

Spina Bifida & Psychological Health

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What Is Depression

- Symptoms (≥ 5 Sxs; ≥ 2 weeks)
 - Depressed mood*
 - Less Interest or pleasure in activities*
 - Loss of appetite or weight Loss (when not dieting)
 - Sleep Problems
 - More or less motor movement (fidgety or slowed down)
 - Fatigue / energy loss
 - Feeling worthless or excessively guilty
 - Thoughts of death, self-harm or suicide

- Affects functioning in life activities



What Is Mild Dysthymia/Persistent Depressive Disorder

- Symptoms (≥ 2 years)
 - Depressed mood more days than not
 - Poor appetite/overeating
 - Insomnia
 - Low energy or fatigue
 - Low Self-esteem
 - Poor Concentration or indecision
 - Hopelessness

- Affects functioning in life activities



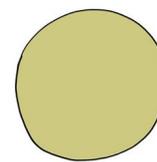
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What Is Generalized Anxiety

- Symptoms (≥ 6 months, more days than not)
 - Excessive anxiety & worry
 - Difficulty controlling worry
 - Associated with these Sx
 - Restlessness or feeling keyed up or on edge
 - Being easily fatigued
 - Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank
 - Irritability
 - Muscle Tension
 - Sleep disturbance

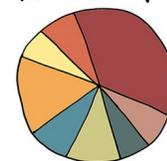


WHAT PEOPLE THINK ANXIETY FEELS LIKE



Worrying about everything, all the time

WHAT ANXIETY ACTUALLY FEELS LIKE



Sweating, a lot
 second-guessing yourself
 muscle tension
 trouble sleeping
 chest pain
 overthinking all the things
 increased heart rate
 Your mind and body refusing to cooperate, no matter what you know is rational

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What Is Social Anxiety

▪ Symptoms

- Fear or anxiety in situations where one could be scrutinized
- Fear of acting in a way that will be negatively perceived
- Social situations provoke fear or anxiety
- Avoidance situations or enduring with **INTENSE** fear or anxiety

▪ Examples

- Freezing, or failing to speak in social situations
- Tensing up and or feeling as if shaking while speaking or wanting to speak



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What Is Panic

▪ “A Surge” of intense fear or discomfort

▪ Symptoms (≥4)

- | | |
|--|---|
| – Heart pounding, palpitations, accelerated heart rate | – Chills or heat sensation |
| – Sweating | – Numbness or tingling |
| – Trembling / shaking | – Depersonalization / derealization |
| – Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing | – Fear of losing control or “going crazy” |
| – Feeling as if choking | – Fear of dying |
| – Chest pain / discomfort | |
| – Nausea / abdominal distress | |
| – Dizziness, unsteadiness, light-headed / faint | |



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What to Do

▪ Treatments

- Psychotherapy / talk therapy (Individual, Family, Couples, etc)
 - Social skills training
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
 - Mindfulness
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Behavioral Activation
- Groups
 - Community / Diagnosis / Age / Issue
- Antidepressants



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What to Do

▪ Recognize

- “Diagnosis: HUMAN!”
 - It is okay to experience these things, talk about them, and seek out help

▪ Speak up

- “physical, medical, cognitive, emotional, or psychosocial consequences [of spina bifida] are often missed by medical professionals” (Wagner et al., 2015).
- Be an advocate for yourself!

▪ Have a “Check Up”

- Speak with a professional, who may be able to help
- You’d see a dentist for a cavity, so why not a psychologist or psychiatrist?



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What do I do?

▪ Get busy / Behavioral Activation

–25% Of patients had mild or greater symptoms of depression. Significant depressive symptoms are associated with fewer hours out of bed and fewer days leaving the house. (Dicianno, et al., 2015).

- Get up and get out as much as possible
- Identify pleasurable activities
 - Experiment with new activities
- Participate and be engaged with the community at large
- Participate and be engaged with your smaller communities
 - Like the SBANT!

▪ Self-Care & Healthy Living

–“young people with spina bifida tend to eat less healthy diets, do less exercise, and engage in more sedentary activities (Minn, et al., 2012).

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What do I do?

▪ Wellness Behaviors

- Exercise & Recreation
- Relationships / Socialization
- Stress Management
- Sleep Hygiene
- Diet



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Exercise & Recreation

▪ Exercise

- Adaptive Sports & Recreation
- UTSW Adaptive Sports Coalition
- Find us on facebook
- <https://www.facebook.com/UTSWAdaptiveSports/>



▪ Benefits

- Mood
- Less Sedentary Lifestyle
- Weight Control
- Socialization
- Quality of Life



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Relationships & Socialization

▪ Relationships & Socialization

- Better quality of life
- Increased support
- Share in experiences
- Important for life success
- A way to help others
- Romantic aspirations?
 - First step is hello...



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Stress Management

Stress Management

- Relaxation
 - Breathing Exercises
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Prayer / Meditation
 - Yoga / Tai Chi
 - Aromatherapy
 - Pet Therapy
- Diversion
 - Laughing & Joking
 - Writing
 - Music
 - Reading
- Talk with Someone



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Sleep Hygiene

Sleep Hygiene

- Regular bedtime ritual & habit
- Not too hungry, full, or hydrated
- Avoid “blue light,” electronics
- Dark room
- Cool, temperature control
- Bed is for sleep and ...
- Get out if not asleep in 15 minutes
- Winding down period, don't rush to sleep
- Get natural sunlight
- Exercise
- No daytime naps or short, early naps



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Diet

▪ Diet

- Why eat & drink healthfully?
 - Better for skin & healing
 - Better for energy and sense of wellbeing
- Obesity
- “Better Movement,” or ...
 - Less constipation



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Substance Use

▪ Alcohol

- Avoid altogether
 - excessive use

▪ Marijuana & Illicit Drugs

- Avoid altogether

▪ Prescription Medications

- Use as directed/prescribed
- Honestly report your use

▪ Seek Help

- To quit & maintain



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Questions

