



Depression and Anxiety Throughout the Generations

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Depression and Anxiety

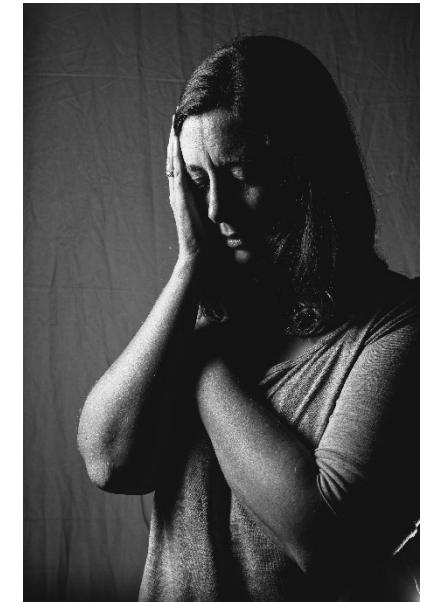
Depression and Anxiety are:

- Common mental health conditions.
- They often co-occur. This means a person can experience both at the same time.
- Anxiety and depression are linked because they can originate in the same part of the brain responsible for emotional responses.

What is Depression?

Depression is more than just feeling down or having a bad day.

- If a sad mood lasts for a long time and interferes with your daily life, you may have depression. (CDC, 2025)
- About 1 out of every 6 adults will have depression at some time in their lives. (CDC, 2025)
- Depression affects about 16 million people a year. (CDC, 2025)



Types of Depression

Depression disorders may include:

- **Major Depression** symptoms include depressed mood, loss of interest which affects your daily life and last for 2 weeks or more.
- **Persistent Depressive Disorder** symptoms are less severe and last usually for at least two years.
- **Seasonal Affective Disorder** symptoms come and go with the seasons, usually starting in the fall or winter and go away by spring or summer.
- **Bipolar Disorder** can cause intense mood swings.
- **Depression with symptoms of psychosis** is a severe form of depression with symptoms of false beliefs (delusions), seeing/hear/feeling things that are not there (hallucinations). (MedlinePlus, 2025)

What Causes Depression?

The cause of depression is unknown, but may be a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors.

Factors that put you at risk include:

- Having blood relatives who have had depression.
- Experiencing traumatic or stressful events, such as physical or sexual abuse, the death of a loved one, or financial problems.
- Going through a major life change, even if it was planned.
- Having a medical problem, such as cancer, stroke, or chronic pain.
- Taking certain medications.
 - Talk to your doctor if you have questions about whether your medications might be making you feel depressed.
- Using alcohol or drugs (CDC, 2025)



What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is considered the most common mental disorder which impacts daily life, school, and work.

- Anxiety affects nearly one in three adults in the United States.
- Anxiety can affect children and adolescents.
- Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life, but people with anxiety disorders experience intense, excessive, and persistent worrying and fear which interferes with your daily life.
- Symptoms of anxiety may start as a child or in your teen years and continue into adult life. (Mayo Clinic, 2025)

Types of Anxiety

Anxiety disorders may include:

- **Generalized anxiety disorder** is persistent or excessive anxiety about activities and events.
- **Social anxiety disorder** is high levels of anxiety, fear, and avoidance of social situations.
- **Phobias** are characterized by major anxiety when you are exposed to a situation, object or activity you want to avoid.
 - Phobias can often cause panic attacks.
- **Separation anxiety disorder** occurs in childhood related to separation from parents and others in parental roles.
- **Panic disorder** is sudden feelings of intense anxiety, fear or terror.
- **Substance-induced anxiety disorder** occurs when symptoms are a direct result of misusing drugs or mediation, exposure to a toxic substance and withdrawal from drugs.

(Mayo Clinic, 2025)

What Causes Anxiety?

Anxiety may be caused by a mental condition, a physical condition, the effects of drugs, stressful life events, or a combination of these.

Anxiety can be caused by life events, including:

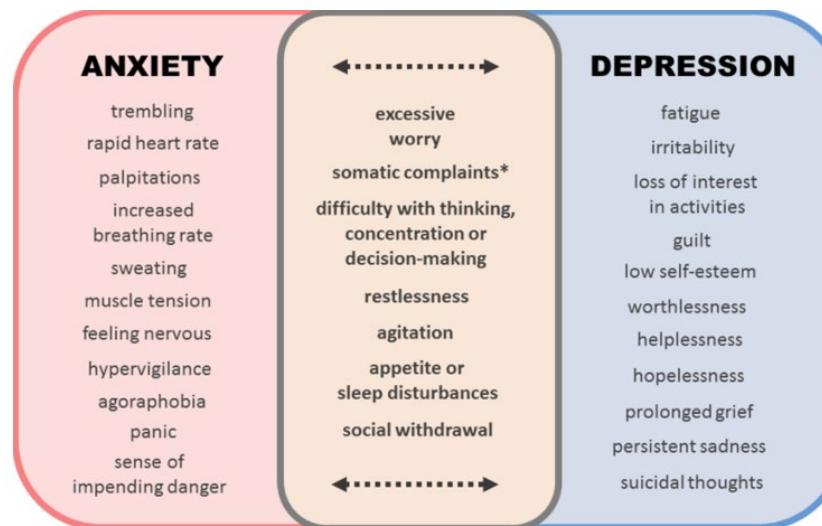
- Stress at work.
- Stress from school.
- Stress in a personal relationship such as marriage.
- Financial stress.
- Stress from global occurrences or political issues.
- Stress from unpredictable or uncertain world events, like a pandemic.
- Stress from an emotional trauma such as the death of a loved one.
- Stress from a serious medical illness. (WebMD, 2025)



Can Depression and Anxiety Occur Together?

Almost half of people with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives, and vice versa.

- Having both can worsen the symptoms of each disorder and make them last longer.
- Anxiety can trigger depressive episodes, and anxiety can be a symptom of depression.
- Having both depression and anxiety together can be harder to treat requiring specialized, integrated care.



(The Open University, 2025)

Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

Adults

Symptoms of depression and anxiety in adults can include persistent worry, difficulty focusing, changes in sleep or eating habits, and fatigue. Additional symptoms can include:

Emotional:

- Feeling persistent sadness, hopelessness, or anxious often or all the time.
- Not wanting to do activities that used to be fun.
- Feeling irritable, easily frustrated, or restless (mood swings).
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or helpless.

Cognitive:

- Having trouble concentrating, remembering details, or making decisions.

Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

Adult symptoms of depression and anxiety continued:

Physical:

- Having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep (changes in sleep patterns).
- Waking up too early or sleeping too much.
- Experiencing aches, pains, headaches, or stomach problems that do not improve with treatment (physical tension).
- Feeling tired, even after sleeping well.
- Changes in appetite including eating more or less than usual or having no appetite.

Behavioral:

- Withdrawing from others.
- Engaging in risky behaviors or using substances like alcohol to cope.
- Thinking about suicide or hurting yourself. (CDC, 2025)

Symptoms of Anxiety

Children and Adolescents

Fears and worries are typical in children, but persistent or extreme forms of fear and sadness could be due to anxiety or depression. Some anxious children keep their worries to themselves, and their symptoms can be missed.

Symptoms of anxiety in children/teens can include:

- Fear or worry
- Irritability and anger
- Trouble sleeping
- Physical symptoms can include fatigue, headaches, or stomach-aches

Symptoms of Depression

Symptoms of depression in children and teens include:

- Feeling sad, hopeless, or irritable a lot of the time.
- Not wanting to do or enjoy doing fun things.
- Changes in eating patterns (eating a lot more or a lot less than usual).
- Changes in sleep patterns (sleeping a lot more or a lot less than normal).
- Changes in energy (being tired and sluggish or tense and restless a lot of the time).
- Having a hard time paying attention.
- Feeling worthless, useless, or guilty.
- Showing self-injury and self-destructive behavior. (CDC, 2025)

Treatment and Management

Chronic stress can lead to serious health conditions like hypertension, diabetes, depression, and digestive issues.

Treatments often involve a combination of therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes like regular exercise.

- **Medication:** Doctors may prescribe antidepressants, such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), to manage symptoms. It is crucial to follow the doctor's instructions and not to stop medication suddenly without consulting them.
- **Therapy:** Various forms of therapy can help individuals develop coping strategies for both anxiety and depression.
 - **Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)** focuses on changing negative thought patterns.
 - **Interpersonal Therapy (IPT)** focuses on improving relationships.
 - **Psychodynamic Therapy** explores how unconscious patterns from past experiences and relationships may contribute to current symptoms.
 - **Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)** focuses on processing traumatic memories that may be contributing to symptoms.



Treatment and Management: Lifestyle

- **Exercise**
 - Regular physical activity can significantly improve mood, increase confidence, and help manage symptoms.
- **Lifestyle**
 - Avoiding alcohol and other substances as a coping mechanism is important, as they can worsen symptoms.
- **Diet**
 - Incorporating stress-fighting foods into your daily routine can help to curb 'mindless eating.' Here are a few foods to consider:
 - **Avocados** – Packed with healthy fats, fiber, vitamin C, and B6, avocados help regulate stress and lower blood pressure. Plus, they keep you full longer!
 - **Berries & Citrus Fruits** – Blueberries, strawberries, and oranges are loaded with vitamin C, which supports your body's ability to manage stress.
 - **Dark Chocolate** – A little indulgence can be good! Dark chocolate is full of antioxidants that help combat stress.

Treatment and Management: Diet

- **Decaf Tea (Green, Black, Chamomile)**— A warm cup of tea can promote relaxation and help reduce cortisol levels.
- **Eggs**—are high in protein and vitamins B12 and B7 and are good for anxiety.
- **Fatty fish or other food rich in Omega -3 fatty acids**- help to fight inflammation and protect against surges of Cortisol.
- **Fermented food**-like sauerkraut, kimchi, or kombucha help to reduce depression and anxiety.
- **Leafy Greens** – Spinach and kale are high in magnesium, which helps regulate cortisol and blood pressure, plus folate, which boosts dopamine (your feel-good hormone).
- **Nuts** – Whether you prefer walnuts, almonds, or cashews, nuts are rich in good fats, potassium, and B6, making them a great stress-reducing snack.
- **Sweet Potatoes & Bananas**— Natural sources of complex carbs and potassium, these foods support a balanced mood and energy levels.
- **Whole Grains & Oats**— These complex carbs support steady energy levels and keep blood sugar stable.
- **Yogurt**-with their probiotics help to improve health and decrease anxiety. (North Oaks, 2025) (Cleveland Clinic, 2024) (Brown University, 2025)

Getting Help and Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out for professional help.

If you are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org. You can also find help on the [SAMHSA website](https://www.samhsa.gov).

- Other resources available include:
 - **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**: <https://www.nami.org/support-education/nami-helpline/>
 - **Anxiety & Depression Association of America (ADAA)**: <https://adaa.org/find-help/support/community-resources>
 - **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help>
 - **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-support>



Getting Help and Resources

For Children and Adolescents:

- **Child Mind Institute:** <https://childmind.org/>
- **Families for Depression Awareness:** <https://www.familyaware.org/>

In Pennsylvania:

Immediate & Crisis Support:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 for free, confidential 24/7 support for anyone in distress.
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741 for immediate crisis counseling.

Statewide & Advocacy Organizations include:

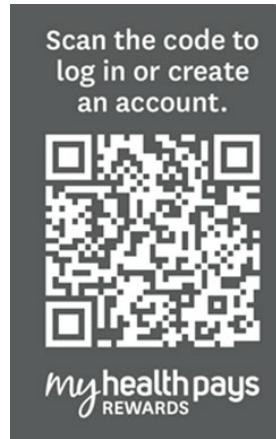
- **Youth MOVE PA:** A youth-led organization promoting mental health awareness and supporting young people. <https://youthmovepa.wildapricot.org/>
- **NAMI Keystone PA (National Alliance on Mental Illness):** Provides education, support, and advocacy for individuals and families affected by mental illness. <https://www.namikeystonepa.org/stone>
- **PA Department of Human Services (DHS):** Offers resources and connections to services like the Community Care Behavioral Health plan. <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs>



PA Health & Wellness Resources:

Learn more about PA Health & Wellness's Disease Management programs:

- Visit the PA Health & Wellness website: <https://www.pahealthwellness.com/>
- Call Participant Services: 1-844-626-6813 (TTY:711)
- Email: phwcasemanagement@pahealthwellness.com
- QR CODE:



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Questions ?



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