

For Employees:

WORKING WITH AN ANXIETY DISORDER



What is an Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety is a regular part of life, but an Anxiety Disorder goes beyond occasional worry or stress. Anxiety becomes an anxiety disorder when feelings are persistent, overwhelming, and disrupt daily life. Common types include generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, social anxiety, and phobias. Affecting around 18% of US adults, anxiety disorders are common and treatable. Those living with anxiety may experience:

- Excessive worry or fear that is difficult to manage
- Restlessness or feeling “on edge”
- Fatigue or difficulty sleeping
- Trouble concentrating or mind going blank
- Physical distress like increased heart rate, sweating, upset stomach, or muscle tension

How Anxiety Disorders Can Impact the Workday:

Anxiety disorders can make work and home life more difficult by impacting:

- Focus and concentration
- Social interactions
- Decision-making
- Time management
- Energy level

Many people with anxiety are productive team members in their workplace and develop useful skills by learning how to manage their anxiety, such as:

- **Resilience and coping skills** to manage stress and decrease instances of overwhelm
- **Self-awareness** leading to strong self-management
- **Emotion regulation**, which can help in high-pressure situations
- **Empathy and sensitivity**, contributing to inclusive and compassionate work environments
- **Creative problem-solving** helping the team see new ways of exploring solutions
- **Verbal and nonverbal communication skills** leading to greater engagement and empathy for colleagues and customers.



If you find yourself struggling with your mental health, remember that you are not alone. NAMI has a HelpLine you can call or text if you want help finding or understanding resources for yourself or a loved one. You can also call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline to be connected with a trained counselor who will offer compassionate and accessible support, resources and referrals to community care.



stigmafree.nami.org

NAMI HelpLine

Managing ANXIETY DISORDERS in the Workplace

Tools to Manage an Anxiety Disorder in the Workplace

Many people with anxiety disorders thrive at work with few or no accommodation. You may wish to connect with your treatment provider for help identifying accommodations that may be helpful. Some common adaptations include:

- **Flexible work arrangements** so you can attend treatment appointments, therapy, or support groups.
- **Temporary workload adjustment** so you can ensure appropriate engagement on your tasks and deliverables.
- **Access to a quiet workspace** or noise-canceling headphones to better allow concentration on work.
- **Modified break schedule** so you can take breaks according to your needs.



Steps You Can Take to Seek Help

- **Reach Out for Support:** Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or mental health professional. Opening up can make a big difference.
- **Access Employer Resources:** Explore your company's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or health benefits for therapy or counseling options.
- **Practice Stress-Management Techniques:**
 - Breathing exercises (i.e. box breathing), mindfulness (i.e. meditation), or grounding exercises (i.e. progressive muscle relaxation) can help in the moment.
 - Journaling or singing your thoughts can help you slow down and gain perspective.
- **Set Small, Achievable Goals:** Break tasks into manageable steps to prevent feeling overwhelmed.
- **Problem Solve with Your Manager (if comfortable):** Reflect on what support might be helpful, or connect with your treatment provider or another source (like the Job Accommodation Network) to learn about potential accommodations. Write down what you want to cover with your manager. It can be helpful to remind your manager that your will continue to meet the needs of your job.
- **Consider Professional Treatment:** Therapy (such as cognitive-behavioral therapy) and medication can be highly effective in treating anxiety disorders.

Remember: Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. You're not alone, and help is available.

MORE RESOURCES



NAMI HelpLine Call: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)

Text: "helpline" to 62640 | Chat: nami.org/help



Find Your Local
NAMI

[NAMI.org/local](https://nami.org/local)

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Available 24/7/365

Call, text, or chat

988lifeline.org

- [NAMI's Anxiety Disorders webpage](#) provide an overview of anxiety symptoms along with treatments and support available to those living with an anxiety disorder.
- [NAMI Peer-to-Peer Classes](#) are a free, eight-session educational program for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery. Taught by trained leaders with lived experience, this program includes activities, discussions and informative videos. Find a Peer-to-Peer course near you via your [local NAMI Affiliate](#).
- [NAMI Connection Support Group](#) is a peer support group for people with mental health conditions. Groups meet weekly, every other week or monthly, depending on location. This program is also available at certain NAMI affiliates in Spanish, as NAMI Conexión. Find a NAMI Connection Support Group near you via your [local NAMI Affiliate](#).
- [Anxiety & Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#) offers in-depth information on anxiety, depression, OCD, and PTSD and co-occurring disorders, including treatment, resources, and support group information. ADAA also offers a [Support Group Locator](#) where you can search for in-person and online support groups for individuals and families of those living with the condition.
- [The Anxiety Network](#) provides resources, information and screening tools about panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder. They also offer online articles about anxiety-related topics and ways to cope.
- [Phobias Awareness](#) is a free, online community forum for people experiencing anxiety to connect with others to gain support and learn coping techniques.