

## Information about Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal healthy reaction. Moderate amounts of anxiety actually improve your performance, spurring you onto greater achievements.

It becomes a problem when it interferes with performance. Anxiety disorders involve anxiety a more intense anxiety which lasts longer (e.g. three months) and interferes with everyday life. A person can feel detached from themselves or think they are dying or going crazy.

### Anxiety can affect people in three main ways:

- Physiological effects like a racing or pounding heart, sweating, breathlessness, dizziness, shaking or trembling, chest pain or tightness, nausea and stomach pain, muscle tension or a dry mouth.
- Thoughts are often repetitive, with a fixed view of a situation that may bear little relation to reality.
- Behaviour – anxiety changes what someone feels able to do (or not). It can sabotage a person's ability to act, express themselves or to cope in certain situations.

There are different anxiety disorders including generalised anxiety, agoraphobia, social phobia, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms vary but they all involve persistent feelings of high anxiety causing discomfort and disruption to everyday living. Thirty percent of women and 20% of men will suffer from an anxiety disorder during their lifetime. Treatment of anxiety can include counselling and/or anti-anxiety medication.

### Ways staff can assist:

- Create an environment where students are encouraged to disclose their needs and seek appropriate support as required.
- Provide a clear structure for the course with explicit information about assessment, dates, and resources.
- Provide a safety net for students unable to attend or concentrate on lectures by making lecture material available on Cecil or in the Department.
- Flexible assignments (provide students with a range of ways to show their understanding and grasp of material).
- Flexible deadlines, or a system for extensions which reduces the amount of self-advocacy that the students need to undertake (with documentation of the impairment and possibly for the life of the subject).
- Know relevant support services on campus and in the community, and where appropriate, seek advice from them or encourage students to ask for help.

### Available support services for staff and students

- Student Disability Services: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936  
Email: [disabilities@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:disabilities@auckland.ac.nz)
- Student Learning Services: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 88850  
Email: [sls@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:sls@auckland.ac.nz)
- Student Health & Counselling: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 87681
- Useful Website: [www.flexiblelearning.auckland.ac.nz/calm](http://www.flexiblelearning.auckland.ac.nz/calm)

The University of Auckland encourages partnerships between Faculties, student services and students, to support students achieve their academic potential.

**Disclosure is voluntary**

Students may choose not to disclose their disability because they:

- Don't want special treatment, or want to see if they can cope alone.
- Fear discrimination.
- Feel embarrassed about asking for help.
- Want to get to know staff before telling them..

**Information has been sourced from:**

- T. Powell (1992). The Mental Health Handbook. Oxon: Winslow Press.
- Tertiary Students with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Staff. The University of Auckland.
- Anxiety and how to handle it. Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.

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## CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT

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### **Student Disability Services**

Room 036 Basement

ClockTower Building

22 Princes Street

Auckland

Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936

Fax: 09 308 2354

[www.eo.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.eo.auckland.ac.nz)

[www.disability.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.disability.auckland.ac.nz)

[disabilities@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:disabilities@auckland.ac.nz)

### **University Medical Services**

City Campus Clinic

Level 3, Student Commons Building

2 Alfred Street

Ph: 373 7599 ext 87681

Grafton Campus Clinic

The "White House"

151 Park Rd

Ph: 373 7599 ext 86962

Tamaki Campus Clinic (Registered Nurse Clinic only)

Building 730.110

Morrin Road

Ph: 373 7599 ext 86677

Epsom Campus Clinic

R Block, Gate 4

60 Epsom Avenue, Epsom

Ph: 373 7599 ext 48526

### **Student Learning Services**

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 88850

[sls@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:sls@auckland.ac.nz)

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