



## **Information on 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 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**

- Disability Services: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936  
Email: [disabilities@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:disabilities@auckland.ac.nz)
- Student Learning Centre: Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 88850  
Email: [slc@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:slc@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)

**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.

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

## CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT

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### **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 Centre**

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 88850

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

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