

How to Deal with **ANXIETY AT WORK**



If you find yourself getting stressed at work, know that it happens to everyone and it's completely normal. But if you realise that stress is constant, overwhelming, and prevents you from living your life, it could be an anxiety disorder.

Having anxiety at work can have a huge impact on you and your career. People who feel anxious at work might even make career decisions based on their anxiety. For example, you might feel like you have to turn down a promotion if it involves more managing, public speaking, or traveling to new places.



If you have workplace anxiety, you might have symptoms like:

- Avoiding friends or family
- Constant worrying
- Crying
- Feeling irritable, tired, or tense
- Feeling like you need to be perfect
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Losing interest in your work
- Overeating or undereating

What Causes Workplace Anxiety?

Lots of things can cause anxiety in the workplace. The root cause of anxiety at work however differs from person to person.

It's not uncommon for people to feel nervous about a big presentation, meeting with clients, or working directly with senior leaders, but anxiety disorders involve more extreme, often crippling, and persistent levels of fear, apprehension, and worry.





Here are some red flags that might suggest you have an anxiety disorder:

- A drop in your performance
- Excessive missed days of work
- Not appearing engaged in work
- Physical complaints, like sweating, upset stomach, and not sleeping well (without another explanation)
- Poor job productivity

Managing Anxiety at Work

- **Adopt healthy habits.** Getting enough sleep, eating healthfully, regularly exercising, and not drinking too much alcohol or caffeine can help keep your mind and body shipshape.
- **Be organised.** Although clearing your computer and desk might not seem high priority, staying organised will do wonders for you in the long run.
- **Be honest with yourself.** If you don't have enough time for it, don't take on tasks, projects, and assignments you don't have the time to handle.
- **Communicate.** Ask for help if you need it. If you have too much to handle, speak up. Your manager might not realise you're spread too thin.
- **Celebrate your successes.** Before moving to the next task or project, take a second to celebrate your work and thank the people who helped you.
- **Educate yourself.** Learn to spot signs of anxiety and get an idea of how to handle those symptoms at work.
- **Get it right the first time.** Spend a little extra time nailing it the first go around. This can help in the long run as you won't have to redo your hard work.
- **Prepare and plan.** If you have any major projects, get started on them early and set mini deadlines for yourself. It can also help to prepare for issues that might crop up and try to prevent them.



- **Set clear boundaries.** Don't bring work home with you. For example, make it a rule not to check your voicemail or work email once you leave the workplace.
- **Steer clear of toxic co-workers.** Don't listen to gossip or negativity in your workplace.
- **Take breaks when you need to.** Try some deep-breathing techniques or take a walk to clear your head. This also includes vacations. Chances are, you'll feel refreshed and ready to get back to it once you return.
- **Tell a co-worker you trust.** Having someone at work who knows about your anxiety can be comforting, and it might ease some of that stress and fear.
- **Use your time management skills.** Practicing time management can help alleviate some of the anxiety. Try using to-do lists to prioritise your tasks. These lists can also ensure you set aside enough time to finish each task.
- **Work.** Bussing yourself with work can boost your self-esteem and add to your social identity, not to mention earning needed income.



Telling Your Employer

Whether or not you tell your employer about your anxiety at work is completely up to you. However, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is there to assist you to deal with such issues and the HR can refer you to the Service or you can book your own appointment at Mental Health Services (014 590 1700 or 080 000 6942). EAP Counsellors (010 133 0525) are also available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to offer counselling and support.

Source: Medically Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD on April 05, 2021, By Madeline Lagaite