

How Normal Anxiety, Depression & Stress Can Become a Problem

Isn't it normal to be stressed or depressed sometimes?

Yes – some life events are hard to cope with and will make you feel anxious, sad or stressed. However, everybody deals with their feelings differently and some people find it easier to cope with stressful events than others. The experiences we have had in our lives, and how we have learned to cope with them, will influence the way we deal with difficult situations.

What sort of things can cause increased stress, depression and anxiety?

- Difficult life events, especially if they last a long time
 - for example, the death of someone you love, serious illness (your own or someone else's), relationship / family problems, exams, losing your job or stress at work.
- The after-effects of a frightening situation
 - for example, if you are in a car accident, you may feel anxious when you are driving or a car passenger. If you are mugged, you may feel anxious about going out.
- Lack of confidence and negative thoughts about yourself
 - 'I'm a failure', 'I can't do this', 'I can't cope any more'.

What are the symptoms that stress, depression and anxiety are becoming a problem?

- You start getting panic attacks.
- You start hurting yourself, or think about ending your life.
- You drink too much, or take drugs to try to cope with your feelings.
- Your feelings last a long time, or keep coming back.
- Your feelings affect your work and your social life - you avoid other people, or stop doing activities you normally enjoy.
- Your feelings affect your sleep patterns, sex life or your appetite.
- You start to worry that your feelings are caused by a serious health problem and that you will never recover.

If you have any of these symptoms, you should go and see your GP or other health professional.

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