

Anxiety and Kidney Disease

From Pre-Dialysis to Transplant: How Anxiety can Affect those Living with Kidney Disease

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Thanks to our speaker!



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- Medical Social Worker at Wellbound South Austin in Texas
- Works with patients and families who are adjusting to a new lifestyle by providing emotional support and connecting them to community resources.
- Provides one-on-one counseling when patients have been identified as having symptoms of anxiety and/or depression.

What is Anxiety?

- “A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.”
(Per Google Dictionary)
- ‘Anxiety is a normal reaction to stressful situations, and even high levels of anxiety can be healthy and beneficial at times. Disorders are only present when anxiety symptoms last for several weeks to months and significantly interfere with every day function or cause long-lasting distress.’ (www.anxiety.org)

Who Gets Anxiety?

- Anyone dealing with a life-changing event.
- Those who have a history of generalized anxiety or panic disorder.
- Those who have not practiced coping skills or do not have outlets for stress management.
- Those with no support systems or those with overly-active support systems.
- Those who did NOT expect kidney disease to lead to dialysis and those that DID expect kidney disease to lead to dialysis.
- Those who are not well-informed on their treatment options or disease process.

(per National Institutes
of Mental Health)



What Can Trigger Anxiety?

- A life-changing event (marriage, divorce, moving, birth of a child, change in health status, i.e., kidney disease, job status)
- Fear of the unknown (financial/insurance worries)
- Loss of control (feeling stuck/trapped)
- Stress
- Overly-bearing friends and family
- Poor sleep
- Lack of information/knowledge
- Phobias
- Poor relationships with medical personnel
- Sadness, depression

What Can Anxiety Feel Like?

- Shortness of breath
- Trembling of hands
- Excessive sweating
- Increased heart rate
- Chest pain
- Changes in blood pressure
- Dizziness
- Abdominal pain
- Feeling disconnected from reality
- Fear of dying
- Irritability/Anger
- Desire to isolate from friends and family
- Muscle tension
- Avoidance of every day activities
- Depression
- Worrisome thoughts/Obsessive thoughts
- Poor concentration

****It is important to rule out medically-related causes by your doctor before assuming the symptoms are anxiety-related****

How to Recognize Anxiety in Others

The **duration** of the symptoms and level of **impairment** are important to consider, aside from the following symptoms:

- The person reports excessive anxiety or worry about future events.
- The person may have sweaty palms, racing heart, shortness of breath triggered by certain situations or events.
- The person experiences sleep disturbances (sleeping too much or too little).
- The person has poor concentration.
- You may notice a decline in personal hygiene, weight changes (up or down)
- Changes in performance at work or school
- Major changes in mood (irritability)
- Or withdrawal from people or daily activities or hobbies.

How to Recognize Anxiety in Others (Cont.)

- It is important to understand that only a mental health professional can diagnose an anxiety disorder as presenting symptoms can overlap with other types of mental health challenges.
- If you recognize signs of anxiety, or feel something is different about someone you care about, it's may be a good idea to simply ask the person how they are feeling.
- You could use a question that is neutral and supportive like:
 - “It seems like something might be bothering you. Is there something happening that you want to talk about?”

How Can Anxiety and Kidney Disease Affect YOU?

- Underestimated/Misunderstood (Stigma)
- Can lead to depression
- Paralyzing—even a simple task
- Can lead to non-adherence (fear of knowing/not knowing, fear of treatment, fear of transplant, fear of financial stress)
- Missed treatments/doctor's appointments
- Poor health outcomes
- Disruptions with employment and relationships

Pre-Dialysis to Transplant: Tips and Resources

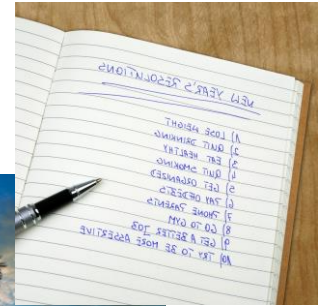
- Get as much information as you can pre-dialysis (know your options and make a plan)
- Get involved with your local ESRD network
- Find a support group
- Talk to your doctor about exercise
- Talk to your doctor or Social Worker about talk therapy and/or medication supplements
- Attend all doctor's appointments and come with questions

Pre-Dialysis to Transplant: Tips and Resources (Cont.)

- Engage: Become a Facility Rep or talk to your Facility Rep
- Participate in Patient Care Conferences or request one with your dialysis team
- Set appropriate boundaries with friends and family
- Find hobbies that interest you
- Set goals

Self-help Techniques

- Mindful thinking: “Attention to **thoughts** and **feelings** without judging whether they are right or wrong; paying attention to the present state, not the past.”
- Meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Physical exercise
- Limit or cut caffeine
- Practice best sleep hygiene
- Journaling



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

- Tell someone!
- National Alliance on Mental Illness:
 - 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America
 - Telemental Health (online therapy)
 - Mental Health Apps
 - <https://adaa.org/>
- For a full list of mental health resources visit:
<https://socialworklicensemap.com/mental-health-resources-list/>

Questions?



Join us for our next webinar!

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Date & time: TBD

Speaker: TBD

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