

Hello, class. So anxiety disorders are some of the most common mental disorders that we can encounter alongside things like depression or mood disorders and things like ADHD and learning disorders as well. Anxiety disorders appear in almost 20% of adults. So when we talk about anxiety, we're referring to any kinds of feelings of nervousness, or worry, or unease within a person.

And anxiety isn't necessarily all bad. In fact, anxiety can be helpful for people to identify things that are particularly important, or dangerous activities, or things like that. They're almost sort of a mental indicator or clue to the person that they need to particularly pay attention to something.

However, an anxiety disorder is any kind of disorder where a person feels this anxiety, this worry or unease, in a pervasive or particularly strong or unnecessary kind away. And it impairs their life in some form. So oftentimes, people with an anxiety disorder can develop feelings of defensiveness, an insecurity towards other people, as well as inferiority. A lot of times, they might feel like they're threatened, and they can't necessarily do anything about it. So you can see how that can impair people's lives in certain ways.

Remember, when we talk about mental disorders, we're referring to extremes of mental functions or behaviors. So when we say anxiety, we don't mean in its normal form. For example, when we say somebody is getting anxious, like when they're taking a test, that's normal. You should feel worried when it's something that's particularly important to you.

However, with an anxiety disorder, for example, when a person has a panic attack, it's not just that normal feeling of anxiety, but rather it's when a person feels like their life is actually physically in danger. They start choking. It's very hard for them to breathe. They might get nauseous. They lose control of their body and literally just drop to the ground. They could have chest pains.

And all of this can last for a period of minutes to hours. So you can see how this can be detrimental to a person to an extreme degree. So anxiety disorders can take a lot of different forms. And in this lesson, we're going to look over some of the most common of these anxiety disorders.

So the first one that we're going to be taking a look at today is generalized anxiety disorder, which is a feeling of being anxious or tense without any specific cause for a person. And this feeling of anxiety occurs in a person for at least six months in length. But oftentimes, it can happen for longer periods of time, where a person feels especially jittery or on edge constantly with physical symptoms that might go along with this, things like sweating or rapid heart rate, an upset stomach, dizziness, and trouble concentrating for these people.

So notice, it's not short, quick periods of increased anxiety. That would be something like a panic disorder, which we'll talk about next. Rather, it's long, and it's a pervasive feeling of anxiety that's constantly with a person, and it can vary in its intensity. It can be very intense, or it can be general and sort of in the background with the person for the majority of the time. But you can see how having these feelings can make a person feel very psychologically distraught or stressed out as a result.

Now, a panic disorder, on the other hand, is when a person has a constant feeling of anxiety, as we said before, with frequent periods of especially intense and often unexpected panic or very intense periods of that anxiety occurring. And this is what we call a panic attack. So that short period of time where suddenly they feel incredibly worried or nervous, almost without any kind of physical control over this, and this can often be for no reason. But it can also be because of specific causes, though the intensity is inappropriate for those causes. So, for example, if someone becomes especially stressed out by something at work, they can have a panic attack, which increases that feeling of anxiety to a degree that's really unnecessary for the thing that's actually causing it to occur.

Now, oftentimes, a person that's having a panic attack can feel like they're having a heart attack as well. Or they might feel like they're actually about to die. So that's a very stressful thing for a person to have. And panic disorder can appear either with or without agoraphobia, which, again, we'll talk about next. So we can have panic disorder with agoraphobia or panic disorder without agoraphobia.

Now, agoraphobia is any kind of anxiety or fear of being in an open space or an unfamiliar space where escape is especially difficult. Now, this is different from what we would call social anxiety disorder, which is a fear of being in social situations and interacting with others because agoraphobic people would feel anxious in a crowded public place just like a person with social anxiety disorder. However, an agoraphobic person would also be-- feel very anxious or afraid if they're out in the middle of the woods, if they're out in the middle of nowhere with no people present. And that's because they're in a situation where they feel exposed, and they aren't sure where they can escape or where they could run to if they needed some kind of safety.

So someone with a panic disorder with agoraphobia may have a panic attack as a result of being out in public, so they have a panic attack as a result of their agoraphobia. Or they could be so worried that they might have a panic attack that they would stay at home. So in other words, their agoraphobia might affect or might be affected because of their panic disorder. So you can see how these two can feed on each other if they're seen together.

So panic attacks, panic disorders, generalized anxiety disorders, any of these anxiety disorders we've talked about today, they can be treated with medication. We can use anxiolytics, which are drugs that are specifically designed to decrease anxiety and feelings of fear, as well as with antidepressants. But people can also be treated with these disorders by being taught strategies to reduce or cope with the anxiety, which can help them to better

mentally deal with either their general or their specific anxieties that they have throughout their lives.