

## **Stress, Anxiety, and Depression**

*Adapted by Alissa Brown, Psy.D. from materials created by Minding Your Mind*

Emotional wellness is a personal and subjective experience unique to each individual. These materials provide you with an opportunity to explore the signs and symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, and to offer opportunities for reflection about yourselves and others. Most importantly, help is available when needed, and there are coping skills students can use to feel better.

- Cabrini is partnering with the Minding Your Mind program throughout 2021. Check out all of the online mental health resources here: [https://online.mindingyourmind.org/bundles/for-students?th\\_ug=31bc446c](https://online.mindingyourmind.org/bundles/for-students?th_ug=31bc446c)
- Undergraduate students at Cabrini also have access to free, confidential counseling services at CAPS – Counseling and Psychological Services. For more information, visit our website at: [www.cabrini.edu/counseling](http://www.cabrini.edu/counseling), or call 610-902-8596, or email us at [jennifer.gorman@cabrini.edu](mailto:jennifer.gorman@cabrini.edu)

### **Brief videos to get started:**

Understanding Anxiety - <https://vimeo.com/453326117/eab7ebe56b>

Understanding Depression - <https://vimeo.com/453329911/cffa6807a1>



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## WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is a normal part of life and happens to everyone. It can be helpful and motivate us to study for a test or get out of dangerous situations. But it can be harmful when it impacts our mood, friendships and relationships, health, and school performance.

### WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Stress can feel different for everyone, but usually we can feel stress physically and emotionally.

#### Physical Symptoms:



- Headaches
- Racing heart
- Sweating or sweaty hands
- Difficulty breathing, can't catch your breath
- Sleeping difficulties - can't fall asleep, wake up too early
- Stomachache or "butterflies in the stomach"
- Changes in appetite, nausea, digestion problems



#### Emotional Symptoms:



- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling tired
- Difficulty focusing
- Feeling angry or irritable
- Tearful, wanting to cry
- Easily frustrated
- Lashing out at others - yelling or screaming
- Avoiding something or ignoring the stressor
- Feeling like time is speeding up

### IS IT NORMAL?

Stress is normal and common, yet everyone experiences it differently. Stress can be really uncomfortable, but is manageable. Here are some things you can do:

- Take a few deep breaths or listen to music
- Talk to a friend or trusted adult
- Make a list and prioritize what has to happen first

# WHAT IS ANXIETY?



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Anxiety is a normal part of being human. It ranges from a vague apprehension to an intensely uncomfortable feeling similar to fear. Anxiety serves an important purpose: It is a warning signal, triggered by a conscious or unconscious perception of danger.

## WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Anxiety can feel different for everyone, but usually we can sense anxiety physically and emotionally.

### Physical Symptoms:



- Muscle tension
- Shaking
- Racing heart
- Dizziness
- Sweating
- Difficulty breathing
- Can't catch your breath
- Tightness/heaviness in chest
- Sleeping difficulties
- "Butterflies in the stomach"
- Changes in appetite, nausea, digestion problems



### Emotional Symptoms:



- Excessive worrying or thinking something is going to go wrong
- Specific fears
- Invasive automatic thoughts
- Negative thinking
- Self-criticism and self-doubt
- Difficulty trusting others
- Paranoia
- Inability to concentrate
- Feeling distracted
- Hypervigilance
- Isolation or avoidance

## IS IT NORMAL?

These symptoms are normal reactions to many situations; however, when anxiety becomes frequent, ongoing, or causes problems with normal everyday functioning, it may be considered a treatable disorder.



Important questions to consider:

How often do I experience anxiety?

How much does anxiety get in the way of living my life fully?





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# WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a normal reaction to loss, stress, and hardship. It affects how you feel and think. It often feels like lack of interest in activities that were once fun, and/or feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless for at least two weeks.

## WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Depression can feel different for everyone, but usually we can feel depression physically and emotionally.

### Physical Symptoms:



- Muscle fatigue
- Loss of energy
- Aches and pains
- Bodily heaviness or the feeling of being weighed down
- Changes in appetite, nausea, or digestion problems
- Sudden weight loss or weight gain
- Difficulty sleeping, waking up early or oversleeping
- Decrease in physical movement



### Emotional Symptoms:



- Unable to think, concentrate, remember, feeling foggy or indecisiveness
- Feeling sad or "empty"
- Having the same thoughts repeatedly
- Excessive crying or lack of emotions
- Feeling irritable or angry often
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness often
- Loss of interest or feeling pleasure
- Wanting to be alone
- Thoughts of death and/or suicide, or plans of suicide attempts



## IS IT NORMAL?

Depression is a normal reaction to many difficult situations; however, when depression continues for more than two weeks and causes problems with normal everyday functioning, it may be considered a treatable disorder.



Important questions to consider:

- Have I been feeling this way for more than two weeks?
- How much does my depression get in the way of living my life fully?