

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

"I Feel So Overwhelmed By Everything."

THE **HOPE**LINE

TheHopeLine.com

Everyone feels anxious or nervous at some point in their lives. From making a big presentation at school to having to tell someone bad news, situations in everyday life can cause temporary uneasiness and worry. Levels of anxiety can fall anywhere on a broad spectrum, from momentary nervousness to paralyzing disorders that interfere with normal life functions.

No matter where your anxiety lies on that spectrum, there are a variety of ways to help deal with anxiety.

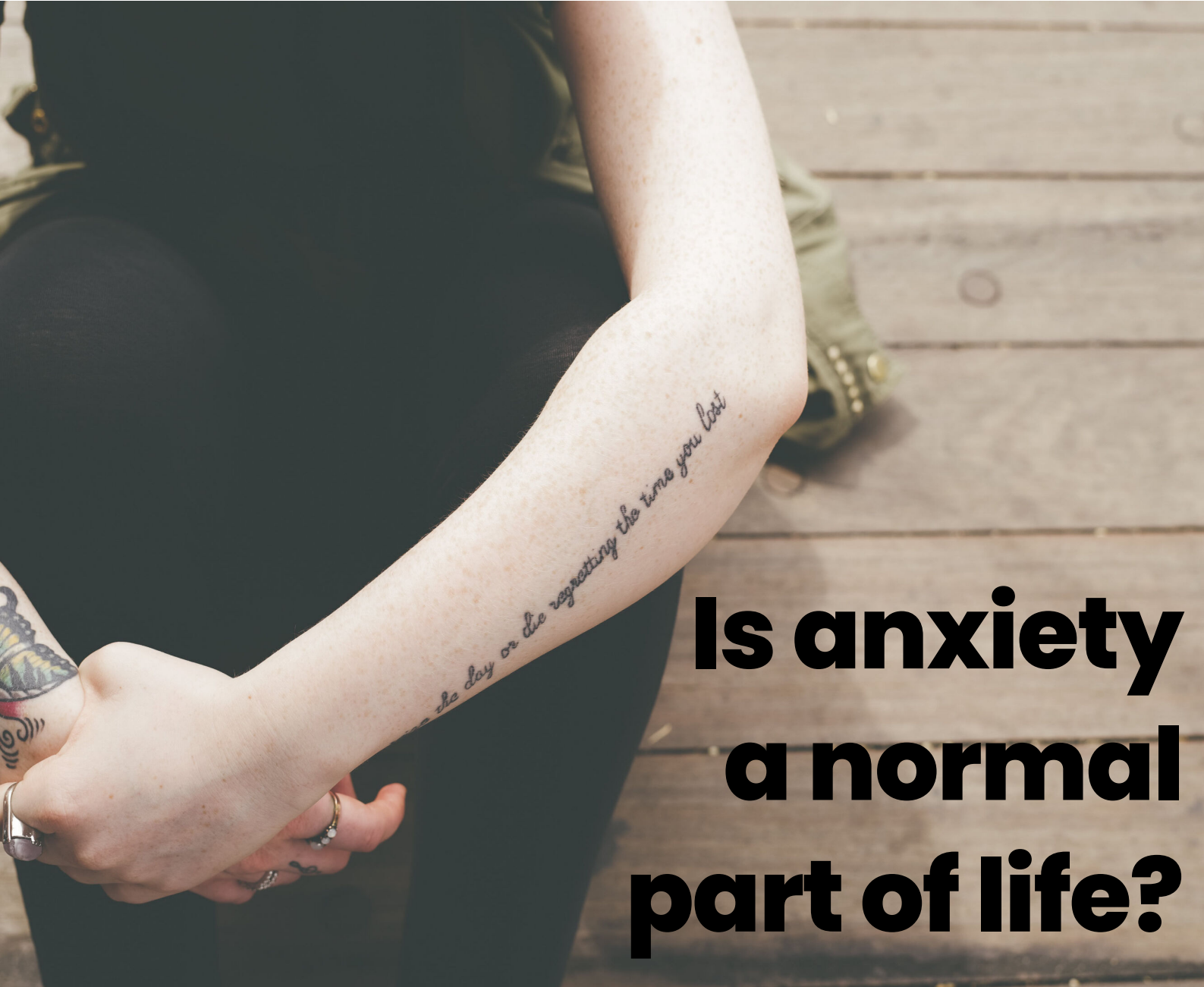


*"I've been having
a lot of anxiety
and feeling
overwhelmed."*

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is described as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. For millions of people, coping with anxiety is a part of everyday life. The frequency of anxiousness, how you cope with it, and any related mental or physical issues may indicate if medical attention is needed.



A close-up photograph of a person's forearm and hand. The person has a tattoo on their forearm that reads "one day or die regretting the time you lost" in a cursive font. They are wearing a dark-colored top and a green bag is visible in the background. The background is a wooden deck.

Is anxiety a normal part of life?

No one is immune to feelings of anxiety, whether it's getting nervous before a big game or chronic anxiety that occurs regularly. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, over 40 million Americans suffer from anxiety, roughly 18% of the US population, so if you feel anxious often or if it interferes with your daily

life, you're not alone. These days, there are many effective treatments and useful coping mechanisms for anxiety, and there are resources available to make your life better and your symptoms more manageable. Seek professional help to assess your anxiety and get medical attention if needed.



Why does anxiety happen?

Anxiety triggers can vary from person to person. Typically, anxiety begins in childhood or adolescence and continues into adulthood. Anxiety is usually a result of a variety of contributing factors, which could be related to:

- Stress at work, school, or other potentially high pressure situations
- Difficult relationships with a significant other, friend, or family member
- Big, life-changing decisions
- Stressful events such as violence, abuse, or emotional trauma
- A side effect of prescription medication
- Financial problems
- Mental health issues such as depression, substance abuse, ADHD and eating disorders



***What does
anxiety feel
like?***

There are a variety of symptoms, feelings, and physical reactions your body might experience from anxiety. Here are some examples:

- **Heart pounding**
- **Excessive sweating**
- **Feeling dizzy or faint**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Feeling very tense**
- **Trembling or shaking**
- **Upset stomach**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Dry mouth**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Feeling panicked**
- **Feeling fearful**
- **Feeling irritable**
- **Trouble sleeping**
- **Headaches**
- **Fear of dying**
- **Panic attacks**
- **Constantly worrying**

If some of the things on this list sound familiar, here is an anxiety screening test you can take to help you determine if you need to seek professional help:

ETY SCREENING TEST

Types of Anxiety Disorders

Dealing with anxiety doesn't necessarily mean you have an anxiety disorder. Anxiety comes in many forms and can warrant professional help, even if it doesn't cross over into a clinical disorder. There are four common types of anxiety: generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and phobias. If you feel anxious often or identify with some of the following disorder symptoms, seek professional medical help.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder Symptoms:

- Intense, excessive anxiety about everyday situations
- Feeling unable to relax
- Frequent headaches, sweating, trembling, difficulty swallowing, and other physical symptoms
- Excessive worry about everyday problems consistently for at least 6 months or more

Panic Disorder Symptoms:

- Terror that strikes suddenly and repeatedly with no warning
- Sweating, chest pain, palpitations, or a feeling of choking, which may make the person think they are having a heart attack or "going crazy"
- Feeling out of control
- Interferes with everyday activities and often leads to a specific fear of a place or situation such as fear of elevators, etc.



Social Anxiety Disorder Symptoms:

Overwhelming worry and self-consciousness about everyday social situations.

Worry often centers on a fear of being judged by others, or behaving in a way that might cause embarrassment or lead to ridicule

Difficulty making friends and having a hard time talking to others

Feeling nauseous or sick around others

Specific Phobia Symptoms:

An intense fear of a specific object or situation, such as spiders, heights, or flying, etc.

The level of fear is usually inappropriate to the situation

Fear leads to avoiding common situations, which interferes with work, school, or family

Dealing with Anxiety

From understanding why you get anxious to finding healthy ways to manage anxiety, it's key to find things that work for you as you cope with anxiety. Below are a few helpful tips that could help:

Understand what triggers your anxiety. If you aren't sure what triggers your anxiety, try writing in a journal when you feel anxious to keep track of any specific causes or patterns.

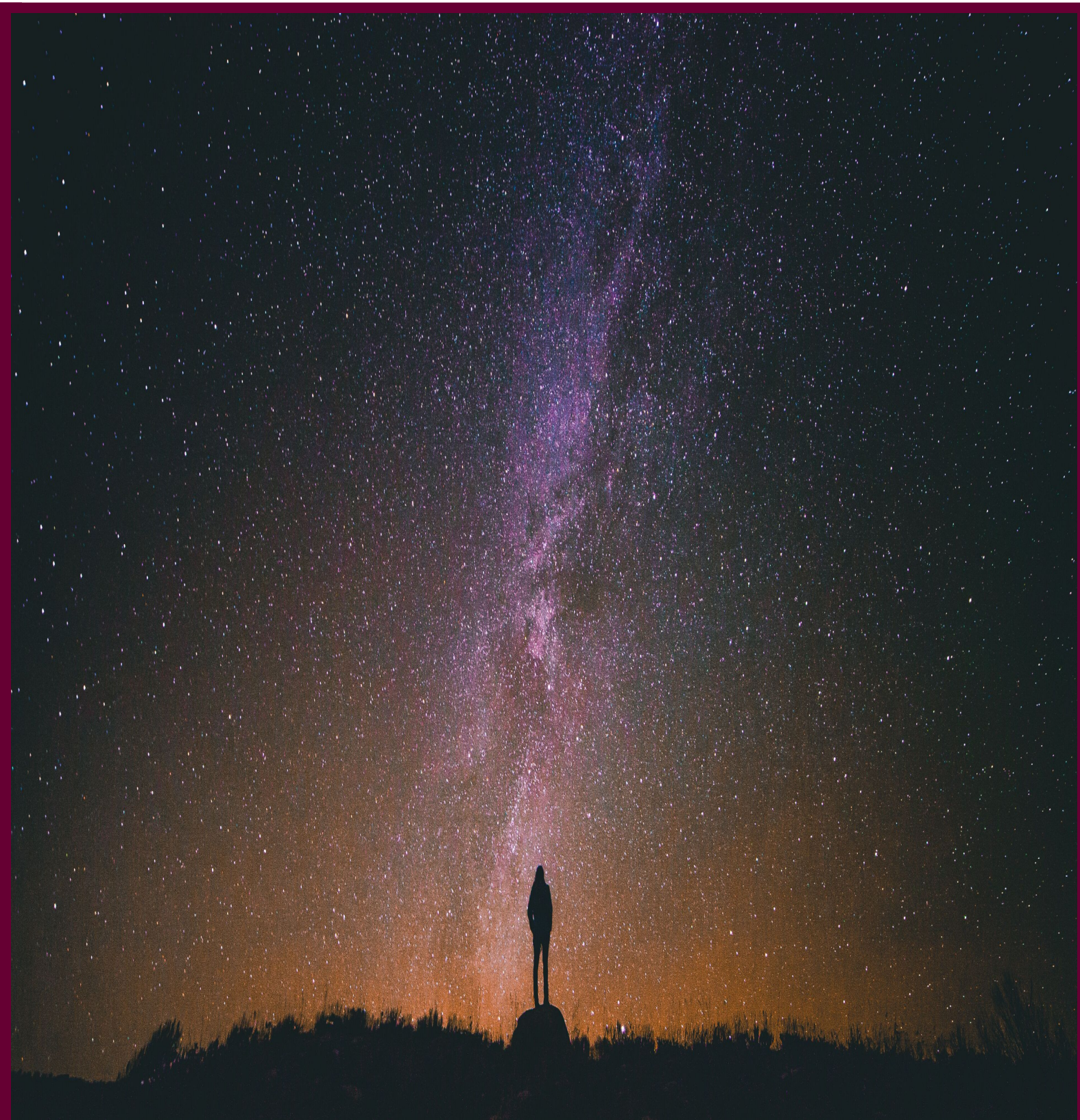
De-stress often. Enjoy your hobbies and relaxing activities, especially at times when you're more likely to be stressed and anxious. Try calming activities like meditation, prayer, listening to music, going on a hike, or other fun, low-stress activities.

Take care of your whole self. Eat healthy food, exercise regularly, learn how to unplug from electronics and social media, and get plenty of sleep. Also, avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol, which can significantly aggravate your anxiety.

Talk to someone you trust. Find a friend, family member, teacher, pastor or counselor you can trust to talk about your anxiety and what triggers it. You can also [**chat online with our HopeCoaches**](#).

Get a plan. Before the next time anxiety hits, come up with a plan to help cope with it. Make a short list of things that help you calm down and be prepared to do them. That could look like keeping headphones on you so that you can listen to music, downloading an app that walks you through meditations, having a small journal in your bag, or just being ready to take deep breaths and count ten if that helps you regain composure.

Seek medical help. Don't hesitate to seek help if you are struggling. There are thousands of great counselors, therapists, and doctors who are specially trained to help with anxiety and stress.



Anxiety Attacks

*A*nxiety attacks or panic attacks can be sudden, very unsettling, and produce unpleasant symptoms.

Some of the most common symptoms of an anxiety attack include:

- A feeling of overwhelming fear
- Feeling of going crazy or losing control
- Feeling you are in grave danger
- Feeling you might pass out
- An urgency to escape
- Dizziness
- Heart Palpitations
- Trembling
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pressure or pain
- Feeling detached from reality
- Weak in the knees
- Hot and cold flashes
- Numbness and tingling sensations

There are two main causes of anxiety attacks or panic attacks:

1) High degree anxiety

The most common cause of anxiety attacks is thinking you are in grave danger which causes the body to produce a high degree stress response. Once that chemical stress response is initiated, many react with more fear, which causes more stress responses, which can cause more physiological, psychological, and emotional changes.

2) Chronically elevated stress

When stress builds up over time with no relief, lingering chemicals in the brain can trigger the body into a panic attack. When we experience an involuntary high degree stress response, the sensations can be so profound that we think we are having a medical emergency.



The good news is that all anxiety attacks end, and even though the signs and symptoms of an anxiety attack can seem powerful and even out of control, they are temporary episodes.

When you feel an attack coming on, here are some tips for managing your anxiety:

Close your eyes. Slow your breathing. Breathe by expanding your abdomen. Relax your body as much as you can. Gently rub or massage your legs and arms.

If you feel you need to move, go for a walk. Leisure walking can shut off the stress response. Use the five senses to identify things that will connect you to the present moment.

Remind yourself that anxiety attacks aren't causing harm to your body. You are not dying. You will be fine. This is a *temporary*, though strong, reaction to worry and fear.

Remind yourself that anxiety attacks ALWAYS end. The more you can calm yourself down, the faster they end.

One way you can calm yourself down is by listening to music. TheHopeLine has a Spotify play list of calming music that might work for you. [Check it out.](#)

Develop a Calming Sequence



Think of your happy place, a loved one, or an activity that comforts you. Visualize it as you practice the rest of your calming sequence.



Dealing with Social Anxiety

Do you ever feel uncomfortable in social situations, especially around people you've never met? Most people face some degree of social anxiety but there are many different levels from severe (afraid to leave your house) to mild (not a huge fan of making small talk). If this sounds familiar, take a look at some of these things that may help you deal with social anxiety.

Realize fears are normal.

Socializing is a perfect opportunity for rejection, and no one wants to be rejected. If you start talking to someone, there is a chance they may find you boring. But at the same time, there will be people who think you are interesting and fun. It's okay to be nervous, but trust that the people you're meant to connect with will find you.

Start the conversation.

Chances are that other people in the room are nervous too. When you begin the conversation you take the pressure off them and end the awkward silence. It gets easier and more natural with practice. You could start with something as simple as: "Where are you from?" or "I love your jacket. Where'd you get it?"

Know what's going on.

The more you know about what's going on in the world the better your chances are of finding something to talk about. In conversation be prepared to talk about something you found interesting recently. Start with something like: "I saw the funniest thing yesterday," or "Did you see that article about...?"

Take a sincere interest in the other person.

People are most often drawn to those who make them feel comfortable and show a real, genuine interest in them. True connection requires empathy, so make sure you give as much as you take.

Learn to read body language.

Look for non-verbal cues. You don't want to be that person who traps someone in a conversation or the last one at the party who hasn't picked up on the fact that it's time to go. At the same time, you may notice that there's someone else who seems to be nervous, and you could try talking to them to ease both of your anxieties.

Take a friend.

Entering into a new social situation is always easier if you go with a friend. It helps to know someone who likes you is there with you, which might help you feel confident enough to talk to someone new.



Helping a friend deal with anxiety

Be a source of encouragement. Everyone needs a friend, especially when dealing with anxiety. Write a thoughtful note, make a small gift, offer a hug, or invite them to hang out. Let them know you are there for them.

Plan calming, stress-free activities. Dealing with anxiety can feel lonely so try planning activities that are calming, like hiking, getting a pedicure or painting pottery.

Keep in contact. In any situation, it's important to have a friend that you can trust and confide in. Give your friend a call every few days or so, and see how they are doing. Be consistent so that they know they can reach out to you if they need to.

Share this eBook. Pass this eBook along to any friend or loved one dealing with anxiety to encourage them and offer help.

A Spiritual Perspective on Anxiety

Life can be busy, stressful and complicated. If you're dealing with anxiety and feel sad, hopeless or scared, please know you aren't alone. There are many effective ways to deal with and overcome anxiety so you can experience life without the weight of constant fear and nervousness.

>> THE SOLUTION

No matter how exhausted, terrifying, or crippling your anxiety becomes, know that God loves you. Anxiety can make you feel lonely and worthless, but you are always valued and worthy in His eyes.

The Bible says that Jesus invites "all who are weary and burdened" come to Him that they might find rest, and that

He came to earth and died so everyone can have "real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of..." [John 10:10 The Message].

You are meant for so much more than the struggles you've been going through. You are loved and accepted, and there is hope for an abundant life, even as you battle with anxiety issues.

A real, personal relationship with Jesus can be a ever-present source comfort and help you discover your true self-worth. With His love on your side, you can trade your fear for freedom and replace anxiety with a peace that surpasses understanding.

Verses for Hope When Struggling with Anxiety



*"God through Jesus has given us the
opportunity to live without fear."
-Matty Mullins*



**If you want to know more about having a
relationship with God or have questions about
anxiety, chat with a HopeCoach.**

Check out TheHopeLine's [library](#) of other Guides on topics such as:

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[Self-Worth](#)

[Suicide](#)

[Eating Disorders](#)

[Cheating](#)

[Lying](#)

If you have found this guide helpful, please help us get our eBooks into the hands of others by donating [HERE](#).

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