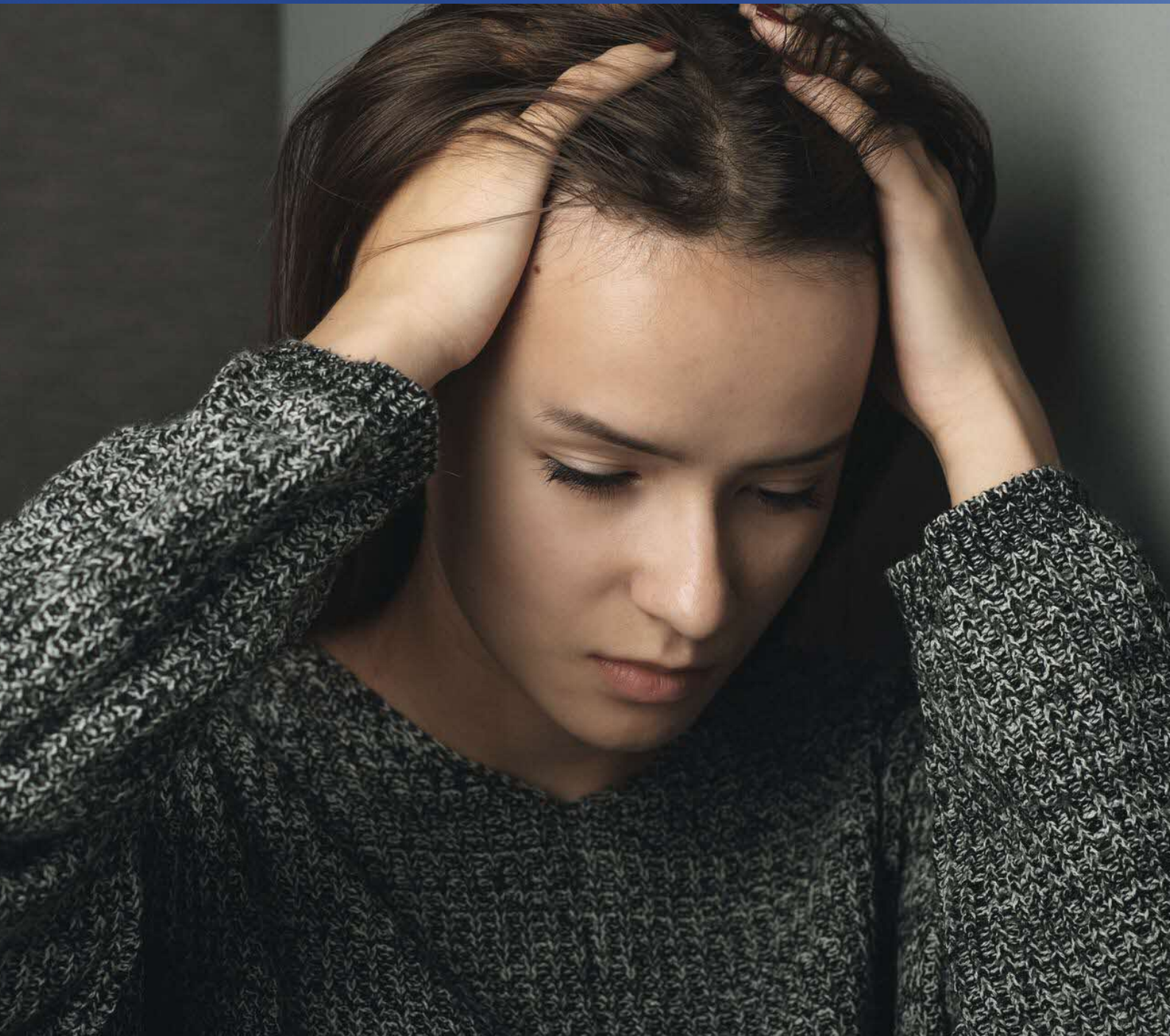


A Guide for Patients and Families

# Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)



## What is Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)?

Anxiety and fear are common emotions. But, while fear is a normal response to a perceived threat, anxiety is an unwarranted or inappropriate fear to a vague or ill-defined threat.

However, when these emotions are persistent, excessive, and irrational, they may affect:

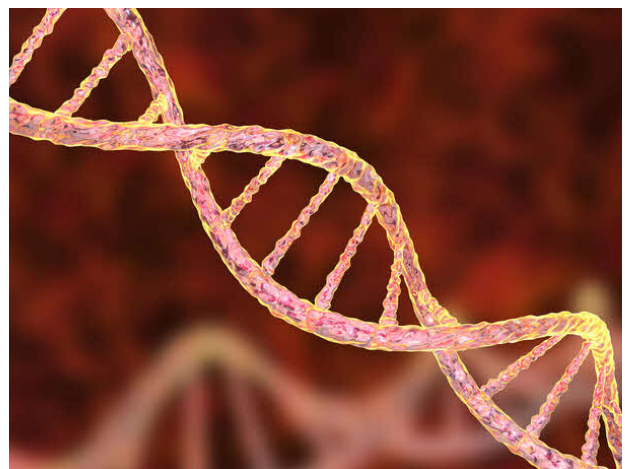
- The way a person leads his life.
- The person's ability to work.
- The person's ability to cope with the demands of life or relationships.



When this happens, anxiety becomes a disorder.

There is usually a combination of factors that contribute to GAD.

- Genetic – a family member suffers from a mental health condition.
- Biochemical – hormonal and chemical imbalance.
- Cognitive – misinterpreting physical sensation as threatening or having a serious medical condition.



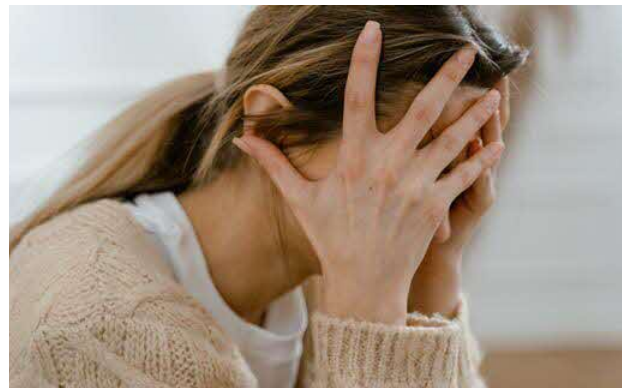


## Signs & symptoms:

In GAD, the anxiety symptoms occur most of the day, persistent, and may not be restricted to any event.

You may feel some/all the unpleasant mental symptoms such as:

- Apprehension
- Confusion
- Worry
- Feeling keyed up or on edge.
- A sense of helplessness.
- Repeated negative thoughts.



**It also triggers a wide range of physical symptoms such as:**

- Muscle tension and weakness.
- Pounding heart (palpitations).
- Difficulty breathing.



## Treatment

Treatment for GAD often includes a combination of psychotherapy (such as cognitive - behavioural therapy) and medications.



- Psychotherapy helps individuals understand and manage anxious thoughts and behaviours.



- Medications like benzodiazepines or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) can be prescribed to alleviate symptoms.

## Others

- Sharing one's feelings with a supportive person.
- Performing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing exercises.
- Meditation or distracting oneself with favourite activities.
- Doing physical exercises.
- Using positive self talk, e.g. "I can do this"; "Things won't be as bad as I predict".
- Picturing oneself successfully facing and conquering that fear.



Regular communications with a mental health professional is essential to monitor progress and make adjustments to the treatment plan if needed. Lifestyle changes, stress management, and self-care are also crucial components of managing GAD.

