

Gray Matters What You Need To Know About Aging and Anxiety



Improving Antidepressant Medication Management Provider Toolkit

Antidepressant Medication Management



Provider Toolkit

Tools to increase antidepressant medication adherence and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in depression management.



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[Antidepressant Provider Toolkit](#)



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National Alliance on Mental Illness
MINNESOTA


Gray Matters

What You Need to Know About Aging and Anxiety

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Extendicare Foundation

Presentation Objectives

- Understand symptoms and risk factors of anxiety disorders in older adults
- Learn the different types of anxiety disorders
- Understand treatment and management
- Learn the warning signs of suicide
- Learn about resources to support older adults living with anxiety



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Definition

Mental illnesses are medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood and ability to relate to others and daily functioning.



U.S. Adults with a Mental Illness in Any One Year

Type of Mental Illness	% Adults
Anxiety disorder	19.1
Major depressive disorder	6.8
Substance use disorder	8.0
Bipolar disorder	2.8
Eating disorders	2.1
Schizophrenia	0.45
Any mental disorder	19.6

Source: National Co-morbidity Survey Replication. Published 2007 ; the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Update published 2011; and Tandon, Keshavan & Nasrallah published 2008.



What Is Anxiety?

- Natural emotion that everyone experiences
- Fear and anxiety are essential for our survival
- Fear and anxiety are not the same
- Anxiety is caused by, and intensified by, stress
- Fear is the body's way of telling us to prepare for "fight or flight"



Natural Anxiety vs Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety Disorders are:

- Persistent
- Excessive
- Life-altering



Why Aging Can Make Us Anxious

- Death of a spouse and friends
- Dealing with an illness or medical condition
- Isolation
- Loss of some hearing or vision
- Changing financial resources and physical independence
- Leaving a home of many years and moving to a new environment



Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders

Emotions and Thoughts

- Excessive fear and worry about past and future events
- Indecisiveness, irritability, impatience, anger, confusion, restlessness
- Being “on edge,” tired, sleep disturbances, vivid dreams
- Decreased concentration and impaired memory



Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders

Physical

- Cardiovascular: pounding heart, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, flushing
- Respiratory: hyperventilation, shortness of breath
- Neurological: dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling, numbness



Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders

Physical Continued

- Choking, dry mouth, stomach pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Muscle aches and pains, restlessness, tremors and shaking, inability to relax



Anxiety Symptoms Can Result From:

- Stress
- Some medical conditions
- Side effects of certain prescription drugs
- Intoxication with alcohol, caffeine, marijuana and other recreational drugs
- Withdrawal from alcohol, cocaine, anti-anxiety medication and sedatives



Don't Overlook Late-life Symptoms

- Anxiety can share symptoms with a variety of illnesses
- Medications often have side effects that cause or mimic anxiety
- Fear of illness can prevent reporting of anxiety symptoms
- An older adult may fear their family will see them as incompetent



Don't Overlook Late-life Symptoms

- Older adults might be uncomfortable talking openly about mental illness
- They may feel stigma and shame about emotional problems
- They may view mental illness as evidence of moral or physical weakness



What Causes an Anxiety Disorder?

- Biology
- Heredity
- Environment
- Life Experiences
- Temperament
- Brain Chemistry



Risk Factors

- Traumatic event
- Tendency to worry
- Stressful event early in life
- Alcohol abuse
- History of anxiety in childhood or adolescence
- Major long and short-term life stresses



Family Factors that Increase Risk

- Difficult childhood – physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- Family history of anxiety disorders
- Parental chemical dependency
- Separation and divorce



Types of Anxiety Disorders

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Social Phobia
- Panic Disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Specific Phobia
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Chronic worry over a wide number of matters for at least six months
- Worry takes on a life of its own
- Repeated doctor visits with various symptoms
- Always anticipating disaster



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Becoming impaired in social functioning
- Always wondering, “What if?”
- Tendency to self-medicate with alcohol



Social Phobia Fear of:

- Strangers
- Unfamiliar social situations
- Speaking or performing in public
- Voicing one’s opinions
- Using public bathrooms
- Eating in front of others



Panic Disorder

- Spells of intense apprehension and fear
- Feeling of impending doom
- Physical symptoms like chest pain, rapid heart beat, difficulty breathing, perspiring, dizziness and nausea
- Fear of dying, losing control or being publicly humiliated if confronted by a feared activity



Panic Disorder

- Panic attacks that appear out of the blue
- Perceived need to escape a feared situation
- Waking at night with a feeling of terror



Definition of a Panic Attack

A distinct episode of high anxiety with fear or distress. It develops abruptly and usually has its peak within 10 minutes.



Symptoms of a Panic Attack

- Pounding heart, rapid heart rate
- Sweating and flushing
- Trembling and shaking
- Shortness of breath, sensations of choking or smothering
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Abdominal distress or nausea



Symptoms of a Panic Attack

- Dizziness, light-headedness, feeling faint or unsteady
- Numbness or tingling
- Chills or hot flashes
- Feelings of unreality or being detached from oneself
- Fear of losing control
- Fear of dying



Agoraphobia

Intense fear of any place or situation where escape might be perceived to be difficult or embarrassing, leading to avoidance of situations. Fear of having a panic attack or panic-like symptoms in that situation.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Can occur after someone experiences a traumatic event that caused intense fear, helplessness or horror. PTSD can result from personally experienced trauma or from witnessing or learning of a violent or tragic event.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Re-experience
- Avoidance
- Increased arousal
- Numbing



Specific Phobia

- Exaggerated, involuntary and irrational fears of particular situations or things
- Brought about by a specific object or situation
- Examples: flying, spiders, heights, needles or snakes



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

- Obsessions are intrusive, irrational thoughts – unwanted ideas or impulses that repeatedly occupy a person's mind
- Compulsions are repetitive rituals that perhaps provide momentary relief
- These obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviors interfere with life



Co-Occurring Disorders

- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Dementia (neuro-cognitive disorder)
- People living with depression or anxiety disorder are two to three times more likely to have a substance use disorder



What Can Help?

- Medication, Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Exposure Therapy, education and support
- A healthy diet, less stress, exercise, affirming relationships, activities you enjoy and a spiritual connection



Treatment

Psychotherapy (Behavior Therapy or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) is a good place to start. Why?

- Many older adults already take a number of medications for other medical conditions
- Psychotherapy has additional benefits for older adults



Suicide and Older Adults

- U.S. suicide rate for all ages is 13.4 per 100,000
- U.S. suicide rate for ages 65 and above is 16.6 per 100,000
- U.S. suicide rate for ages 15-24 is 11.6 per 100,000
- U.S. suicide rate for ages 45-64 is 19.5 per 100,000

Source: American Association of Suicidology 2016; data from 2014



Warning Signs of Suicide

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- Seeking access to means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling worthless or a lack of purpose
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
- Displaying an unexpected peacefulness



Warning Signs of Suicide

- Feeling trapped
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or society
- Demonstrating rage and anger or seeking revenge
- Appearing agitated
- Having a dramatic change in mood



Suicide Risk Assessment

- Gender
- Age
- Chronic physical illness
- A mental illness or family history
- Use of alcohol or other substances
- Less social support
- Previous attempt
- Organized plan



Suicide Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24/7):
1-(800)273-TALK (8255)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:
www.afsp.org
- NAMI Helpline for non-emergency information
and resources:
(651)645-2948 or 1-(888)NAMI-HELPS



Recovery from Anxiety Disorders

“Recovery does not mean you will never feel anxious again. The anxiety will diminish and become more manageable. When we learn to accept our anxiety and panic, without resistance, they lose their power and occur less often. Recovery is more than being free of anxiety and panic. It means personal growth and awareness.”

Judy Bemis – *Power of Acceptance*



Open Door Anxiety Groups

Open Door Anxiety groups are free NAMI educational support groups that meet twice a month. Learn effective strategies in anxiety management and self-talk techniques for coping with anxiety and panic attacks while receiving encouragement and peer support.

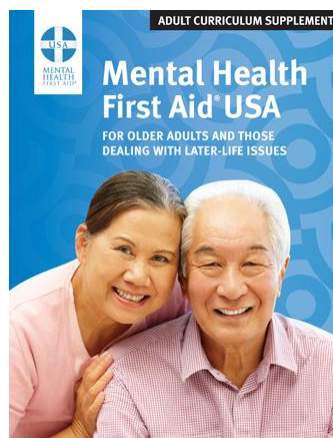


Community Resources

- NAMI's Family to Family or Hope for Recovery classes, Mental Health First Aid
- MN Department of Human Services (DHS)
- People Incorporated, Jewish Family Services St. Paul or Volunteers of America (in the Twin Cities)
- Community Mental Health Centers (e.g. – Canvas Health or Hiawatha Valley Mental Health)
- Senior LinkAge Line: (800) 333-2433
www.MinnesotaHelp.info



Mental Health First Aid Class



NAMI Minnesota Resources

- Education
- Support Groups
- Fact Sheets
- DVDs
- Helpline



Senior-Specific Resources

- Senior LinkAge Line = 1 (800) 333-2433;
www.minnesotahelp.info
 - Statewide resource database of over 12,000 agencies offering social services, education, health, recreation, etc.
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Senior Recovery Program – Chemical Dependency: www.seniorrecoverycenter.org;
(651) 773-0473



Senior-Specific Resources

- Volunteers of America Minnesota – Senior Mental Health Services: www.voamn.org; (763) 225-4052
- People Incorporated – Stark Mental Health Clinic: www.peopleincorporated.org; (612) 872-2000
- Jewish Family Service of St. Paul: www.jfssp.org; (651) 698-0767



What We Do

- Education classes, booklets and fact sheets
- Suicide prevention
- Support groups, Helpline
- Public awareness presentations
- Legislative advocacy
- NAMIWalks



Support NAMI Minnesota

- Advocate for a better Mental Health System
- Attend an event
- Sign up for a newsletter
- Join an affiliate
- Be a sponsor
- Volunteer
- Become a donor



Thank you

Contact NAMI Minnesota for more information

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