

How Depression and Anxiety Can Impact Employment

Depression and anxiety disorders are different, but people with **depression** often experience **symptoms** like an **anxiety** disorder, such as nervousness, irritability, and problems sleeping and concentrating. But each disorder has its own **causes** and its own emotional and behavioral **symptoms**.

Depression causes people to lose pleasure in daily life. It can make other medical conditions more complex. At its worst, it can lead to suicide.

Anxiety can look similar in symptoms to depression. Additionally, it can manifest in 'panic attacks'.

"It's a cycle," says [Sally R. Connolly, LCSW](#), a therapist at Couples Counseling of Louisville in Kentucky. "When you get anxious, you tend to have this pervasive thinking about some worry or some problem and you feel bad about it. Then you feel like you've failed, and you move to depression."

The two conditions have a complicated relationship:

- The incidence of developing depression in addition to an anxiety disorder is high — almost half of all people with major depression also suffer from severe and persistent anxiety, Connolly notes.
- "People who are depressed often feel anxious and worried, so one can trigger the other," she says. "Anxiety often comes before depression."
- There may be a biological predisposition to both depression and other anxiety disorders.
- People who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), an anxiety disorder, are particularly likely to also develop depression, according to the [National Institute of Mental Health](#) (NIMH).

"Especially with anxiety, more so than depression, there often is some family history, and so therefore we think that there may be some genetic predisposition to this," Connolly explains. "Some people are just worriers and pass it down."

Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression

These are signs that a person may suffer from both anxiety disorder and depression:

- Constant, irrational fear and worry
- Physical symptoms like rapid heartbeat, fatigue, headaches, hot flashes, sweating, abdominal pain, and difficulty breathing
- Insomnia
- Changes in eating, either too much or too little
- Difficulty with memory, decision making, and concentration
- Constant feelings of sadness or worthlessness
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Feeling tired and cranky
- Inability to relax
- Panic attacks

The impact at WORK can be seen in poor attendance, 'job hopping', irritability, inattentiveness, job loss, trouble concentrating, low productivity and poor social interactions.

Adults may have little trouble finding a job, but a history of being fired or walking away from jobs. They may find they cannot 'sell' their skills in an interview setting.

Questions to help identify depression and/or anxiety-

- 1) How did your last two or three jobs end?
- 2) Do you sleep too much or too little?
- 3) What gives you a great feeling?
- 4) Do you often feel tired? Irritable? Fatigued?
- 5) How do you sleep at night?
- 6) What sorts of things cause you to worry?
- 7) Have you ever spoken to a doctor about feeling depressed?
- 8) Do you ever experience panic attacks?

**With proper treatment
Including medications, counseling,
exercise, and wellness plans,
MOST people achieve better control of their symptoms.**

**Local mental health agencies provide free screening, as
does the crisis team at '411'**

Further Resources

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/16/work-and-depression_n_5823534.html

http://www.depressiontoolkit.org/takecare/coping_at_work.asp

<https://www.healthcentral.com/article/looking-for-a-job-when-you-are-depressed>

<https://themighty.com/2016/09/when-depression-and-anxiety-affect-your-ability-to-keep-a-job/>