

# ANXIETY & YOUNG PEOPLE



**Everyone experiences anxiety from time to time, it might be about sitting your driving test, waiting for exam results or meeting new people.**

Anxiety is our body's way of preparing us to manage potential threats or stressors. While it is normal to feel anxious at times, for some people these feelings are more extreme. This anxiety is more than feeling stressed or worried, it can make day to day life difficult to manage.

## WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is the most common mental health problem experienced by young people. In Australia, 1 in 14 young people aged between 4-17 experienced an anxiety disorder. Anxiety is excessive fear and worry about everyday life, it is intense and sometimes debilitating. There are several types of anxiety disorders, but it's important to know that they can all be treated.

## SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

Anxiety is different for everyone, however there are some common signs and symptoms:

- A racing heart
- Stomach or digestion issues (nauseousness and diarrhoea)
- Muscle tension
- Sweating
- Having trouble sleeping
- Inability to relax
- Persistent worry
- Avoiding people or places
- Withdrawing from friends and family



## WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?

While there is no single cause of anxiety, a few factors can increase the likelihood of developing anxiety. A family history of anxiety (genetics) can play a part, as well as a stressful life event such as the death of a loved one, family conflict or bullying at school. Living with a chronic illness also increases your risk of developing anxiety or depression.

## ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Many young people who experience anxiety may also experience symptoms of depression. If you are feeling anxious and down, it is important to talk to someone or visit your GP.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Practicing self care is important in managing your mental health. Trying to eat well, getting regular exercise and prioritising sleep can go a long way to support your overall mental health and wellbeing. Avoid or limit your use of alcohol and other drugs, as they often make anxiety worse over time.

Mindfulness and breathing exercises can help you relax and reduce anxiety levels. Here are a couple of free apps for guided meditation.

**Smiling Mind** – Australia's leading mindfulness app.

**Insight Timer** – Free guided meditations to help calm the mind, reduce anxiety and manage stress.

## GETTING HELP

If you are feeling that your worries are more than you can handle, it is important to talk to someone. You do not have to go through this alone, and there are things that you can do to cope and feel better. Talking to a trusted person, such as a school counsellor, a parent, teacher or your GP.

## HOW CAN WE HELP?

At CFWA we understand the relentless demands that living with CF has on your life. We have a dedicated youth social worker who is available to meet up for a juice and provide emotional support and advice. We also offer financial support for gym memberships and gap funding for mental health. We also run an Instagram account where young people with CF in Western Australia share their stories **@cfwayouth**

Please contact us on **08 6457 7333** or email [servicesmanager@cfwa.org.au](mailto:servicesmanager@cfwa.org.au) or our Youth Social Worker Haylee Riddell at [socialworker@cfwa.org.au](mailto:socialworker@cfwa.org.au) if you would like further support.

## MENTAL HEALTH LINKS

Headspace [headspace.org.au](https://headspace.org.au)

Orygen Youth Health [www.orygen.org.au](https://www.orygen.org.au)

Reachout.com [au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-anxiety](https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-is-anxiety)