

# Eight Categories of Anxiety Disorders

## **Specific (Simple) Phobia (most common in younger children)**

- ✓ Intense anxiety in the face of a circumstance or object that in reality poses no danger
- ✓ Includes: animal type, natural environment, blood-injection-injury type, situational type
- ✓ Leads to avoidance behaviors

## **Social Phobia (most common in adolescents)**

- ✓ Consistently focuses on the fear of embarrassment in social situations causing intense anxiety
- ✓ Leads to avoidance behaviors
- ✓ Causes isolation and depression
- ✓ Includes: Selective mutism and avoidance of people and groups

## **Agoraphobia (most common in adolescents)**

- ✓ Anxiety in social situations so severe that child is unable to participate in most social situations
- ✓ May become homebound

## **Panic Disorder (rare in young children)**

- ✓ Attacks of recurrent and unexpected terror
- ✓ Four or more of the following symptoms: pounding heart, sweating, trembling, chest pain, nausea, shortness of breath, choking sensation, dizziness, detachment, fear of losing control, fear of dying, numbness

## **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (common in both young children and adolescents)**

- ✓ Excessive and unrealistic worry in a variety of situations
- ✓ Excessive attention to details of such activities such as homework or other normal tasks
- ✓ Worries about “worrying”
- ✓ Physical symptoms include: restlessness, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, irritability, unusual muscle tension, sleep disturbance

## **Separation Anxiety (most common in younger children and young adolescents)**

- ✓ Occurs when child is separated from familiar people and situations
- ✓ Lasts longer than four weeks
- ✓ In younger children includes: clinging, crying, or panic upon separation
- ✓ In young adolescents includes: unrealistic worry about potential harm to loved ones or fear they will not return home, reluctance to sleep alone, refusal to attend school, stomachache or headache

# **Eight Categories of Anxiety Disorders (continued)**

## **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (found in both children and adolescents)**

- ✓ Serious condition that requires immediate professional assistance
- ✓ Exposure to sudden or periodic traumatic event in which the threat of death or serious injury was presented to child/adolescent or to others
- ✓ Experience of intense fear, helplessness, or horror
- ✓ Symptoms include: re-experiencing the traumatic event as thoughts or feelings; play re-enacts the traumatic event; repeated bad dreams; intense avoidance of people, places and things that serve as reminders; inability to remember details; detachment; difficulty concentrating; being easily startled
- ✓ Symptoms usually appear within the first three months, but may not surface for many months or even years after traumatic event

## **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (most common in adolescents)**

- ✓ Obsessions lead to repetitive compulsive behaviors
  - ✓ Behaviors relieve their fears and anxiety briefly
  - ✓ Obsession consumes child/adolescent for more than one hour a day
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- *Disorders are often co-morbid*
  - *Family history of anxiety disorders is often present*