

## Is there anything I can do?

Dealing with anxiety at work is a two-part process: The first part is to look after your physical self. Eat healthy food, take exercise, have fun. It is important to remember *who* you are; although work is an important 'part', it is just a part of your life. Plenty of sleep, hobbies and loving relationships are also important.

The second part of how to deal with anxiety is cognitive, This involves a deliberate assessment of how you cope with challenging situations. Anxiety symptoms are exacerbated or diminished according to how we behave and think. Quick fixes in the form of medication are not always the best solution. The answer is learning how to deal with your anxiety.

However valuable awareness of our behaviour and reactions may be, professional help is a useful aid to achieving change. Research confirms that counselling often reduces work-related stress and anxiety as it helps people learn how to react differently and quickly to their causes.

### ▶ How can I make life at work less stressful when suffering for, an anxiety disorder?

**Keep working!** Employment is important for your social identity and for enhancing your self esteem, and more obviously there is the financial reason.

**Educate yourself** about your disorder. Learn to recognize the symptoms and how to handle them if you experience any while at work.

**Recognize** your own limitations. Be realistic and don't overestimate what you can handle.

**Tell a trusted co-worker about your disorder.** Knowing that someone at work is aware of your condition, and accepting of it, can be very comforting. It can take much of the anticipatory fear out of having a panic attack at work.

# 10 ways to ease stress

- 1 **Eat and drink sensibly**--Alcohol and overeating add to stress
- 2 **Assert yourself**-- It is O.K. to say "no". Being assertive allows you to stand up for your rights & beliefs while respecting those of others.
- 3 **Stop smoking or other bad habits**--Nicotine acts as a stimulant and brings on more stress symptoms.
- 4 **Exercise regularly**--Aerobic exercise has been shown to release endorphins (natural substances that help you feel better and stay positive)
- 5 **Practice relaxation**-- A combination of deep relaxation and aerobic exercise is a sure way to protect your body from the effects of stress
- 6 **Take responsibility**-- Control what you can, and let go of what you can't control
- 7 **Reduce the causes of stress**--Ask for help when appropriate, set priorities, pace yourself, and take time out for yourself.
- 8 **Set realistic goals and expectations**--Its healthy to realize you cannot be 100% successful at everything at once.
- 9 **Examine your values and live by them**--Let your actions reflect your beliefs, you will feel better, no matter how busy your life is.
- 10 **Have a healthy sense of self esteem**--When you feel overwhelmed, remind yourself of what you do well.

### talk the talk

We have psychologists at Tri-City Psychology Services Inc. who specialize in assessing and treating anxiety disorders.

Visit our website to learn more:

[www.tricitypsychology.com](http://www.tricitypsychology.com)

or call **604 939 9988** for more information

## How employers can help

Despite well-publicized data, work-place cultures still tend to promote a code of silence when it comes to discussing mental-health issues, and the stressors that cause or exacerbate these issues.

### 'Resist imagining management is conspiring against you'

According to mental health professionals, both employers and employees stand the best chance of surmounting the problem if they educate themselves about the condition and communicate in good faith. Try to solve issues as if you are all on the same side, people often become stressed in the work place when they have to deal with authority and they feel powerless. Everyone experiences anxiety differently, as an employer be tolerant, supportive and non-judgemental. The benefits for employers who support their staff, personally as well as professionally, show in greater employee satisfaction, improved retention, reduced absenteeism and higher productivity.

But in the final analysis, hard pressed workers should be kinder to themselves. Recognize the onset of anxiety symptoms deal with them in a positive way and strive to achieve a better balance in life.