



What is GAD?

Everyone experiences worries or anxiety from time to time. However, those who have Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) experience persistent and excessive worry. GAD is diagnosed when someone has difficulty controlling anxieties on the majority of days for at least six months and has three or more symptoms.

6.8 million adults (or 3.1% of the US population) are affected by GAD in any given year. The exact cause of GAD is unknown, however, there is evidence that biological factors, family background, and life experience can play a part.

Please contact these resources for more information

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

1-800-662-HELP (4357) or
TTY 1-800-487-4889

www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment

Anxiety & Depression Association of America (ADAA)

www.adaa.org/find-help

Verywell Mind

www.verywellmind.com

National Institute of Mental Health (NIH)

www.nimh.nih.gov

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

How to Support Your Loved Ones



GAD Symptoms

Generalized anxiety disorder symptoms may include:

- Feeling nervous, irritable, or on edge
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation), sweating, and/or trembling
- Being easily fatigued
- Having muscle tension
- Difficulty controlling feelings of worry
- Having sleep problems (difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, restlessness, or unsatisfying sleep)
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Difficulty concentrating



When should my loved one seek help?

If your loved one's anxiety is preventing them from sleeping, working, interacting socially, or doing the things they love, it may be time to see a professional.



5 Things to do when supporting a loved one with GAD

As a support person, it is your job to offer support, not a treatment for your loved one. Here are some ways you can do that.

1. Educate yourself

Learning about the GAD symptoms and treatment. Knowing the facts can help relieve some of the frustrations for both you and your loved one.

2. Set limitations

Setting limitations and boundaries can help you prevent "helper burnout" and prevent you from becoming a pseudo therapist for your loved one.

3. Share resources

Sharing resources can be helpful to loved ones who have not already sought out help, but also to those who have. It can show your loved one that you care and encourage

them to seek the help they may need. Be sure not to force help or resources on a loved one that has expressed that they do not want help (this does not "solve" your loved one's problem and could cause them more stress).

4. Listen & Validate

Listening empathetically and without becoming frustrated is one of the best ways to be supportive of your loved one. It is also important to validate what your loved one is feeling and take not to minimize those feelings. Avoid phrases such as "stop worrying" and "it's no big deal." Your loved one recognizes their reactions are irrational, and calling attention to it can make their anxiety worse.

5. Ask questions

Asking questions such as "How can I help?" and "What helps you cope with your anxiety?" can show your loved one that you care and there to support without sounding judgmental. Also, the best way to find out how you can support your loved one is by asking them.