

Anxiety

Anxiety's symptoms range from a vague feeling of uneasiness, a tightness in the pit of one's stomach, a racing heart beat, sleepless nights or an over-whelming sense of mental pain which seems almost impossible to endure. It is closely related to worry and fear and may have its roots in them. Agents which may produce anxiety include worry, fear, stress, guilt, failure, frustrations, low self-esteem, anger, trauma, perfectionism, family interactions, finances, and social ineptitude (shyness, etc.). Often anxiety appears for no apparent reason.

Although most people feel some anxiety at various times (an example would be speaking to an audience) it is usually not so long-lasting or so severe as to keep these people from leading a reasonably normal life. There are those of us, however, who experience anxiety severe enough to interfere appreciably with our everyday life. Situations that may not bother some people may produce severe anxiety in others.

Anxieties can begin at any age, including childhood. Feelings of anxiety can extend over a long time period or may last for a few hours and subside, or may result in periodic short-lived acute panic attacks. Most of us with disruptive anxiety problems have found our will power alone is insufficient to deal constructively with our anxieties. We've found admitting this to ourselves, and turning the control of our lives over to a Higher Power is an important key to beginning a process of recovery. "EA is supportive of all positive actions that members take to regain and maintain their mental and emotional health. We do not discourage visits to psychiatrists, taking medication or the like,"*

Belonging to a group such as Emotions Anonymous can be an important part of recovery. Members of EA have been through, or are going through; similar problems and they accept us as we are without judging or criticizing us. The honest emotional support from our EA group is a big help. What a relief to know that "we are not alone."

As we are exposed to the recovery tools of EA:

Steps, Traditions, Promises, Just For Today's, Helpful Concepts, and Slogans, we begin to recognize the importance of "working the program" using these tools. Slogans like "Let go and let God," "One day at a time," and "This too shall pass" can be especially helpful in dealing with anxiety. We begin to realize we no longer need to control the world, or even our family members or friends. The only person we can control is ourselves, and we can only do that with the help of our Higher Power. Living "One day at a time" reduces our worry, which reduces our anxiety. Many have found an increase in physical activity is also beneficial.

Dealing with external stresses is another important part of recovery from an anxiety disorder, to this regard, the Serenity Prayer is a proven guide. It suggests that we reduce the external stresses we are able to reduce and learn to accept and live with the stresses we can't change, and be wise enough to know the difference.

Often, people with anxiety disorders experience periods of depression. Although the symptoms of anxiety and depression are somewhat different, the root causes are usually similar. Repeated panic attacks can result in fear of future attacks which can result in agoraphobic type symptoms such as fear of crowds, traffic or new situations which, in turn, can lead to depression. Remembering that most of us didn't develop life-disrupting anxiety problems all of a sudden, we should also remember recovery from these problems is likely to take some time. Negative thoughts keep us prisoners, while working the EA program helps us develop positive attitude changes. As we recover, we begin to see the Promises of EA coming true in our own lives.

Working the Steps and attending weekly EA meetings has been the solution for many who have suffered from, or who are still suffering from, anxiety problems.

"IT WORKS WHEN YOU WORK IT."