

# depression and anxiety

## What they look like and when to seek help.



When it comes to anxiety and depression, it can be hard or even uncomfortable to distinguish between behavior that is “normal” for a particular person and behavior that is unhealthy. Everyone has their own baseline. Some people are naturally more anxious. Others might be more relaxed. This doesn’t necessarily mean anything is wrong. In fact, a healthy amount of self-awareness can be helpful. It serves as a reminder to follow the speed limit when driving, to take turns talking during a conversation, or to dress well for an interview. But what happens when that self-awareness rises to an unhealthy level? **Let’s talk about it.**

Without appropriate support and intervention, sometimes the characteristics once thought to be minor or harmless can become a problem. Anxiety and depression can begin to interrupt daily functioning and can disrupt the ability to work, carry out daily activities, or even engage in satisfying relationships: in other words, the ability to live, laugh, learn, and love.

For almost all mental health disorders, studies show there is typically a delay in an individual seeking treatment and a large percent who never seek treatment. Research compiled by Mental Health First Aid (2015) indicated that delay can be as long as ten years. Most people only report physical health complaints when visiting a doctor and neglect to share concerns or questions about psychological issues, further delaying potential treatment. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), reports an estimated 19% of adults struggle with an anxiety disorder, compared with 31.9% of adolescents affected, yet only 36.9% of those suffering will seek or receive treatment (2017).

Anxiety and depression most often have their onset in late childhood and early adolescence. Because of this, the detriments associated with delayed treatment and lack of support have the capacity to be far reaching by affecting education, social skills, physical health, relationships, and even the ability for long-term employment.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**19%**

of adults struggle with an anxiety disorder

**31.9%**

of adolescents are impacted by an anxiety disorder

**36.9%**

of those adolescents suffering will seek or receive treatment for their anxiety



## Understanding Depression and Anxiety

Several years ago, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA, 2006) conducted a self-report survey to better understand typical workplace stress levels. The results were startling. Over 70% of individuals surveyed reported stress and anxiety levels that moderately affected their daily functioning, 40% reported experiencing excessive anxiety, 30% reported regular use of medication to manage symptoms, and 28% reported experiencing a panic or anxiety attack at some time during the past year. What was surprising about the report was that of all the individuals surveyed, only 9% reported to have a diagnosed anxiety disorder. Knowing there may be a problem is only a start. **Knowing what to do next can be life-changing, and for some, lifesaving. So, let's talk about it!**

In many ways, mental health treatment is a type of spectrum. For some, educational prevention might be all that is needed. This could be a stress management or resilience training course or even mental health education programs like Mental Health First Aid, offered by Peace River Center. Prevention is best for individuals who are otherwise well or might be starting to experience

a mild difficulty in functioning. If difficulty persists or increases despite the preventative efforts, getting some professional help may be a good next step. Finding a safe person to talk to or even making an outpatient therapy appointment is a great start. If treatment is needed, an individualized plan for treatment can be developed with a therapist. Though treatment looks different for each person, many people diagnosed with anxiety and depression find that a successful combination of medication management and talk therapy help to reduce symptoms and bring balance back to your daily life.

When safety is a concern and immediate help is needed, support from experts trained in responding to mental health crises is available. Peace River Center operates a 24/7 Crisis Hotline for phone or walk-in services. If you can't come to us, our Mobile Crisis Response Team will go to you in Polk, Highlands or Hardee Counties 24/7/365.

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**If you are in crisis, need emotional support or are struggling with the urge to use substances, please call our free 24-hour crisis line at 863.519.3744 or toll-free at 800.627.5906. For questions or to schedule an appointment, call 863.248.3311 or toll-free, 800.305.6780.**