

Tip Sheet: Anxiety Disorders

Several Types of Anxiety Disorders:

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder
2. Panic Disorder
3. Separation Anxiety Disorder
4. Social Anxiety Disorder
5. Selective Mutism
6. Specific Phobia
7. Agoraphobia

Making a Diagnosis

Anxiety prepares us for life's challenges! Not all anxiety is pathologic.

Anxiety disorders are clinical diagnoses. They are underrecognized and undertreated.

Obtaining clinical information from the patient and collateral information from parents/caregivers and teachers are important in diagnosing these disorders.

There is a good chance that multiple anxiety disorders are occurring at the same time.

Anxiety disorders are more than likely comorbid with other mental health diagnoses.

Consider using rating scales initially and during treatment. Scales are not diagnostic tools but can be helpful for gathering data.

Treating Anxiety Disorders

CBT therapy is the first line of treatment if symptoms are mild to moderate.

CBT + SSRI is recommended and effective if symptoms are high-moderate to severe.

First-line medications are the SSRIs; consider an SNRI if SSRIs are intolerable/inefficacious.

Apples don't fall far from trees. If a family member is already prescribed an SSRI, that may be the best place to start.

If a patient has two failed SSRI trials, then review the diagnosis, consider psychological testing, or possibly seek a psychiatry consult.

Off-label medications may be effective adjunctives to treatment.