

But no one has to live with any of these problems. Both mild and severe anxiety disorders can be treated by health professionals. To find someone who can help, contact your G.P. or contact Anna at the Transcultural Mental Health Centre, 5 Fleet Street, Parramatta 2151, tel: (02) 840 3755. For information about services for people affected by the trauma of torture or war, contact the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), 152-168 The Horsley Drive, Carramar 2163, tel (02) 794 1900.



English  
[BHC-3325]

Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.

## Help For Anxiety Problems

NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service  
Website: <http://www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au>  
Email: [mhcs@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mhcs@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)  
Tel: (02) 9816 0347



## Help for Anxiety Problems

60-year-old Kate spends much of her day worrying. She lives with her family, and each day when her daughter drives to work, Kate is afraid she'll have an accident in her car. She is also afraid of travelling by herself to different suburbs in case she gets lost and refuses to take lifts in a department store - she is afraid it will break down. She is afraid when her cat goes outside - what if it gets hurt by a dog? She is afraid of storms - what if she's struck by lightning?

About one in five people in Australia has an anxiety problem which is severe enough to affect their lives. People with Kate's problem - known as Generalised Anxiety Disorder - worry constantly about bad things happening to themselves or to loved ones, about their health or their work or their relationships.

Although there are many different kinds of anxiety disorders, some of the symptoms are similar. Anxious people are often irritable and uneasy, for instance. They find it hard to relax or to concentrate or to sleep. They may have physical symptoms like heart palpitations, sweating, dizziness, nausea, feeling faint, indigestion, or bowel problems, or even loss of libido. Common anxiety problems include:

**Phobias** We're all scared of something, but people with phobias have an intense fear that can affect their lives. Examples are if someone has such a powerful fear of heights that they can't live or work in tall buildings, or if they are so afraid of spiders that they won't go into the garden.

**Social Phobia** People with this problem are scared of doing things in public like eating, drinking, speaking or writing. They're afraid that if they don't do these things well or they make a mistake, other people will notice and think they are worthless. Social phobia can make it hard for people to have relationships, a social life or even a job.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** Many people who have experienced major traumas like war, torture, persecution, traffic accidents, fire or violence, continue to feel terror long after the event. They may have nightmares or flashbacks for years. They may feel anxious a lot of the time and find it hard to concentrate or sleep.

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder** Mark couldn't keep a job for long because he never got to work on time. The reason? He had to keep checking over and over again that he really had locked the front door or switched the stove off. About two out of a hundred people in Australia have this disorder which compels them to do certain things over and over again. Hand washing is another example - some people with OCD wash their hands repeatedly until the skin is raw.

**Agoraphobia** People with agoraphobia often experience fear in places like supermarkets, department stores, crowded places, confined places or even on freeways. They are afraid of being in a place or a situation where they can't get help if they need it or from where it might be difficult or embarrassing to get away.

**Panic Disorder** People with this problem have severe panic attacks in everyday situations where most people don't feel afraid. These attacks include physical symptoms like palpitations and nausea, along with a fear that they will lose control or even die. This fear may also result in agoraphobia - some people become afraid of going out in case they have a panic attack.