

# Keep anxiety from hijacking your life

Anxiety is the most common mental health condition in Australia. On average, one in four people – one in three women; one in five men – will experience it at some stage, research from Beyond Blue has shown.

Left unaddressed and without an outlet, anxiety can contribute to a downward spiral in a sufferer's life and work, says Audrey Morrison-Greet, principal and founder of Partnership For Growth (PFG), which provides psychological counselling, life and mindset coaching and employee assistance programs (EAP).

"General anxiety is a normal human emotion," she says. "Its purpose is to protect you from a perceived threat. When the 'stressor' has been resolved, the body and mind usually resorts back to a calm state.

"However, when anxiety takes over, many people find they can no longer concentrate on everyday activities. It can become very distressing and sometimes lead to depression."

Morrison-Greet says it can be triggered by something as seemingly simple as being late for an important appointment or meeting new people in a social setting to more deep-seated issues such as relationship or family conflict, or issues at work.

"When intrusive, even obsessive thoughts are part of the equation, a sufferer may feel like their mind and life have been hijacked and their confidence and self-esteem plummet," she says.

"Some physical symptoms of anxiety can look like panic attacks: shortness of breath, heart palpitations, discomfort in the gut and headaches. These in themselves can be terrifying. But the good thing is, managing anxiety is normally successful."



Audrey Morrison-Greet is the principal and founder of Partnership For Growth. Photo: AAP

One of the first steps PFG treatment offers is educating clients about how anxiety not only affects the mindset but also the body when the "fight, flight or freeze" response is activated by the amygdala, a structure in the brain.

"Knowledge empowers individuals to make sense of their symptoms so they can better manage them," Morrison-Greet says.

"During therapy, PFG uses well-known strategies to help people find the root cause

of their anxiety and-or depression so as to bring about the changes they want. But a strong sense of wellbeing is also fundamental to overcoming anxiety."

That's having healthy connections with family and friends, good nutrition and diet, quality sleep, sufficient physical activity, pursuing leisure activities that are intrinsically enjoyable and "giving back". Morrison-Greet says excessive alcohol and drug consumption should be avoided.

"People who self-medicate with these substances are only masking the problem and usually make things worse as a result," she says.

"Finally, if a person is struggling with anxiety and not coping it is important they seek help from among the diverse range of mental health practitioners available."

Partnership For Growth's EAP sees it counselling a range of workers, both those referred by employers via managers or HR departments, and individuals who make an approach through a company channel.

In all cases, what is discussed in counselling remains strictly confidential; any information shared is with a client's full knowledge and consent, she says.

"We see everyone from high-level corporates in such fields as law, finance and banking to rank and file administrative staff and health care professionals," Morrison-Greet says. "At Partnership For Growth we give clients the necessary tools, skills and knowledge to resolve unhealthy conflict, behaviours and challenges in a positive way.

"This helps them achieve greater clarity and peace of mind, enabling them to get their life back on track."

## Support for when you need it most

We are dedicated, compassionate & committed to your emotional wellbeing and this is how we can help you. Partnership for Growth provides Psychological Counselling, Life & Mindset coaching & Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) in Sydney CBD, Woolloomooloo and surrounding suburbs.

- Anxiety and Depression
- Grief and Bereavement
- Relationship Issues
- Life & Mindset Coaching
- Family Conflict
- Employee Assistance Program

If any you wish to discuss any of the issues raised above (or in the article).

**Please contact us here on 02 8095 8607**

initial phone consultations are free.

We look forward to assisting you.

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