

Anxiety

Fear is a normal and healthy feeling to have when a person is in danger. If you had to run from a lion to save your life the experience of fear would prepare your body to flee the situation and help keep you safe. Fear becomes anxiety when you feel fearful when you are in no actual danger. When people experience anxiety, peoples bodies react as if they are in actual danger which can be extremely distressing and can get in the way of living life to the full.

Symptoms of anxiety include:

- ◆ Excessive worry
- ◆ Feeling uneasy or restless
- ◆ Not being able to think clearly
- ◆ Getting a dry mouth when stressed
- ◆ A rapid heart beat

If you are experiencing anxiety it might be helpful to:

- ◆ Listen carefully to what your anxiety is telling you. You may actually have a very good reason to be anxious and may need to make some changes in your life.
- ◆ Learn as much about anxiety as you can. The more you know about anxiety the greater the chance of being able to beat it.
- ◆ If you have distressing memories confront them rather than avoiding them. The more you avoid something, the more fear evoking it becomes. You may find it helpful to consult a counsellor if you have difficulty doing this.
- ◆ Learn which situations, thoughts, memories and experiences trigger your anxiety and learn to deal with the trigger. Being able to identify anxiety and then take active steps to settle yourself down helps your body to learn that you are not in danger, which can then lead to a reduction in your level of anxiety.
- ◆ Learn to challenge and settle your thoughts and beliefs when you get anxious.
- ◆ Learn what you can do to calm yourself down when you do get anxious. E.g. Go for a walk, have a bath, call a friend, do some gardening, write down your worries, go for a swim.

(continued on the next page)

- ◆ If you are doing too much in your life or have too many responsibilities, do what you can to make more time for you. Learn to say NO.
- ◆ Develop relaxing activities that help you feel relaxed.

Please feel free to contact Life Supports on 1300 735 030 if you would like to discuss your situation with a professional counsellor. You can find more information about Life Supports services by visiting www.lifesupports.com.au.