

The information contained in these handouts is provided to increase awareness of how hypnosis may help and does not constitute medical expert opinion, diagnosis, or treatment. It is not intended to replace medical care or professional advice from a qualified healthcare provider. If you have any concerns for yourself or loved ones consult with medical and or health providers.

Anxiety: Handout

Definition

Anxiety is a normal emotion that happens when your mind and body sense danger or uncertainty. It can include feelings of worry, fear, or unease, and it often comes with physical symptoms (like a fast heartbeat or tight muscles). Anxiety becomes a problem when it's intense, persistent, and/or interferes with daily life.

How Anxiety Affects People Mentally

Anxiety can show up in thoughts, emotions, and behaviors such as:

- Constant worry or “what if” thinking
- Racing thoughts or difficulty focusing
- Overthinking and expecting the worst
- Fear of losing control, embarrassment, or panic
- Irritability or feeling on edge
- Avoidance (staying away from situations that trigger anxiety)
- Low confidence (“I can’t handle this”)

Common mental patterns:

- Threat-focused thinking (your brain “scans” for danger)
- Catastrophizing (predicting the most negative outcome)
- Mind-reading (assuming others judge you)
- All-or-nothing thinking (things must be perfect to be safe)

How Anxiety Affects People Physically

Anxiety can trigger the body's “fight-or-flight” response, which may cause:

- Fast heartbeat / pounding heart
- Shortness of breath or tight chest

- Sweating, chills, or hot flashes
- Trembling, restlessness, or muscle tension
- Stomach issues (nausea, diarrhea, stomach cramps) • Headaches
- Fatigue (even if you're "trying to stay ready")
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Sleep problems (trouble falling asleep or staying asleep)
- Changes in appetite
- Frequent urges to urinate

Important: These physical symptoms are real—they're caused by your nervous system, even if the "threat" is mostly psychological.

Myths About Anxiety (and the Truth)

Myth 1: "Anxiety means something is seriously wrong."

Truth: Anxiety often reflects a stress response, not a clear emergency. It can feel dangerous, but it's commonly manageable.

Myth 2: "People with anxiety are just weak or can't handle life."

Truth: Anxiety can happen to anyone. It's influenced by biology, learning, stress, and nervous-system sensitivity—not character strength.

Myth 3: "If you think positively enough, anxiety will go away."

Truth: Positive thinking can help, but anxiety is more than thoughts. It involves habits, body sensations, conditioning, and coping skills.

Myth 4: "You just have to push through it—don't talk about it."

Truth: Avoidance can make anxiety grow over time. Support and skills often reduce symptom .

Myth 5: "Anxiety is always constant."

Truth: Many people have waves—symptoms may flare during stress, transitions, or certain situations.

Myth 6: "Panic attacks mean you're in danger or having a medical emergency."

Truth: Panic attacks are intensely uncomfortable but usually not life-

threatening. They are a surge of fear/physical arousal that typically settles.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q1: Is anxiety normal?

Yes. Everyone has anxiety sometimes. The key difference is when it becomes frequent, intense, or disruptive.

Q2: How do I know if it's "too much" anxiety?

Consider it "too much" if it:

- interferes with work, school, relationships, or health
- lasts for weeks/months without relief
- causes frequent avoidance
- leads to panic episodes or constant physical symptoms

Q3: Can anxiety make me feel like I'm sick?

Yes. Anxiety can cause stomach problems, headaches, dizziness, muscle tension, and sleep difficulties.

Q4: Why do my symptoms feel physical even when I know I'm safe?

Your brain and body can trigger the fight-or-

flight system automatically. Knowing you're safe doesn't always stop the body's alarm right away.

Q5: Will hypnotherapy replace medication or therapy?

Often hypnotherapy is used alongside other supports. Whether medication is appropriate depends on the person and should be guided by a qualified clinician.

Q6: Can anxiety be treated?

Yes. Many people improve with evidence-

based therapies, coping strategies, skills training, lifestyle changes, and hypnotherapy

How Hypnotherapy Can Help With Anxiety

Hypnotherapy is a therapeutic approach that uses focused attention and guided suggestions to help reduce distress and support healthier responses to anxiety.

Common ways hypnotherapy may help include:

- Reducing fear responses: Helping your mind and body feel safer during anxiety symptoms.
- Changing automatic patterns: Working with learned associations (e.g., “I feel a Symptom → I panic → it gets worse”).
- Building calm and coping resources: Teaching relaxation responses you can access when stress rises.
- Improving sleep: Supporting deeper relaxation and reducing “threat scanning” at bed time.
- Strengthening confidence: Reinforcing beliefs like “I can handle this feeling” and “It will pass.”
- Supporting emotion regulation: Making it easier to respond rather than react.
- Reducing avoidance: Encouraging gradual, manageable engagement with triggering situations (when appropriate).

A typical hypnotherapy process often includes:

1. Assessment and goals (what anxiety looks like for you)
2. Learning relaxation/focus skills
3. Targeted suggestions for anxiety patterns and coping
4. Practice between sessions (where applicable)
5. Review and progress tracking

Quick “Takeaway” Box

- Anxiety is a normal alarm system that can become overactive.
- It affects mind (worry, thoughts, fear) and body (fight-or-flight symptoms).
- Myths can increase shame; facts can support effective help.
- Hypnotherapy may help by calming the nervous system, changing anxiety habits, and Strengthening coping.

If you’d like help getting started, you can book a supportive consultation with Brendan Hypnotherapy Online and discuss your Anxiety.