

Anxiety is a normal emotion that everyone feels. Anxiety helps us react right away when we're in danger. However, our brains sometimes think there is danger when there is none. This resource provides basic information about anxiety.

## WHY DO PEOPLE FEEL ANXIOUS?

You might have heard people describe anxiety as worry, uncertainty, concern, fear, or stress. These are all different words for anxiety.

Some causes of anxiety may include:

- Going to certain places, like school or the doctor's office.
- Being in social settings, like making friends or going to parties.
- Specific things like heights, bugs, or clowns.

People might feel nervous when they are around these things.



## SIGNS OF ANXIETY

- Anxiety affects how people think, feel, or behave and can make our bodies feel different.
- Some people might feel sick to their stomach, sweaty, have a hard time breathing, or have trouble thinking clearly.
- Anxiety causes people to “Fight, Flight, or Freeze.”
- Some people “fight” when they are anxious. This means they may argue, become angry, yell, or become physically aggressive.
- Some people experience feelings that make them want to take “flight,” or that they have to run away or get out of the situation immediately.
- Other people “freeze” when they are anxious. This may make them feel like they can't talk, feel stuck in their body, have trouble remembering what happened, or feel cold.
- Other signs of anxiety for people with autism may include an increase in self-stimulatory behaviors, asking repetitive questions, having a harder time communicating, or pacing.

## WHAT IS NEXT?

If you feel like your anxiety is severe or causing problems in your everyday life, there are different ways to help.

- Therapists can help teach how to recognize the signs of anxiety and different coping strategies.
- Doctors can prescribe medications when anxiety impacts everyday life.

To learn more about anxiety, check out other Be Well, Think Well resources on how to recognize, diagnose, and treat this condition.