

# Fear and anxiety



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Fear causes anxiety, and anxiety can cause fear. Throughout our lives, we experience circumstances that make us feel different emotions. Some situations make us experience positive feelings and emotions, such as joy and excitement. At other times, we experience things that bring about feelings of loneliness, loss, sadness, fear and anxiety. Anxiety and fear both produce similar responses to certain dangers. Also, they both often cause similar symptoms, such as muscle tension, increased heart rate and shortness of breath brought about by the body's "flight-or-fight" instinct.

It is no surprise that for many of us fear and anxiety pretty much mean the same thing but indeed there is a difference. Fear is known to be a cognitive and an emotional response to a situation in which someone feels threatened, related to the specific behaviors of escape and avoidance. The cause of the threat is realistic in nature. For example, if someone is chasing you with a knife, human instinct of fear is to run! Often times, fear of a certain situation or event is caused by a traumatic event experienced earlier in life.

The effects of this traumatic event are carried by the person throughout his or her life to such an extent that when the individual finds himself or herself in a similar situation, he or she begins to feel the symptoms of being threatened. As a child I was bitten by a dog and ever since then I have a fear of dogs. When I see a dog, I immediately start to run away. Another example, I have a fear of driving because one of my older brothers' passed away due to a car accident so I try to avoid driving. In short, fear is the ability to recognize a dangerous situation leading to an urge to confront it or flee from it.

My fear of driving can also be related to anxiety because when I do drive I tend to feel nervous and worried. Some of my friends may even say I drive as slow as an old lady because of how slow and cautious I drive. Anxiety is considered to be a psychological disorder where the person experiences symptoms similar to those experienced by those who face fear-inducing situations or circumstances. The difference between anxiety and fear is that, unlike fear, symptoms leading to anxiety can happen even though there is no apparent risk or cause for physical harm.

Anxiety can create feelings of concern and uneasiness. Although it is considered to be a normal reaction to a stressor, when it becomes excessive, it may fall under the classification of an anxiety disorder. For example, it is normal for someone to feel anxious before taking an important test, or before a presentation, or before a job interview. Those who suffer from anxiety find themselves helpless and unable to cope with their symptoms to such an extent that that it begins to interfere with their daily activities and interactions with other people.

Anxiety is often one of the primary causes of other psychological disorders, such as depression and personality disorders. I have some history with anxiety. When I was about 14 years old, I began stressing a lot of things, being worried and feeling scared, so much that I isolated myself from my friends and family. Sometimes, I would experience anxiety attacks just from thinking about “ what ifs...” or from waiting on something to happen and not knowing the outcome. Headaches, chest pains, shortness of breath, frequent urination, upset stomach and insomnia are some of the symptoms I dealt with.

I didn't seek professional help til I was 16, where I received counseling for about 15 months. Soon after, since I was still having the symptoms of an anxiety disorder, I was put on a medication called Prozac for about six months, then Xanax for about 10 months. The starting doses for these medication is 0. 25-0. 5 mg 3 times daily using immediate release tablets. The dose may be increased every 3-4 days to a maximum dose of 4 mg daily. Although, sometimes I still do experience some of the symptoms, it's not as bad as before. Now, thankfully, I am not on medication.

Everyone has felt a little anxious at one time or another. It may have been when you were dealing with issues of work, school, or relationships with family, friends, or significant others. You may also have felt fear about something in particular. Some people have a severe fear (phobia) of heights, closed spaces, or spiders. Or you can have a short-lived fear response to a bee buzzing around your face, and you can wake up at three in the morning drenched in anxiety that won't let you get back to sleep. Anxiety is just one of those things you learn to live with whether you have to be on medication or not.

Fear, on the other hand, can often cause the individual to become empowered to deal with and overcome this. Because they are able to determine the root cause of their fear, they are able to look into options that will help them overcome their fears and be able to live a normal life. For instance, a fear of dogs is something that can be unlearned. Whereas, the feeling of anxiety is something that happens just because; there is no root cause. No one signs up to feel difficult, uncomfortable emotions but we can't

avoid these feelings either. Whatever your case may be, fear or anxiety, you can live with it or choose to overcome it.