

# Exercise

Professional Version | US English

## Am I Experiencing Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)?



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## Description

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Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is a condition characterized by problematic worry. Everyone worries to some extent, but people with GAD find that their worries form chains of thoughts and images that progress in ever more catastrophic and unlikely directions. GAD is experienced by between 2 and 6 people out of every 100 (Stansfield et al, 2016; Kessler et al, 2005), but like many anxiety disorders, it is under-diagnosed and often goes unrecognized (Munk-Jørgensen et al, 2006; Kasper, 2006).

DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for GAD include:

- Excessive anxiety and worry, occurring most days for at least 6 months, about more than one event or activity.
- Finding it difficult to control one's worry.
- Anxiety and worry which is associated with 3 or more of the following 6 symptoms (with at least some symptoms present on most days for the past 6 months):
  - Restlessness, feeling 'keyed up', on edge, or easily fatigued
  - Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank
  - Irritability
  - Muscle tension
  - Sleep disturbance (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or having unsatisfying sleep)
- Anxiety, worry, or physical symptoms which cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
- Disturbance not attributable to the psychological effects of a substance, and which can't be explained by another mental disorder.

The ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for GAD include:

- **Marked symptoms of anxiety** manifested by either general apprehensiveness that is not restricted to a specific environmental circumstance, or excessive worry about negative events occurring in several different aspects of everyday life.
- **Anxiety and general apprehensiveness or worry** accompanied by additional symptoms. These include:
  - Muscle tension or motor restlessness
  - Sympathetic autonomic overactivity (for example, frequent gastrointestinal symptoms, palpitations, sweating, trembling, shaking, and/or dry mouth)
  - Subjective experience of nervousness, restlessness, or being 'on edge'
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Irritability
  - Sleep disturbances (difficulty falling or staying asleep, or restless, unsatisfying sleep)
- **Symptoms that are not transient**, persist on most days for at least several months, and which are not better accounted for by another mental disorder. They are also not a manifestation of another medical condition, and are not due to the effects of a substance or medication on the central nervous system.
- **Symptoms which result in significant distress** about experiencing persistent anxiety symptoms or significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. If functioning is maintained, it is only through significant additional effort.

*Am I Experiencing Generalized Anxiety Disorder?* is an indicative screening tool, designed to help clients self-assess whether their experiences might warrant further investigation. It is not intended to give a formal diagnosis or provide a measure of severity.

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## Instructions

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### Suggested Questions



Some people who worry a lot have a condition called generalized anxiety disorder. Would you like to try a short quiz that could give us an idea of whether this problem troubles you?

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## References

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# Am I Experiencing Generalized Anxiety Disorder?

GAD should only be diagnosed by a mental health professional or a doctor. However, answering the questions below can give you an idea of whether you might find it helpful have a professional assessment.

Did you worry a lot when you were younger?

Never

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

Do you find yourself worrying even when there is nothing to worry about?

Never

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

Do worries about minor everyday things spiral into major concerns?

Never

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

Do you find it hard to stop worrying once you have started?

Never

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

Does worry get in the way of you enjoying your life?

Never

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

If you were not worrying about <whatever you are concerned with today>, would you be worrying about something else?

Yes

No

If you answered 'often' or 'yes' to most of these questions, you could be experiencing excessive levels of worry about everyday situations. This is one of the factors that a psychologist will use to make a diagnosis of GAD.

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