

What Treatments are available?

People experiencing anxiety should be able to choose freely between the range of treatment options, or combinations of treatments. In practice, the majority of people attending GP surgeries are offered medication as the first treatment choice. For many people, other treatments may be more effective.

Counselling and psychotherapy

There are different types of counselling and psychotherapy available. Some help with how you are feeling, others look into reasons why you may be experiencing anxiety. Cognitive therapy encourages you to develop positive ways of thinking and to construct strategies for managing anxiety so you feel in control.

Complementary therapy

Complementary therapies can help you to relax, sleep better, and deal with the symptoms of anxiety. The most common of the complementary therapies are aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, herbalism, Bach flower remedies, homeopathy, and hypnotherapy.

Exercise

Taking more exercise can help you cope with anxiety and feelings of tension. Exercise uses up the adrenalin and other hormones that are produced under stress, allowing muscles to relax. Also, certain brain chemicals are released during exercise, which can enhance your mood.

Assertiveness

Learning how to handle difficult situations and how to stand up for ourselves can make us feel more confident and thereby relaxed. For some people, learning self-defence may make them feel more safe.

Self Help Groups

Self-help groups will allow you to talk to other people with similar difficulties and challenges. You will be both encouraged and supported in your battle against anxiety. Panacea in Mind is a support group for people with anxiety in Bournemouth and Poole: you can get in touch with the group coordinator, Kim Hamilton, on 01202 392910 or 0781 6640294.

Medication

Nowadays, doctors should only prescribe tranquillizers, such as Valium (diazepam) or other benzodiazepine drugs, for people suffering from severe or disabling anxiety. Use of these drugs should be limited to the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time, and they should not be taken for more than about four weeks. GPs sometimes prescribe antidepressants, such as Seroxat or Prozac, although there is some indication that these may increase anxiety and problems with sleeping. Doctors may also suggest a patient try a beta blocker to deal with symptoms such as palpitations, although the success of this treatment is variable.



**For better
mental health**

Understanding Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

Stress and anxiety are a part of modern life. How will I pay the bills on time? Will the car start? How can I get everything done on time? We all experience these examples of anxiety, which represent relatively small challenges.

However for some people such challenges can be a constant source of worry. The challenges grow into problems and the mounting problems increase anxiety. This spiralling effect will make it more and more difficult for the person to resolve their issues and move on. Instead their problems and their anxiety continue to grow, until they seem like an impossible mountain to climb. When anxiety increases in this way it may be that the person is suffering from an anxiety disorder, which will dramatically affect their quality of life.

This type of anxiety is a disease, with a predictable pattern of problems, which stem from our basic survival techniques of flight or fight. Sufferers of anxiety disorders have many unpleasant symptoms and frightening thoughts e.g. they are afraid that they are going mad, will have a heart attack etc. they cannot believe that their symptoms are "just anxiety".

One in three of us will experience a panic attack at some point in our lives; it is a very 'normal' illness.

The Terror of Panic

Panic is a sudden often powerful burst of anxiety and panic attacks can often occur out of the blue, for no apparent reason. Some of the symptoms of a panic attack are:

- Feeling breathless and dizzy.
- Pins and needles which gradually creep all over your body.
- Your heart is pounding hard and fast.
- You are sweating, shaking or feeling flushed.
- You feel "unreal" or "not there".
- The room begins to close in on you.
- You have powerful negative thoughts.
- You fear that you are going crazy or that you will die.

Phobias

Panic attacks can be so terrifying that the sufferer will do absolutely anything to avoid them. The fear of fear has set in, and once this happens we cannot comprehend what is happening to us. Continued avoidance can then lead to phobias such as Agoraphobia or Social Phobia. Avoiding anxiety in this way can become a full time preoccupation. It closes down the person's choices and erodes their self-esteem; gradually they become more and more trapped by their condition. Going on holiday or to parties becomes impossible and a person with an anxiety disorder can easily become quite isolated and lonely.

About us

Dorset Mind is a local, independent charity providing services for people with mental health problems. It is affiliated to Mind, the mental health charity.

The services provided include a befriending service; a group for people suffering from anxiety disorders; groups for women; a sports club and an arts group.

Contact Us

Dorset Mind
11 Shelley Road
Bournemouth
BH1 4JQ

tel: (01202) 392910
email: contact@dorsetmind.org.uk
website: www.dorsetmind.org.uk

Useful Numbers

Panacea in Mind (Self help group)	01202 392910 0781 6640294
Samaritans	01202 551999
Bournemouth Mental Health Helpline	01202 314577 (Evenings only)
Mind Information Line	0845 766 0163
Saneline	0845 767 8000
No Panic Helpline	0808 808 0545

©April 2005 Dorset Mind is Registered in England as a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 5333018 and as Charity No. 1108168