
Stress, Anxiety, Worry & Panic

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NOTE: This handout is intended as an educational and informational aid, and is not intended to be used for the purpose of diagnosis or treatment. Diagnosis and treatment of emotional or behavioral problems, and related disorders and conditions, should be provided by a licensed mental health professional.

Stress: Stress is a natural response to demands or pressures from the environment. It can arise from various sources, including work, relationships, financial issues, or major life changes. Stress can be both positive (eustress), motivating individuals to perform better, or negative (distress), leading to feelings of overwhelm and exhaustion. It's typically a reaction to external events or circumstances.

Anxiety: Anxiety involves feelings of unease, fear, or apprehension about potential future events or situations. Unlike stress, which is often a response to specific stressors, anxiety may persist even in the absence of an immediate threat. Anxiety disorders, such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Social Anxiety Disorder, or Panic Disorder, involve excessive and uncontrollable worry and can significantly impact daily functioning.

Worry: Worry is a component of anxiety characterized by repetitive thoughts or concerns about potential negative outcomes or future events. While everyone worries occasionally, excessive worrying can be a symptom of an anxiety disorder. Worrying often involves a cognitive component, where individuals repeatedly think about potential threats or problems.

Panic: Panic is an intense and sudden onset of fear or discomfort, often accompanied by physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, or a sense of impending doom. Panic attacks can occur unexpectedly or in response to specific triggers and can be very distressing. Panic disorder involves recurrent panic attacks and can lead individuals to avoid certain situations or places for fear of experiencing another attack.

Stress is a response to external pressures, anxiety involves apprehension about future events, worry is repetitive thinking about potential problems, and panic is an intense, sudden onset of fear accompanied by physical symptoms. While they share similarities, they differ in their duration, triggers, and manifestations.

If you notice persistent emotional struggles, consider seeking the help of a mental health professional. Contact our office to schedule an appointment:
hello@atlwell.com.