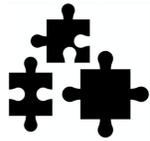




### WHAT IS ANXIETY?\*

Anxiety means feeling worried, nervous, or fearful. Anxiety can be common and even helpful (to warn us of danger, etc.)

Sometimes, however, the brain may detect a threat or danger by mistake. This can lead to feelings of anxiety that are not helpful, and instead, can negatively impact our physical and mental health.



### WHAT ARE SOME COMMON TYPES OF ANXIETY?

- Generalized Anxiety
  - Excessive and persistent worry adversely impacting daily activities that is very difficult to control/stop.
- Panic Disorder
  - Recurrent panic attacks that involve many physical symptoms such as increased heart rate, breathing difficulties, sweating, dizziness, and/or tingling in hands/toes.
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  - Recurrent obsessions (thoughts, ideas) resulting in compulsions (driven repetitive behaviours).
- Phobias
  - Excessive and persistent fear of one specific activity, object, or situation that generally is not harmful (e.g., agoraphobia, or fear of open spaces).



### CASE ILLUSTRATION

The tennis coach was aware of Leah's lack of concentration. Her coach described her as more distracted and on edge. During meetings, practices, and road trips Leah never stopped fidgeting. When her coach inquired if she was worried about something, Leah mentioned she was always a "worrywart" and had difficulty falling asleep as her brain "never shut off." Leah often had the feeling that something horrible would happen to her or others. When she experienced these fears, her breathing increased rapidly, and her heart beat so fast she felt like she was going to have a heart attack. Leah felt powerless in stopping these episodes of fear. Leah had mentioned these episodes to her father and he admitted he had the same problems when playing minor league hockey.



### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

- Excessive worry, fear, or dread
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Increased heart rate and respiration
- Sweating, shaking, or trembling
- Feeling weak and exhausted
- Impaired concentration
- Sleep disturbances (especially difficulty falling asleep)
- Eating disturbances (increased need to eat or difficulty eating due to anxiety)
- Feeling out of control

\*Source: Kelty Mental Health

\*\*Sources: NCAA, APA

### **WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS ON SPORT PERFORMANCE?\***

- Athletes with an anxiety disorder may have an impaired ability to manage their sport and non-sport anxiety properly and positively.
- There can be a negative effect on sport performance, primarily through physical and psychological symptoms
- The ability to focus on performance is diminished, and there is a tendency to attend to the negative aspects rather than the positive aspects of the game
- Negative emotions associated with an anxiety disorder can occur before, during, or after competitions

### **TREATMENT OPTIONS**

- 1) Individual therapy
- 2) Group therapy
- 3) Medication
- 4) A combination of the above

### **HELPFUL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

Foundry Kelowna - <https://foundrybc.ca/kelowna/>

Foundry Penticton - <https://foundrybc.ca/penticton/>

SportMedBC - <https://sportmedbc.com/practitioners>

Canadian Sport Psychology Association - <https://www.cspa-acps.com/find-a-consultant>

Canadian Centre for Mental Health in Sport - <https://www.ccmhs-ccsms.ca/>  
<https://anxietybc.com/>

<http://keltymentalhealth.ca/>

<http://www.apa.org>

<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/mental-health>