

## Anxiety Disorders *By Cheryl McKinzie, LPC Intern*

Everybody knows what it is like to feel anxious -- the butterflies in your stomach before a first date, the tension you feel when your boss is angry, and the way your heart pounds if you are in danger. Anxiety rouses you to action. It gears you up to face a threatening situation. It makes you study harder for that exam, and keeps you on your toes when you are making a speech. In general, it helps you cope. However, if you have an anxiety disorder, this normally helpful emotion can do just the opposite -- it can keep you from coping and can disrupt your daily life. There are several types of anxiety disorders, each with its own distinct features. An anxiety disorder may make you feel anxious most of the time without any apparent reason. The anxious feelings may be so uncomfortable that to avoid it you may stop some regular, everyday activities. You may have occasional bouts of anxiety so intense it terrifies and immobilizes you.

### What is It?

Anxiety disorders are the most common of all the mental health disorders. Considered in the category of anxiety disorders are: Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Agoraphobia, Social Phobia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Specific Phobia, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Acute Stress Disorder. Anxiety disorders as a whole cost the United States between 42-46 billion dollars a year in direct and indirect healthcare costs, which is a third of the yearly total mental health bill of 148 billion dollars. In the United States, social phobia is the most common anxiety disorder with approximately 5.3 million people per year suffering from it. Estimates for panic disorder range between 3 to 6 million people per year; an anxiety disorder that twice as many women suffer from as men. Specific phobias affect more than one out of every 10 people with the prevalence for women being slightly higher than for men. Obsessive Compulsive disorder affects about every 2 to 3 people



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out of 100, with women and men being affected equally. Family history and genetics play a part in the greater likelihood of someone getting an anxiety disorder in their lifetime. Increased stress and inadequate coping mechanisms to deal with that stress may also contribute to anxiety.

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## When Work Schedules Differ *By Bob Good, ThM., LPC, CART*

### **Successful Planning for Keeping Your Relationship Strong**

There is no question that relationships require nurturing, commitment and understanding. And when work schedules operate differently in a marriage it is quite possible that additional stressors may put a strain on even the most secure relationship. In a marriage, effective negotia-

tion *skills*, understanding and respect are key factors in making the relationship work. Although two lives become one it is apparent that individual likes, dislikes, habits, and idiosyncrasies of each still exist. Because of those differences, it is important to implement constant cultivation, no matter if it's brand new or long term. Add different work schedules to

the mix and everyday stressors can seem larger than they actually are. Strategies to keep the relationship strong become a top priority.

### **Make A Policy of Undivided Time Together**

When two people have opposite work schedules, designate a specific uninterrupted day devoted entirely

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## Anxiety Disorders *Continued from Page 1*



***“...there are biological & psychological components to every anxiety disorder.”***

Anxiety symptoms can result from such a variety of factors including having had a traumatic experience, having to face major decisions in one's life, or having developed a more fearful perspective on life. Anxiety caused by medications or substance abuse is not typically recognized as an anxiety disorder.

### **Treatment**

Many people still carry the misperception that anxiety disorders are a character flaw, a problem that happens because you are weak. They say, "Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps!" & "You

just have a case of the nerves." Wishing the symptoms away does not work -- but there are treatments that can help. Anxiety disorders and panic attacks are not signs of a character flaw. Most importantly, feeling anxious is not your fault. It is a serious mood disorder, which affects a person's ability to function in everyday activities. It affects one's work, one's family, & one's social life. Today, much more is known about the causes & treatment of this mental health problem. We know there are biological & psy-

chological components to every anxiety disorder & that the best form of treatment is a combination of cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy interventions. Depending upon the severity of the anxiety, medication may be used in combination with psychotherapy. Contrary to the popular misconceptions about anxiety disorders today, it is not a purely biochemical or medical disorder & treatment can be successful. Contact a licensed professional who can help in the assessment & treatment of anxiety disorders & assist in building hope for today!

## When Work Schedules Differ

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***“Relationships are important parts of our lives & deserve loving attention.”***

to each other. Go see a matinee. Grab a bottle of wine and picnic lunch and walk to the park. Go exercise with your partner. Don't answer the phone and go a day without answering email. This day is about finding interest in your partner's life.

### **Capitalize On Taking Time With Each Other During Work Schedules**

Even if work schedules differ, make the effort to meet your husband/wife, if only for a few moments. Schedule lunch or dinner together. If 20-30 minutes isn't possible, make the extra effort to call him/her. Get up an hour early or delay bedtime to discuss your partner's day -- make the most of the few moments you have together.

### **Establish Roles and Responsibilities**

Who does the budget? What are the roles and numerous other responsibilities that keep the household running smoothly? If children are part of the picture, who takes them to school or daycare, reviews homework, sets up play schedules? Deciding who does what so that time together is not filled with trying to figure out if bills have been paid, or if the laundry has been done or the kid's school project is overdue, helps keep the lines of communication open and alleviates time spent playing catch up.

### **Remember Those Special Occasions**

With different work schedules, invariably a birthday, anniversary or special occasion may be forgotten. Understanding that a partner's work schedule may not allow time off, perhaps the

both of you may need to take time to celebrate the special day before or after. Remember what brought you together in the first place and the actual days that mark those occasions become far less important than the reason why they are special in the first place. Make a concerted effort to remember those occasions -- send flowers, write short notes of appreciation and place them by their computer, or, stick a card in with lunch or near the coffeemaker where your spouse will know that the occasion, and he or she, are not forgotten.

Relationships are important parts of our lives and deserve loving attention. Being aware of each other's needs and finding special time even when work schedules differ, is vital to its continuing success.

## Everybody Has Music *by Wendy Kaye-Russell, LPC Intern*

There is a lovely song that says, *"Music is the sound of life, reaching out for love. Everybody has music inside."* In our modern world, sounds of various kinds of music abound.

Whether it be classical, pop, rock or the blues, our personal taste in music is often a reflection of our personal desires, the generation we grew up in, and times when we felt emotional or the most connected. Think right now of your favorite song. Notice what feelings surface as you start to hear it playing in your mind. Let yourself pause a moment and hum or sing it aloud. It may stir joy or loss, connection, or a memory of a meaningful past event. Perhaps you have had the experience of going through a challenging time, and finding particular comfort in listening repeatedly to a certain song. Let yourself feel the appreciation for how much music has contributed to your life in the great moments like your graduation, prom night, your wedding, your first dance, and other moments of happiness in your life. Truly, it is a gift that is worth cherishing.

It would be interesting to take some time out this week to survey your music collection with fresh eyes and examine what it would reveal

about you. Explore the memories you have around the music that you have not listened to recently. Watch how you've changed, or how that music reawakens good dreams in your heart. How about exchanging your iPod with someone you are trying to get to know better? They could learn more about what you are listening to, and vice-versa. If someone did not know you, but met your music collection, what would they learn about you just by listening to your music?

In 1854 Henry David Thoreau wrote: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." What music do you hear in your internal world? What sounds play on the repeat button in your heart? Sometimes the sound we might hear is just the sound of an echo. If so what are you echoing? You might be echoing the messages long ago planted in your heart by your parents: "What's wrong with you now?" Or maybe, "I'm proud of you." For some, there is no time to hear the music of their own hearts. Their internal world has become a cacophony of confusion and noise, schedules too

full and demands of people too numerous. For others, life may seem dull and lifeless. The sound they hear is the sound of emptiness with traces of longing for something better and different.

In the same way we get to choose what music we play in our homes, cars and on our iPods, you also have the choice to determine the music you play in your internal world. You are in charge of what you put on repeat and what you choose to think on and to keep playing in the background of your heart. Consider how changing your internal music will affect your moods and attitudes. No matter what choices you've made in the past, each moment is a new one to choose what you'd like to play and what is unhealthy for you and better discarded. You get to choose which dance you want to enjoy, and what song you want to sing today. Choose wisely, and let the music of your life create a symphony of happiness and love.



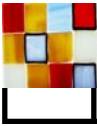
***"Consider how changing your internal music will affect your moods and attitudes."***

### On The Lighter Side . . .



*Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100*

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As I reflect on this year, I am reminded of how very fleeting life is here on earth. None of us likes to think about death and therefore we are many times ill-prepared when we are forced to deal with our own mortality. Can you think of losses you have faced in this past year? Maybe the loss of a loved one or friend, or a cherished pet? Perhaps the loss of a job or house? Loss comes in many forms - - we can lose physical things and people, but we can also lose ourselves.

“And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process?”<sup>1</sup> In our fast-paced, “me-first” society, we too often lose sight of what is important. Moreover, we rarely slow down long enough to look in the mirror and see our real selves. I often give my clients an assignment to look in the mirror and write down what they see. I am always amazed at some of the insights they have when they are

alone with themselves. It is not uncommon for someone to say they see someone who is lost or that they don’t even know who it is they see. Take a moment to see yourself, really see yourself – who do you see?

Jesus asked the disciples, “Who do you say I am?”<sup>2</sup> Now that is the important question. If you look in the mirror and you don’t see Jesus reflected, it’s time to take a seat at Jesus’ feet and learn whose you are. Through the losses I have encountered this year, it has caused me to stop and reflect on the brevity of life and the importance of making each moment count. Most importantly, to know that I am who I was created to be and that I will leave a legacy of Christ-likeness. People will not remember how much money you had, what nice things you owned, or the accomplishments of your career – in the end, they will remember you. Are you satisfied

with who you are right now or have you lost yourself in the cares of this world?

The road to finding yourself can be a long and winding one or a short straight shot. The long and winding road has many detours, pot holes, and forks in the road. These often include giving ourselves away to things that destroy us – lies, addictions, depression, anger, greed, and so many others. The short, straight road leads to the foot of the cross. When we lay down who we think we are and surrender, it is then that we truly find our identity – in Christ. Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me.”<sup>3</sup> Rather than lose yourself to empty things, find yourself – your true self- in Christ. When you do, you will see just how loved and precious you are. But it doesn’t end there. As you find yourself, take a look beside you, behind you, in front of you – and help someone see themselves too.

Life comes at you quickly and before you know it, the end has come. Examine your life and who you are. Think about the legacy you want to leave. Will yours touch a generation and inspire others to find out whose they are? If not, pray for eyes to see yourself as God sees you ... **and then catch His vision.**

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 15:26 (NLT)<sup>2</sup> Matthew 16:15 (NLT)<sup>3</sup> Galatians 2:19, 20 (NLT)



*“Are you satisfied with who you are?”*

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