



Worry, Worry, Worry!

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“My insides feel like a shook up can of Coke!” “I have to get out of here. . . I can’t breathe!!”

These are the words of a teenager complaining of stomachaches, discomfort in her chest, headaches and memory problems. Is it physical or emotional?

The culprit is often anxiety. The National Mental Health Association says that 19 million Americans have their lives significantly impacted by anxiety. The NHMA further reports that 48% of primary care physicians report anxiety as a primary complaint among patients. Physical symptoms such as racing heart, restlessness, insomnia, nausea, headaches, memory loss, dizziness, chest pain or difficulty concentrating often accompany anxiety. Emotional symptoms can include irritability, paranoia, fear, rumination, intrusive thoughts, worry and panic.

There are effective strategies for dealing with anxiety. Cognitive and behavioral therapy can address contributing emotional factors. Therapists may use relaxation techniques, guided imagery, meditation and hypnosis along with individual and family therapy to teach clients how to manage their stress. Primary care physicians and psychiatrists often prescribe anti-anxiety medications and anti-depressants that address the physiological causes of anxiety. Often, treatment involves both therapy and medication.

No one has to live with debilitating anxiety. It is very treatable.