

Addressing anxiety

by JENNIFER HOGELAND



A racing heartbeat. Sweaty palms. Feeling overwhelmed.

It's normal to experience anxiety or feel stressed in different situations. In fact, in some cases anxiety helps us function — keeping us on task and ensuring we get things done. But, when anxiety begins to consume daily activities, it's a problem.

"We usually tell people if your anxiety is impacting your daily functioning then it is out of control — if it is impacting you at work, school or in your relationships," says Lisa Schubring, licensed marriage and family therapist at Prevea Behavioral Care.

"If you are spending a significant amount of your day worrying about a variety of topics — relationships, finances, health — or you are avoiding engaging in tasks because it brings up feel-

ings of anxiety that can be a signal you are getting into the realm of an anxiety disorder," adds Dr. Deirdre Radosevich, psychologist at Aurora BayCare Medical Center.

There are a variety of strategies to manage anxiety. Meditate. Listen to music. Take a moment to clear your head.

"I tell people anxiety's best friend is distraction," says Schubring. "If we can distract ourselves we can often improve our anxiety."

Dr. Radosevich explains daily exercise and eating well are also effective ways to keep anxiety in control.

Schubring recommends pinpointing the cause of anxiety. "If you can isolate and identify the cause of the anxiety you often can do something to change the situation," she says.

If it isn't possible to have control over the situation that causes anxiety, Schubring suggests finding coping mechanisms. This could be as simple as talking to someone or getting up to walk around.

When feeling an anxiety attack coming on, Dr. Radosevich recommends taking controlled or deep breaths. She reveals laughter is often the best medicine. "Being able to use humor and maintain a positive attitude can help," she adds.

If coping strategies aren't working, it may be time to visit your primary care physician. He or she can direct you to a counselor, prescribe medication or both.

Dr. Radosevich reveals she's seeing an increase in anxiety in children, teens and adults. She attributes this to increased socialization — people are never unplugged. Schubring believes life has also become more stressful.

"The pursuit of perfection is a huge issue," she says. "People are pulled in so many different directions and there are so many things that demand our attention today."

Wondering why some people struggle with anxiety more than others? Schubring suggests some people are exposed to higher amounts of stress — work related or family related. Research suggests there also may be a genetic connection.

While having a support system is often beneficial to easing anxiety, Dr. Radosevic explains there is no shame in seeking help.

"There are many people that have anxiety issues. You aren't alone. It is a very treatable disorder and something people can overcome," she adds. [u](#)

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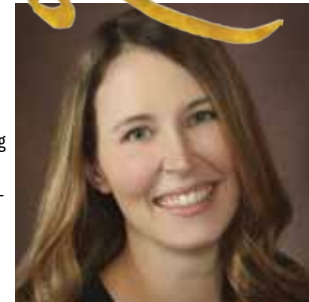
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