, socialize and manage daily tasks
- The context in which your anxiety occurs.

Common treatments for serve anxiety include:

- Relaxation training, meditation, medical tests and stress management
- Supportive counselling or couples or family therapy
- Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Medications
- Combinations of the above

If you need someone to speak with about your anxiety or would like to find further resources to assist you, please contact us at: depressioninitiative@mcctoronto.com.

A workshop on dealing with depression, stress and anxiety is scheduled for October 30 and will be followed by another running of a Support Group over the winter months.