



# ANXIETY DISORDERS AND TREATMENT

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# Objectives



Relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors



What is anxiety?



Types of anxiety



Where does anxiety come from?



Options for treatment



Helping a child with anxiety at home



Lowering anxiety in the community

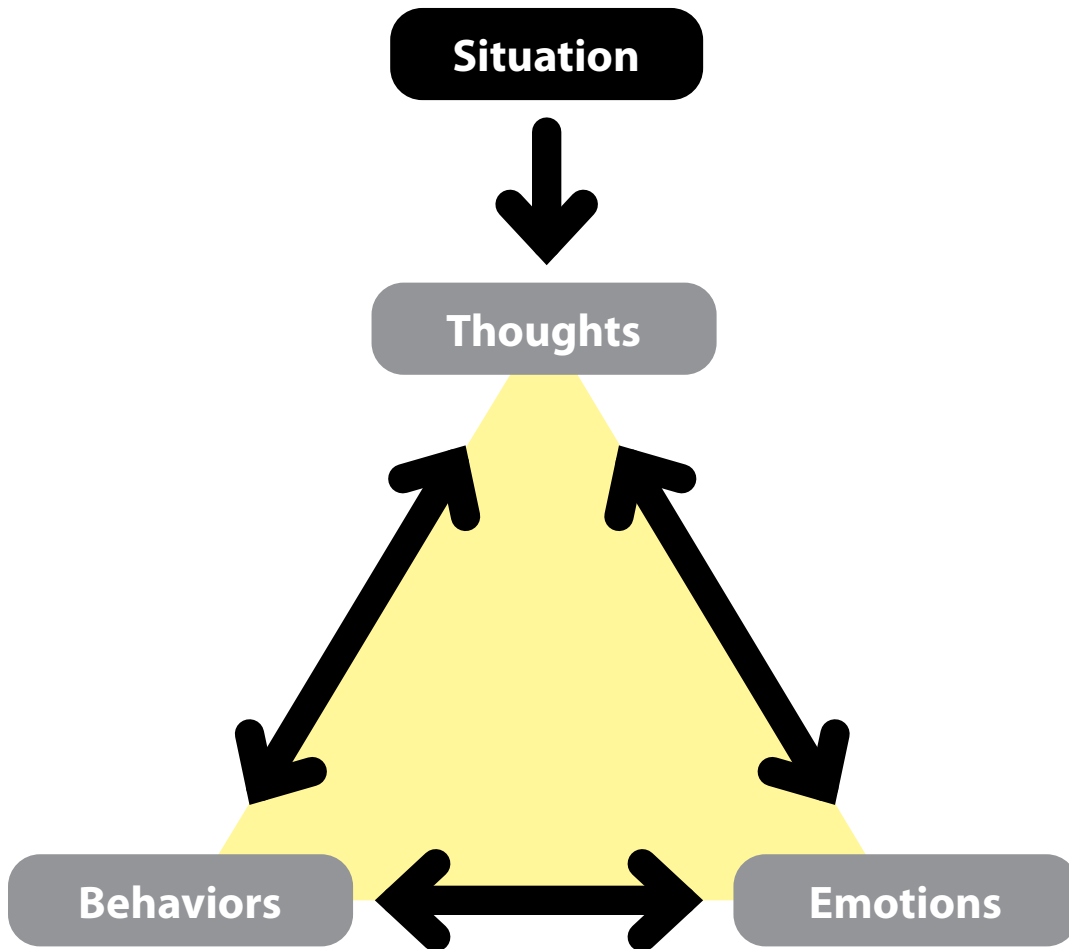


Resources



# The Cognitive Triangle

The **Cognitive Triangle** shows how thoughts, emotions, and behaviors affect each other. This means that if you change your thoughts, you will change the way you feel and behave.



A **situation** is anything that happens in your life that triggers the cognitive triangle.

**Thoughts** are your interpretations of a situation. For example, if a stranger looks at you with an angry expression, you might think: "Oh no, what have I done wrong?" or "Maybe he's having a bad day."

**Emotions** are feelings, such as joy, sadness, anger, or worry. They can have physical and mental components, such as low energy when you feel sad or a stomach ache when you're nervous.

**Behaviors** are your response to a situation. Behaviors include actions like saying something or doing something (or choosing to do nothing).

# WHAT IS ANXIETY?





# Smoke Detector

- Anxiety is part of our body and acts as a defensive mechanism.
- It helps us survive threats and avoid dangerous situations.
- The mind and body work together to mobilize and decide if we want to flee, attack, neutralize, face, or adapt to dangerous situations that arise.
- In some cases there are people where normal anxiety changes and alters them.
- When it affects your daily life it is no longer normal anxiety.

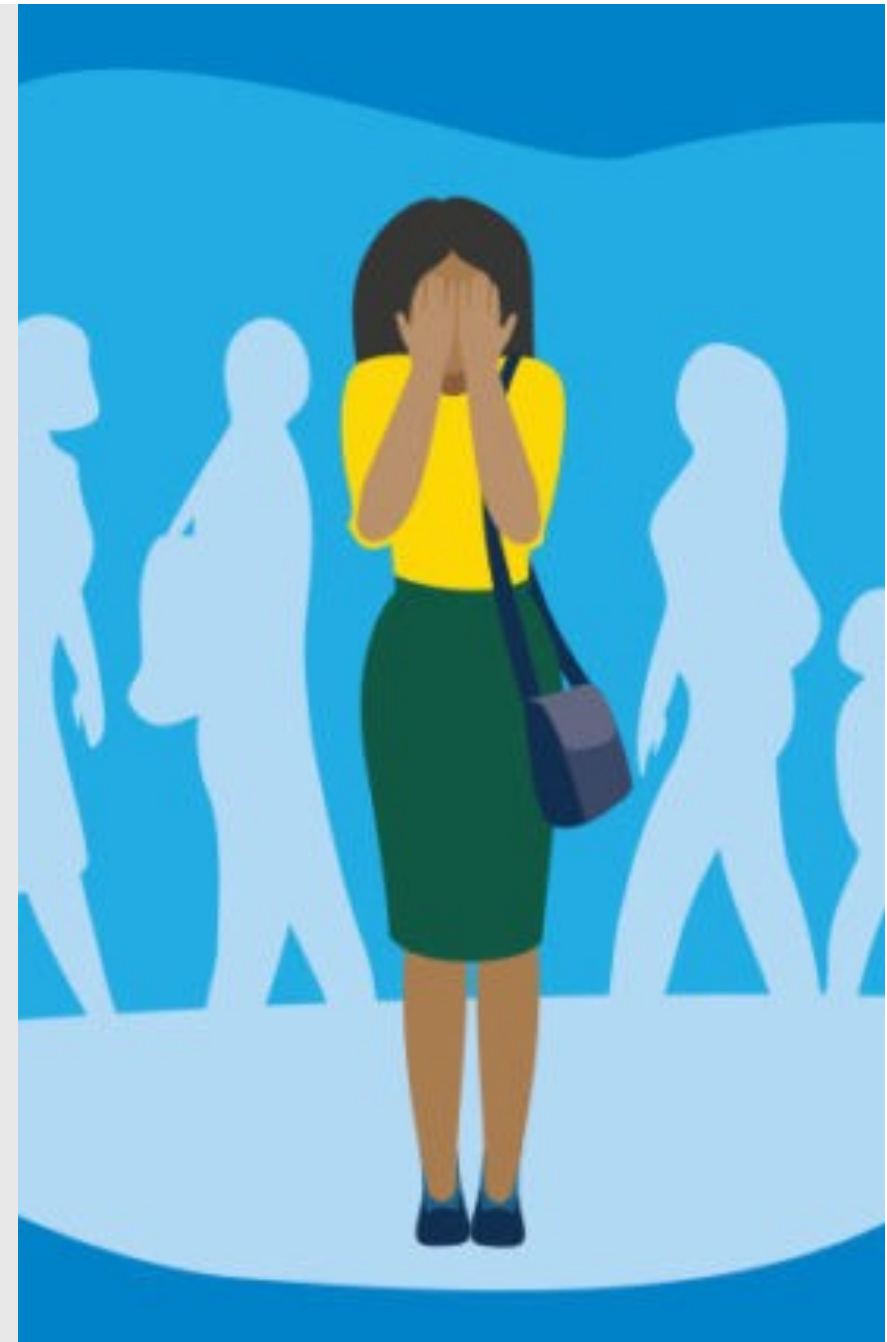
# Common Symptoms

- Excessive anxiety and worry occurring on most days for at least 6 months
- Difficulty controlling worry
- Concern
- Feeling nervous
- Easily fatigued
- Difficulty concentrating or a blank mind
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Sleep disturbances (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless, unsatisfactory sleep)
- Anxiety, worry, or physical symptoms cause distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of life.

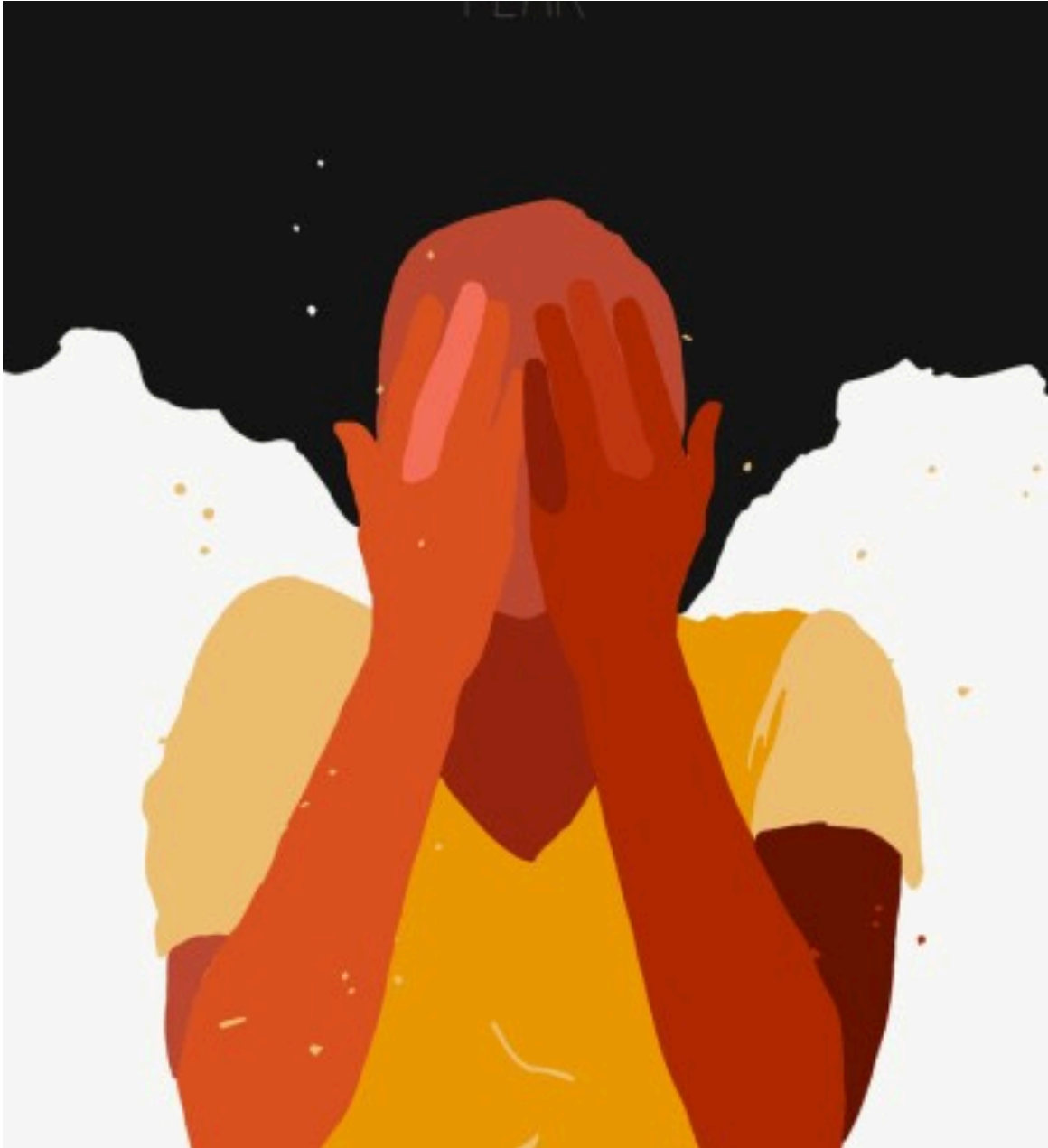


# Social Anxiety Disorder

- Excessive fear of being negatively evaluated by others in social situations.
- The fear is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the social situation.
- They avoid social situations or endure them with intense fear or anxiety.







# Specific Phobia

- Extreme fear or anxiety about an object or specific situations (flying, heights, animals, seeing blood)
- They avoid the object or situation or endure it with intense fear.
- In children, fear or anxiety may be expressed by crying, tantrums, freezing, clinging.

# Panic Attacks

- Abrupt surge of intense fear that peaks over a matter of minutes
- Increased heart rate or irregular heart rate
- Perspiration
- Tremors or tremors
- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling unable to breathe
- Choking sensation
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal discomfort
- Feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or fainting
- Chills or sensations of heat
- Numbness or tingling
- Feeling detached from yourself or feeling like things aren't real
- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Afraid to die





# Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Developmentally inappropriate fear of being separated from caregivers
- Excessive distress in anticipating or experiencing separation from home or parents
- Persistent worries about losing your parents or something bad happening to them (illness, injury, disaster, death)
- Excessive worry about experiencing an unusual event that leads to being separated (getting lost, being kidnapped, having an accident, getting sick)
- Reluctance or refusal to leave home for fear of separation
- Refusal to sleep away from home or sleep away from parents
- Fear of being alone without parents at home or in other settings
- Nightmares about separation
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, nausea, or vomiting when separating from parents or anticipating separation

# Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- The concern is for everything or in general rather than for a specific situation



# Where does anxiety come from?

Biological or genetic factors

Lifestyle

Stress of home environment, work, school, with friends, or with money

Being afraid of various situations

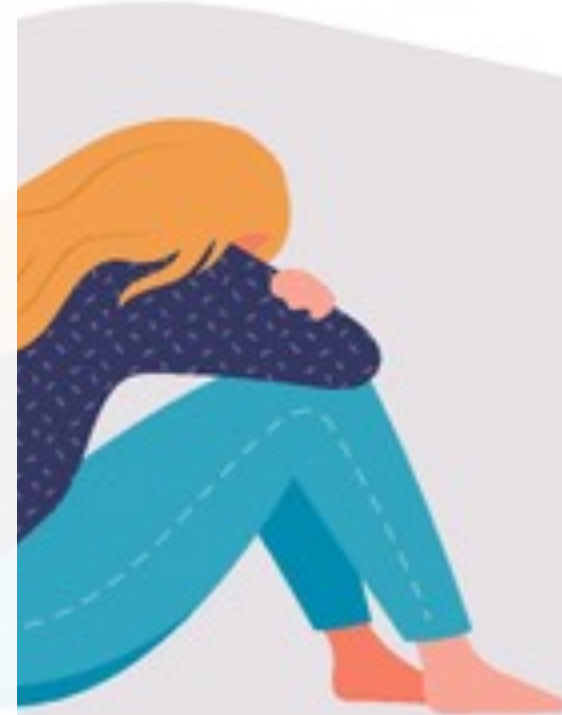
Negative events in life

Alcohol, stimulants, and drugs

Effects of medications

Health problems

Lack of oxygen



# Psychologist vs Psychiatrist



## Treatment Options

- Therapy with a psychologist or mental health therapist
- Medication from your primary doctor or a psychiatrist

# Treatment with a Psychologist

- Changing the way of thinking
- Gradual exposure to fears
- Learn new ways to deal with stress and anxiety



PSYCHOTHERAPY



# Helping Your Child at Home

- Meditation
- Reduce stress
- Spend time outdoors
- Do things that are pleasant
- Socialize with family and friends
- Think constructively
- Building courage and facing fears little by little



# Communicate Acceptance and Trust

- “It's hard, but you have the power to get through.”
- “I understand it's hard, but I'm sure you can cope.”
- “I know it's hard right now, but you'll be fine.”
- “You feel worried, but it's okay to feel that way.”
- “Anxiety is uncomfortable and you can handle it.”
- “I know you feel like you need my help, but I believe in you.”





# COMMUNITY TREATMENT



# Resources

- Talk to your pediatrician.
- Ask for help from the school.
- Find a psychologist or therapist at [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)
- Learn more about anxiety at [childmind.org](https://www.childmind.org) or [sanamente.org](https://www.sanamente.org)
- Book in English for parents – “Breaking Free of Child Anxiety and OCD” by Eli R Lebowitz
- Morrissey-Compton Educational Center - assessments, therapy, groups - [morrcomp.org](https://www.morrcomp.org)