

Anxiety Disorders Resources

(Note: the TDD/TTY telephone numbers are for telecommunication devices for the deaf.)

Agoraphobics Building Independent Lives

400 West 32nd Street
Richmond, VA 23225
(804) 353-3964
www.anxiety-support.org

American Association of Suicidology

5221 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20015
202-237-2280
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
www.suicidology.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

120 Wall Street, 22nd floor
New York, NY 10005
212-363-3500
888-333-AFSP (2377) Toll-Free
www.afsp.org

American Psychiatric Association

1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1825
Arlington, VA 22209-3901
703-907-7300
www.psych.org

American Psychological Association

750 First Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002-4242
800-374-2721
202-336-5500
TDD/TTY: 202-336-6213
www.apa.org

Anxiety Disorders Association of America

8730 Georgia Avenue, Suite 600
Silver Spring, MD 20910
240-485-1001
www.adaa.org

Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies

305 Seventh Avenue, 16th floor
New York, NY 10001
(212) 647-1890
www.aabt.org

Doctors Guide

www.docguide.com

Freedom from Fear

308 Seaview Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10305
718-351-1717
www.freedomfromfear.org

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

60 Revere Drive, Suite 500
Northbrook IL 60062
847-480-9028
www.istss.org

MedlinePlus: Health Information

www.medlineplus.gov

Mental Health America (formerly National Mental Health Association)

2000 N. Beauregard St., 6t floor
Alexandria, VA 22311
800-969-6MHA (6642)
703-684-7722
TTY: 800-433-5959
www.mentalhealthamerica.net

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

Colonial Place Three
2107 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201-3042
800-950-NAMI (6264)
703-524-7600
TDD: 703-516-7227
www.nami.org

National Anxiety Foundation

3135 Custer Drive
Lexington, KY 40517-4001
606-272-7166

National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Medical Center (116D)
215 N. Main Street
White River Junction, VT 05009
(802) 296-6300
www.ncptsd.org

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20847-2345
800-729-6686
301-468-2600
www.health.org

National Drug Abuse Information and Treatment Referral

Hot Line and National Institute on Drug Abuse Help Line
12280 Wilkins Avenue
Rockville, MD 20852
800-662-HELP (4357)
800-66-AYUDA (Spanish-speaking callers)

National Institute of Mental Health

Public Information Communications Branch
6001 Executive Boulevard, Room 8184, MSC 9663
Bethesda, MD 20892-9663
1-866-615-6464 Toll-Free
301-443-4513
TTY: 1-866-415-8051 Toll-Free
TTY: 301-443-8431
www.nimh.nih.gov

National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse

1211 Chestnut Street, Suite 1207
Philadelphia, PA 19107
800-553-4539
215 751-1810
www.mhselfhelp.org

National Mental Health Information Center

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
P.O. Box 42557
Washington, DC 20015
800-789-2647
TDD: 866-889-2647
www.mentalhealth.org

Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation, Inc.

676 State Street
New Haven, CT 06511
203-401-2070
www.ocfoundation.org

Phobics Anonymous

World Service Headquarters
P.O.Box 1180
Palm Springs, CA 92263
760-332-COPE (2673)
www.healsocialanxiety.com

PTSD Alliance

www.ptsdalliance.org

Sidran Institute

www.sidran.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

1 Choke Cherry Road
Room 8-1036
Rockville, MD
800-662-HELP (4357)
www.samhsa.gov

TERRAP (TERRitorial APprehension)

648 Menlo Avenue, Suite 5
Menlo Park, CA 94025
415-327-1312
www.terrapp.com

Glossary

This glossary is designed to assist primary care practitioners and other non psychiatrists with mental health terminology, particularly relating to the anxiety disorders. Psychiatry is an evolving, complex science and the area of anxiety disorders is no exception. To assist the practitioner to better understand and thus become more comfortable with the anxiety disorders, as well as to keep updated, we adapted a practical glossary from several excellent mental health resources to facilitate everyday primary care practice (1–7). This pocket guide glossary is a concise, easy to understand resource for the practitioner requiring a quick reference for writing a patient history and mental status examination, formulating a diagnosis, educating patients and their families about anxiety disorders, and discussing patients in consultation. We encourage the reader to refer to pertinent Internet sites and other resources for a more comprehensive listing of mental health terminology.

acetylcholine Neurotransmitter that helps to regulate memory and control actions of skeletal and smooth muscle.

achluophobia Fear of darkness.

acrophobia Fear of heights.

acute posttraumatic stress disorder Posttraumatic stress disorder that lasts from 1 to 3 months.

acute stress disorder Anxiety disorder that develops following exposure to a traumatic event, lasts 1 month or less, and is characterized by reexperiencing the trauma, and experiencing dissociative symptoms, increased arousal, and avoidance.

adrenergic system System of organs and nerves in which catecholamines such as dopamine, epinephrine, and norepinephrine are the neurotransmitters.

aerophagia Excessive swallowing of air.

aerophobia Fear of flying.

- affect** Behavior that expresses a subjectively experienced emotion. Manifestations may include constricted, labile, blunted, flat, appropriate, or inappropriate.
- agitation** Severe anxiety associated with motor restlessness. Examples include fidgeting, pacing, and wringing of hands.
- agonist** Drug that mimics the action of a natural chemical messenger within the body by occupying cell receptors.
- agoraphobia** Fear of open spaces or leaving the familiar setting of home.
- alexithymia** Inability or difficulty in describing or being aware of one's emotions or moods and a limited fantasy life.
- algophobia** Fear of pain.
- amathophobia** Fear of dust.
- amaxophobia** Fear of riding in a car
- antianxiety medications** See *anxiolytics*.
- anticholinergic effects** Interference with the action of acetylcholine in the brain and the peripheral nervous system by any drug that may result in symptoms such as dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation, and decreased ability to urinate.
- antidepressants** Medications used in the treatment of depression, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, premenstrual dysphoric disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, chronic pain, and other disorders. The mechanism of action of antidepressant medications appears to be due to effects on pre- and postsynaptic receptors affecting the release and reuptake of brain neurotransmitters.
- antihistamines** Medications used to minimize or prevent the action of histamine. Antihistamines are useful as sedatives, hypnotics, and may be used to reduce anxiety symptoms in patients with mild symptoms.
- anxiety** Feeling of apprehension, tension, or uneasiness often marked by physical symptoms, caused by anticipation of danger, the source of which is largely unknown or unrecognized. May be regarded as pathological when it interferes with social and occupational functioning, achievement of desired goals, or emotional comfort.
- anxiety hysteria** Early psychoanalytic term for what is now called phobia.
- anxiety neurosis** See *neurosis*.
- anxiolytics** Medications used to relieve emotional tension.
- astraphobia** Fear of lightening.
- autophobia** Fear of being alone.
- autonomic nervous system** Part of the peripheral nervous system that regulates the involuntary body actions such as breathing,

blood pressure, heart rate, and pupil dilation; also regulates the flight or fight response.

aviophobia Fear of flying.

axon Fiberlike extension of a neuron through which information exits to the target cells.

bathophobia Fear of depths.

behavior Sum total of the psyche that includes impulses, wishes, drives, motivation, instincts, and cravings that are expressed by a persons behavior or motor activity.

behavior therapy Treatment used to help patients substitute desirable or healthier responses and behavior patterns for undesirable or maladaptive ones. The basic techniques include behavior modification, operant conditioning, systematic desensitization, shaping, token economy, relaxation training, aversion training, exposure therapy, flooding, modeling, paradoxical intention, and social skills training.

benzodiazepines Class of medications that have potent hypnotic, sedative, and anxiolytic effects; also called antianxiety medications or anxiolytics.

beta-blockers Class of medications that inhibits the action of β -adrenergic receptors, which modulate cardiac and respiratory functions, and the dilation and constriction of blood vessels. Prescribed to ease physical symptoms of anxiety.

biogenic amines Organic substances subdivided into catecholamines (epinephrine, norepinephrine, dopamine) and indoleamines (tryptophan, serotonin).

chronic posttraumatic stress disorder Posttraumatic stress disorder that lasts longer than 3 months.

claustrophobia Fear of enclosed or confining spaces.

cognition Awareness with perception, intuition, judgment, and memory as well as the mental process by which knowledge is acquired.

cognitive-behavioral therapy Form of psychotherapy focused on changing thoughts and behaviors that are related to specific target symptoms and aimed at symptom reduction and improved functioning.

cognitive therapy Treatment approach based on the theory that our cognitions or thoughts control a large part of our behaviors and emotions. Changing the way we think can result in positive changes in the way we act and feel.

comorbidity Simultaneous appearance of two or more illnesses in the same individual.

compulsion Repetitive ritualistic behavior or thoughts to prevent or reduce distress or to prevent a dreaded event or situation.

conditioning Psychological modification of responses to stimuli to establish new behavior.

- corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF)** Substance synthesized in the hypothalamus that regulates the secretion of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) from the posterior pituitary. Effects include activation of the sympathetic nervous system and regulation of behavioral responses to stress.
- cortisol** A steroid hormone produced in the adrenal glands responsible for many of the physiological effects of stress.
- cynophobia** Fear of dogs.
- cytochrome P-450** Enzyme system in the liver and small intestine that plays a key role in medication metabolism.
- dendrite** Branch of a nerve cell that receives nerve impulses from the axon of a neighboring nerve.
- derealization** Feeling of estrangement or detachment from ones environment.
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)***
The American Psychiatric Association's official classification of mental disorders.
- didaskaleinophobia** Fear of going to school.
- differential diagnosis** Process whereby multiple possible disorders are considered to formulate a final diagnosis.
- distractibility** Inability to maintain attention.
- dopamine** Neurotransmitter associated with movement, attention, motivation, learning, and the brain's pleasure and reward system.
- dread** Pervasive anxiety usually related to a specific danger.
- emotion** Complex feeling state often accompanied by physiological changes. External manifestation of emotion is affect.
- epinephrine** Catecholamine, also known as adrenalin, secreted by the adrenal gland and by neurons of the sympathetic nervous system. Responsible for many of the physical manifestations of fear and anxiety.
- eremophobia** Fear of being alone.
- erythrophobia** Fear of blushing.
- exposure therapy** Method of therapy that involves gradually exposing patients to a feared object or situation. Patients learn that the object or situation can be faced and that avoidance is unnecessary.
- fatigue** Feeling of sleepiness, weariness, or irritability after a period of mental or bodily activity.
- fear** Unpleasant emotional and physiological state in response to a realistic threat or danger.
- flooding (implosion)** A behavior therapy procedure in which the causes of the anxiety are intensely presented either in real life or in imagination. The desensitizers are continued until the stimuli no longer produce disabling anxiety.

- free-floating anxiety** Generalized anxiety that is severe and persistent and not attached to any particular object, idea, or event.
- frigophobia** Fear of cold weather.
- γ -aminobutyric acid (GABA)** Major inhibitory neurotransmitter in the brain.
- generalized anxiety disorder** Excessive and unrealistic worry about many life circumstances, unrelated to another illness.
- gephyrophobia** Fear of crossing bridges.
- global assessment of functioning** Numerical assessment of the patient's overall symptomatology and psychological, social, and occupational functioning. A hypothetical continuum of mental health-illness, on a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 being the highest score.
- globus hystericus** Disturbing sensation of a lump in the throat.
- glutamate** Excitatory amino acid in the brain.
- gynophobia** Fear of women.
- 5-HIAA (5 hydroxyindoleacetic acid)** Major metabolite of serotonin.
- hippocampus** Brain structure involved in learning, memory, and emotion.
- homophobia** Fear of homosexual persons.
- homovanillic acid (HVA)** Principal metabolite of dopamine.
- hydrophobia** Fear of water.
- hyperventilation** Overbreathing marked by reduction of blood carbon dioxide.
- hypothalamus** Complex brain structure composed of many nuclei with various functions. The head ganglion of the autonomic nervous system. Functions include control of heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, and fight or flight response.
- incidence** Number of new cases of a disorder that occur during a specific time period.
- indoleamine** One of a group of biogenic amines such as serotonin.
- inducer** Drug or substance that increases an enzyme's ability to metabolize a substrate.
- inhibitor** Drug or substance that prevents an enzyme from metabolizing a substrate.
- initial insomnia** Difficulty falling asleep.
- insomnia** A dyssomnia consisting of difficulty initiating or maintaining sleep or of nonrestorative sleep associated with daytime fatigue or impaired daytime functioning.
- International Classification of Diseases (ICD)** Official list of disease categories issued by the World Health Organization.
- kakorrhaphiophobia** Fear of failure.

- katagelophobia** Fear of ridicule.
- keraunophobia** Fear of thunder.
- locus ceruleus** Small area in the brainstem containing norepinephrine neurons.
- logophobia** Fear of words.
- MHPG (3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenylglycol)** Major metabolite of brain norepinephrine excreted in the urine.
- middle insomnia** Waking up after falling asleep without difficulty and then having difficulty in falling asleep again.
- mood** Pervasive and sustained feeling tone that is experienced internally.
- musophobia** Fear of mice.
- mysophobia** Fear of dirt and germs.
- needle phobia** Intense, persistent, pathological fear of receiving an injection.
- nervous breakdown** Nonspecific, nonmedical term for a mental disorder.
- neurasthenia** Disorder in ICD-10, characterized by persisting complaints of physical and mental weakness or fatigue after performing daily activities and inability to recover with normal periods of rest. Typical symptoms include dizziness, tension headaches, muscular aches and pains, irritability, and sleep problems.
- neurochemistry** Branch of chemistry dealing with the nervous system, including chemical components, passage of impulses through the nerve cell, and transmission across synapses.
- neuroendocrinology** Science regarding the relationship between the nervous system and the endocrine system, particularly the hypothalamus, which stimulates or inhibits the pituitary's secretion of hormones.
- neurohormone** Chemical messenger usually produced within the hypothalamus, carried to the pituitary and then to other central nervous system cells. Neurohormones interact with a variety of cells, whereas neurotransmitters interact with other neurons.
- neuroimaging** General term referring to technologies such as computed tomography (CT), single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT), magnetic resonance tomography (MRI), and positron emission tomography (PET) used to assess brain disorders.
- neurology** Branch of medicine that studies the organization, function, and treatment of the nervous system.
- neuron** Nerve cell that sends, receives, and processes information.
- neurophysiology** Study of the relationship between nervous system structure and function.

- neuropsychiatry** Medical specialty combining neurology and psychiatry. Emphasizes somatic substructure on which emotions are based and the central nervous system organic neuroreceptors, central nervous system binding sites for neurotransmitters, psychoactive drugs, and hormones.
- neurosis** An older term for all kinds of emotional disturbances other than psychosis. Neurosis implies subjective psychological discomfort or pain beyond what is appropriate to the conditions of one's life. The disturbance is relatively enduring or recurrent without treatment, not limited to a mild transitory reaction to stress, and has no demonstrable organic etiology.
- neurotransmitter** Chemical substance released by nerve cell endings in the central nervous system that transmits impulses across synapses between neurons.
- norepinephrine** Catecholamine neurotransmitter, also called noradrenalin, found in both the peripheral and the central nervous system that helps to regulate arousal, blood pressure, and sleep. Excessive amounts may provoke anxiety.
- nyctophobia** Fear of night.
- obsession** Persistent and recurrent idea, thought, impulse, or image that cannot be eliminated by logic or reasoning. An obsession is intrusive, distressing, involuntary, and recognized as being excessive and unreasonable even though it is the product of one's mind.
- obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** Anxiety disorder characterized by obsessions, compulsions, or both; OCD symptoms are distressing, time-consuming, and significantly interfere with one's normal routine, occupational functioning, usual social activities or relationships with others.
- obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders** Conditions that have obsessive-compulsive qualities and similarities to obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- ochlophobia** Fear of crowds.
- odynophobia** Fear of pain.
- operant conditioning (instrumental conditioning)** Process by which the results of a person's behavior determine whether the behavior is more or less likely to occur in the future.
- ophidiophobia** Fear of snakes.
- orientation** Awareness of oneself in relation to person, place, and time.
- overstimulation** Excitation that exceeds the subject's or system's ability to master or discharge it. Since the psyche has a finite capacity for tension, exceeding that capacity with excessive or repeated stimulation constitutes a trauma, and pain (anxiety)

is experienced. Anxiety becomes a danger signal and a defense against being overwhelmed.

palpitations Sensation of irregular or rapid beating of the heart. Described as fluttering, throbbing, or pounding.

panic Acute, intense, overwhelming anxiety producing feelings of impending doom and physiological changes.

panic attack Period of intense fear or discomfort with the abrupt development of physical symptoms and fear of dying, going crazy, or losing control, reaching a peak within 10 minutes. Symptoms may include dizziness, faintness, trembling or shaking, sweating, choking, shortness of breath or smothering sensations, nausea or abdominal distress, flushes or chills, chest pain or discomfort, rapid heart rate, and palpitations.

panic disorder Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks, at least one of which is followed by a month or more of persistent concern about having another attack. There are two types: with or without agoraphobia.

panphobia Fear of everything.

parasympathetic nervous system Part of the autonomic nervous system that controls the life-sustaining organs under normal, danger-free conditions.

paresthesia Abnormal spontaneous tactile sensations, often described as tingling, creeping, tickling, prickling, or burning.

pathognomic Indicative of a disease or illness, especially characteristic symptoms.

pedophobia Fear of children.

performance anxiety Form of social anxiety in which excessive fear relates to performing a specific task in front of others.

pharmacodynamics Study of the biochemical and physiological effects of drugs and their mechanisms of action.

pharmacokinetics Study of the process and rates of drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and disposition in the organism.

pharmacotherapy Treatment of disease through the use of pharmaceutical medications.

phobia Intense, persistent, pathological, unrealistic, fear of an object or situation, which the subject recognizes as excessive or unreasonable, but cannot dispel it. The phobic stimulus is avoided or endured with marked distress.

phonophobia Fear of or increased sensitivity to loud noises.

photophobia Fear of light or sensitivity to light.

placebo Treatment condition used to control for the placebo effect where the treatment has no real effect of its own.

poinephobia Fear of punishment.

- posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** Anxiety disorder in which exposure to an exceptional mental or physical stressor is followed by avoidance, numbing sensation, persistent reexperiencing of the event, and increased arousal, sometimes occurring immediately and sometimes not until 6 months or more after the stress. The trauma typically includes witnessing, experiencing, or confronting an event that involves actual or threatened death or injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of oneself or others. Reactions include helplessness, fear and horror.
- pnigerophobia** Fear of smothering.
- prevalence** Total number of cases that exist within a unit of population.
- psyche** The mind.
- psychiatry** The medical science that deals with the origin, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental disorders.
- psychic trauma** An intrapsychic event brought on by exposure to an unanticipated danger.
- psychology** A profession, an academic discipline, and a science dealing with the study of mental processes and behavior.
- psychomotor** Referring to combined physical and mental activity.
- psychomotor agitation** Excessive motor activity associated with a feeling of inner tension. Usually nonproductive and repetitive and consists of behavior such as inability to sit still, pacing, and wringing of hands.
- psychopharmacology** The study of the effects of psychoactive substances on behavior. Clinical psychopharmacology more specifically includes both the study of drug effects in patients and the expert use of drugs in the treatment of psychiatric conditions.
- psychotherapy** Form of therapy in which a person relieves symptoms or resolves problems through verbal interaction. Talk therapy.
- psychotropic** Drug that has a special effect on the psyche.
- pyrophobia** Fear of fire.
- rebound** Return of original symptoms when treatment stops.
- receptor** Specialized area on a nerve membrane, blood vessel, or muscle that receives the chemical stimulation that activates or inhibits.
- relapse** Return of symptoms associated with the present episode of illness after the symptoms had been reduced or eliminated for a brief period.
- relaxation training** Use of relaxation techniques to help control the physical and mental state in the treatment of mental disorders.

remission Abatement of an illness.

response prevention Therapeutic technique where stimuli are presented but the individual is not permitted to respond with the typical response.

ritual Formalized, repetitive activity to reduce anxiety.

rumination Constant preoccupation with thinking about a single theme or idea.

scholionophobia Fear of school.

sciophobia Fear of shadows.

selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) Class of antidepressants that increase the amount of serotonin available at the synapse, used to treat major depression, many of the anxiety disorders, and other psychiatric disorders. Also sometimes referred to as serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs).

sensorium That portion of the brain that functions as a center of sensations.

serotonin Central nervous system neurotransmitter involved in mood, sleep, appetite, sexual drive, impulsive and aggressive behavior. When decreased or deficient, may lead to various problems including anxiety disorders and depression.

serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) Class of antidepressants used for the treatment of anxiety disorders, depression, as well as other disorders.

serotonin receptor Protein that binds the neurotransmitter serotonin, becomes activated, and then activates serotonin neurons and pathways.

serotonin syndrome Excessive stimulation of serotonin receptors. Symptoms include mental confusion, lethargy, flushing, diaphoresis, tremor, hyperthermia, hypertonicity, renal failure, and death.

social phobia (social anxiety disorder) Intense anxiety of being judged by others in social situations.

specific phobia (also known as **single, simple phobia**) Real, intense, but illogical fear of a specific animal, object, situation or activity.

stress Physical and psychological result of internal or external pressure.

substrate Drug or substance metabolized by an enzyme.

sympathetic nervous system Part of the autonomic nervous system that responds to dangerous or threatening situations by preparing a person physiologically for fight or flight. Plays a role in the body's homeostasis.

synapse Gap between one nerve cell membrane and another, through which the nerve impulse is passed chemically or electrically.

- syndrome** Configuration of symptoms that occur together and constitute a recognizable condition.
- systematic desensitization** Behavior therapy procedure widely used to modify behaviors.
- tension** Physiological or psychic uneasiness, arousal, or pressure toward action.
- terminal insomnia** Early morning awakening or waking up at least 2 hours before planning to wake up.
- theophobia** Fear of God.
- topophobia** Fear of stage fright.
- transference** Intense feelings directed toward the therapist that many individuals experience in the process of therapy.
- tranquilizer** Medication that decreases anxiety and agitation.
- tricyclic antidepressants** Older class of antidepressants that enhance the concentration of central nervous system norepinephrine and serotonin, useful in some anxiety disorders, depression, and other disorders.
- triskaidekaphobia** Fear of the number thirteen.
- trophophobia** Fear of moving or making changes.

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