

Anxiety

People who deal with anxiety are often labeled as “worriers” or “high strung,” but the truth is, anxiety is a part of most everyone’s life at one time or another. Every person will deal with things that make them anxious, but sometimes, anxiety can get in the way of your daily life and become a problem.

Anxiety often accompanies stress and focuses on the specific cause of stress. Symptoms of anxiety include feeling constantly “on edge,” obsessive worrying, racing thoughts, and panic attacks. These feelings can be crippling, and make you wonder what is going on inside your head (you may wish you could get inside your own head and tell it to just stop!)

Depression

Depression is the other side of the mood spectrum. Whereas people with anxiety constantly feel on edge, people struggling with depression may feel “empty,” worthless, or hopeless. People with depression may notice they have less energy and don’t enjoy doing their favorite activities as much as they normally do. They may also, for no reason, have a short temper, cry unexpectedly, or feel unmotivated. Other symptoms are also common. These symptoms can last weeks, months, or even years if they are not treated properly. Just like anxiety, depression can hold your brain hostage and make you concentrate on the way you feel, giving you the feeling that you will always feel that way, BUT THERE IS HOPE!!

Ready to Take Back Control?

Anxiety and depression are very common, and are known in medicine as “mood disorders.” In fact both of them are two of the most common reasons Americans see their family doctor. Both conditions are treated similarly, because most people struggling with one also have symptoms of the other. The first step in therapy is counseling, the second is medication.

Counseling

Going to see a counselor or therapist can be scary, but these professionals are trained to help teach you strategies to attack the racing and negative thoughts of anxiety and depression. The goal is to give you a set of tools that you can use to fight back! Counselors are great listeners.

Medication

There are many different medications that your doctor may recommend in addition to therapy. Most of these medicines work on chemicals in the brain to help decrease the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Your primary care physician can discuss the benefits and risks of each medicine with you at your appointment.

Most importantly, if you are experiencing thoughts of harming yourself or someone else, *please* call your doctor, a friend, or someone else that you trust and talk to them before you act on those feelings. THESE FEELINGS CAN OCCUR IN ANYONE, and you are not alone! These are treatable medical disorders, and there is no reason to be ashamed. Talking about these symptoms is the best medicine, and your doctor can help!