

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Ezra is a 70 year-old father of two and grandfather of four. Although he had always been known as a “worrier” by family and friends, his worrying has become more severe since his retirement 5 years ago. He worries uncontrollably all day every day. When his friends don’t text him back within five minutes, he feels sick to his stomach and worries that they don’t like him and don’t want to be friends with him anymore. When he hears about a plane crash in a different country, he can’t sleep for days because his son is taking a plane to California in 3 weeks for a business trip and he worries that this plane will crash too. Ezra can never relax and has difficulty concentrating on tasks.

Someone with **generalized anxiety disorder** may have an experience like the one above.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, “a severe, chronic, exaggerated worrying about everyday events is the most common symptom in people with GAD. This is a worrying that lasts for at least six months, makes it difficult to concentrate and to carry out routine activities, and happens for many hours each day in some people. Some people with this disorder anticipate the worst and often experience physical symptoms of fatigue, tension, headaches and nausea due to the severity of their anxiety.”¹

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, **signs and symptoms** of generalized anxiety disorder can include:

- Not being able to relax
- Being easily startled
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Physical symptoms that accompany the anxiety, such as fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, difficulty swallowing, trembling, twitching, irritability, sweating, nausea, lightheadedness, having to go to the bathroom frequently, feeling out of breath, and hot flashes²

Bibliography

¹ Duckworth, Ken, and Jacob Freedman. National Alliance on Mental Illness, "Anxiety Disorders." Last modified April 2012. Accessed July 25, 2013.
http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=142543.

² The National Institute of Mental Health, "<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad/index.shtml>." Accessed July 25, 2013.
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad/index.shtml>.