



Do You Suffer from Anxiety?

You're Not Alone...

If you've ever had to speak or perform in front of a large group of people, you've probably felt a little anxiety. Most people do. In fact, it's perfectly normal to feel anxious when facing difficult, dangerous or even challenging situations. People often feel anxious about financial difficulties, health problems, talking to a boss about a raise, job interviews and big decisions like buying a house or car.

Anxiety is a complex combination of feeling apprehension, dread, fear, nervousness and worry, in anticipation of problems or misfortune. So, when facing unknown or "scary" situations, it's perfectly normal to experience the sensation of "butterflies" or "knots" in your stomach that signal a touch of anxiety. However, for a large number of people, anxiety is something far more serious and persistent.

When anxiety is severe enough to interfere with family relations, socializing and work, it can be debilitating. It can manifest as shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat or heart palpitations, muscle tension, trembling, insomnia, irritability, chest pain, cold sweats, feeling faint and general feelings of stress. These symptoms are bad enough, but to make matters worse, anxiety contributes to the development of other health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, and pain-related disorders such as arthritis and fibromyalgia. There is also a high correlation between anxiety and addiction to alcohol, smoking and drug use.

Clinicians recognize about 12 relatively distinct subtypes of anxiety disorder, but the major ones are: panic disorder (panic attacks), phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and generalized anxiety disorder. These anxiety-related problems have reached epidemic proportions in the United States. According to the Surgeon General, 16 percent of adults ages 18 to 24 experience one subtype of an anxiety disorder that lasts at least a year. That's a lot of anxiety!

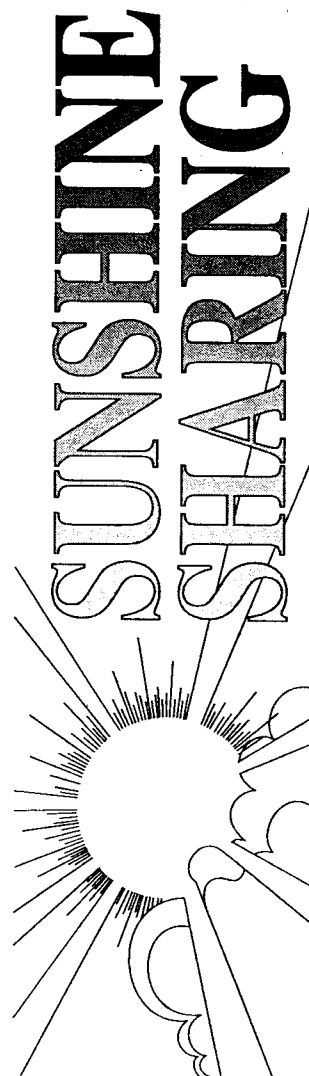
The large majority of those suffering with these disorders are holding full-time jobs, many at executive and managerial levels, and are experiencing a relatively high degree of workplace stress. Most are just masking the symptoms of their problem by taking some sort of medication, such as tranquilizers, anti-depressants or sleeping pills. Others are "self-medicating" through alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. There are better ways of dealing with anxiety, however, and that is the subject of this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*.

To understand how to reduce anxiety in a healthy, natural way, we first need to understand the nature of anxiety. Anxiety is not a "bad" thing. It is a natural reaction to real or perceived dangers. The perception of possible danger triggers the release of hormones and neurotransmitters that prime the body and mind for action. These physiological changes can help us push beyond our normal limits and may actually help us perform better.

For instance, coming back to the example of giving a speech or performing in front of a group, the perceived "danger" of humiliating oneself in front of a large group of people creates a release of hormones that actually prime the person to perform better. So, the key is not to eliminate anxiety, but to keep our anxiety at manageable levels so we can perform well in the tasks before us, and not be paralyzed from action by excessive anxiety.

Fortunately, there are many simple, natural therapies that can regulate the production of stress-related hormones and ease anxiety-related problems. These natural approaches don't just temporarily relieve the symptoms, either. They can actually resolve anxiety problems and help a person get rid of that crippling anxiety for good.

To learn five strategies for relieving anxiety naturally, look inside...



Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Important Notice

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Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne
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