

Stress: What it is and What to do

What is it and why does it happen?

No matter how well you are managing life, stress and anxiety can creep up. Sometimes they are easy to deal with, and other times they can be almost crippling. Anxiety is a complicated experience that includes biological, emotional, cognitive, and social pieces. It can come from a variety of causes, but most of them are related to the things you believe (for example, about yourself, the world around you, other people, your past, your future, or even your anxiety). Before you start to believe that you're the "only one," relax, take a deep breath, and remember that *stress is normal* and there are ways to approach managing it.



What can I do about it?

*Effective strategies*¹: Several techniques have been identified that make anxiety easier to deal with. Consider using a problem solving approach in which you define your problems, list alternative solutions, and set up a plan of action. Consider using more breaks during your work time, and using "quick fix" approaches like going for a walk, deep "belly breathing", and muscle tension and relaxation. Consider examining and writing your thoughts and beliefs to see if any of them are keeping you stuck and unproductive. Consider facing feared situations while using relaxation until the anxiety gradually becomes less overwhelming. A counselor can help you learn these and other strategies.

*Acceptance and Mindfulness*²: One new approach to anxiety that can be especially helpful is acceptance and mindfulness. Imagine your anxieties as they come like leaves floating on a stream. Instead of being caught in a web and pulled along the river, stand above or beside the water watching each anxious thought and feeling float away. Bring a sense of compassion and common humanity to your experience, recognizing that we are all alike, we all struggle in some way or another, and you are loved and worthy in this moment despite what your feelings tell you. Finally, learn to accept yourself the way you are with limitations and all. And don't let that stop you from pursuing the calling for which you know you've come here!

Scriptures to Consider: Finally God's Word has much to say about anxiety. Consider some of the following verses that might help you gain a better understanding and healing from sources of stress: Matthew 6:25-34; Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 4:6-7; Luke 12:24-34; Psalm 55:22; Proverbs 12:25; Psalm 56:3 and Colossians 3:15.

What help can I get?

Here at Regent University, your mental health is just as important as – and is tied together with – your spiritual, academic, and physical health. As a result, resources have been put in place to help you deal with anxiety and stress, as well as other issues, if you find that you just can't do it on your own. Consider using the following resources to help you in your emotional journey here at Regent:

Robbie Kuschel, [Counseling Services](#), Student Center 218; Ph: (757) 352-4101; email: counselingservices@regent.edu
[Psychological Services Center](#), CRB 188, Ph: (757) 352-4488; email: psc@regent.edu (Please do not email for appointment scheduling)

¹ Leahy, R. L., Holland, S. J. F., & McGinn, L. K. (2012). Treatment plans and interventions for depression and anxiety disorders (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

² Forsyth, J. P. & Eifert, G. H. (2007). The mindfulness and acceptance workbook for anxiety. CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.