
Influence Of An Anxious Response On A Person

The modern world is full of situations and circumstances that can create an anxious response in a person. Such influences are not necessarily recent - fear of a threat of physical harm, either to oneself or to one's family or loved ones, for example, will have been impacting on people since the dawn of humanity. Others, such as financial worries, fear of crime, unemployment and so on are certainly more recent concerns. It's unlikely that a cave dweller would have been unduly worried about an increase in the bank base lending rate, for example. Many of the causes of anxiety are a combination of external (environmental) factors and internal (mental, or perceived causes.) It's important to understand that different individuals respond differently, and it's quite possible for a person to feel under threat and in danger of losing control of a situation which another person may not even recognise as a problem. The sense of threat and/or being out of control are both significant factors in creating anxiety.

So being in a stressful situation which you don't fully understand, and therefore feeling uncertain how to evaluate or handle it, can be very worrying. Strange environments can often be a cause of anxiety for this reason, as can having demands placed upon you which you feel ill-equipped or un-equipped to handle. Responses to anxiety-causing stimuli can take many forms, varying from individual to individual and according to the nature of the stimulus. The resultant feelings of anxiety can be either acute or chronic, short- or longer-term, and an individual's response will vary accordingly. Even quite mild anxiety can bring physical symptoms with it, ranging from a sense of "shakiness", shortness of breath, sweating, hyperactivity, nervous tics, nausea and so on. The "perceptual narrowing" I've mentioned before can also come into play,, making it difficult for the individual to concentrate on anything else other than their current concerns and inhibiting their ability to step back and see the wider picture. In the longer term tiredness and even exhaustion can occur, together with nutritional problems resulting from an impoverished diet. Mental effects can also occur - worry, a sense of powerlessness or incompetence, an impaired self-image, irritability and a feeling of being on edge will impact both the individual and those around them.

There are many manifestations of anxiety in people and often several of these effects can be present at the same time. Anxiety can cause the individual to experience a number of difficulties which affect their ability to lead day-to-day life, such as lack of concentration, impairment of judgement, poor attention and similar. Anxiety can also disrupt normal behaviour patterns, such as sleep patterns, becoming irritable, and developing a reliance on drugs, both legal and illegal. Some aspects of the effects of anxiety can impact on an individual's relationships, their family and friends. The anxious person will frequently become restless, irritable, exhibit low self-esteem or self-confidence, become increasingly negative and so on - with a resulting change in

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the way they are perceived by their loved ones as well as by themselves.

Physical effects

Physical effects of anxiety are arguably more familiar to the general public and are certainly referred to in literature. Changes in complexion - flushing or going pale, for example, are often mentioned, as well as a dry mouth, palpitations and more.

Other effects are less widely recognised as resulting from anxiety, such as fatigue, hyperventilation, digestive problems (IBS, nausea, diarrhoea) and the like. The physical effects of anxiety can sometimes be serious or even life-threatening, such as heart problems, from palpitations to cardiac arrest, or stroke. In general (but by no means exclusively) such reactions tend to develop in the longer term.

Anxiety can be quite pernicious in its effect on the family and friends of the individual experiencing the condition. An anxious person will tend to be less effective in communicating with others and may be perceived as withdrawing from a circle of friends or a family group. There can be a sense of loss in those affected by this, as the person experiencing the condition can appear to have changed quite significantly in their behaviour ("He/she isn't the person they were.")

A further aspect which can lead to alienation is that the anxious person may react negatively to offers of help and support, even if they themselves have initially indicated that they feel in need of that support. An anxious person will tend to focus on the perceived source of their anxiety to the exclusion of other considerations, and often feel that their confidantes and friends don't truly understand the problem that confronts them. In turn, this will make the person who is trying to help feel rejected, causing a negative impact on the relationship between the two.

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