
Managing Stress and Anxiety

You've got this!

**Clinical guidance for educators from Highmark
and Allegheny Health Network (AHN) experts**

Brought to you by Highmark Blue Shield

This presentation is intended as a guideline at this point in time, Nov 11, 2020. Always check with local, state and CDC/federal resources to stay current and to fully understand specific school regulations.
Subsequent to this live webinar, the Pennsylvania Department of Health issued additional guidelines to help schools make decisions about school models based on county COVID-19 metrics. Please refer to the guidelines.

Meet the experts



AHN

Alicia Kaplan, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, for Drexel University; Psychiatrist, Allegheny Health Network



Highmark

Demetrios C. Marousis, MA, MBA, LPC, Director of Behavioral Health, Highmark, Inc.

Today's agenda

- What is stress and anxiety?
- How does it affect us? (Impact of COVID-19)
- How to identify it in ourselves and others?
- Managing stress/anxiety
- Self-care strategies
- Professional care and treatment
- How Highmark can help



Mental Health Effects During Pandemic



PA Educators: You're all feeling the stress

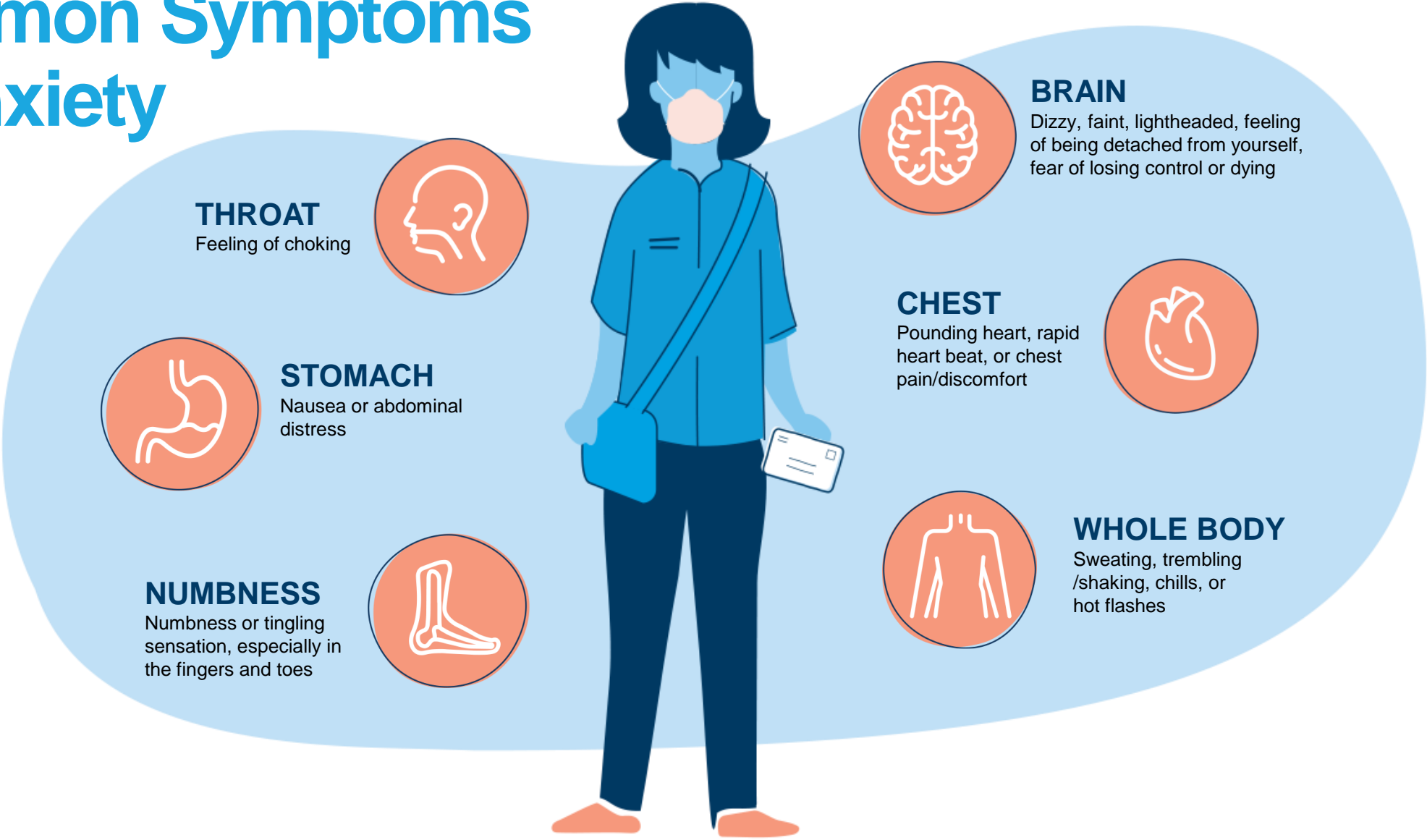
- **Psychological stress** — Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming — individual response
- **Normal human emotions** — Worry, sadness, irritability, detachment triggered by uncertainty
- Changes in eating patterns, gastrointestinal discomfort, muscle tension, headaches, sleep disturbances
- **Anxiety** — Feeling of worry, nervousness, or fear — what ifs
- Restlessness, fatigue, sense of impending panic or doom, pounding and rapid heart rate
- Hyperventilation, sweating, and/or trembling
- Disabling if it interferes with daily life — **significant distress** and interference with usual activities

Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety



- Feeling nervous, irritable, or on edge
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic, or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Breathing rapidly (hyperventilation), sweating, and/or trembling
- Feeling weak or tired
- Difficulty concentrating
- Having trouble sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems

Common Symptoms of Anxiety

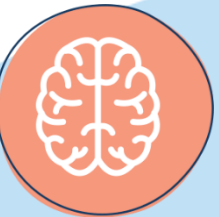


THROAT
Feeling of choking



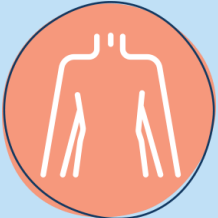
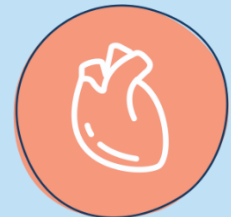
STOMACH
Nausea or abdominal distress

NUMBNESS
Numbness or tingling sensation, especially in the fingers and toes



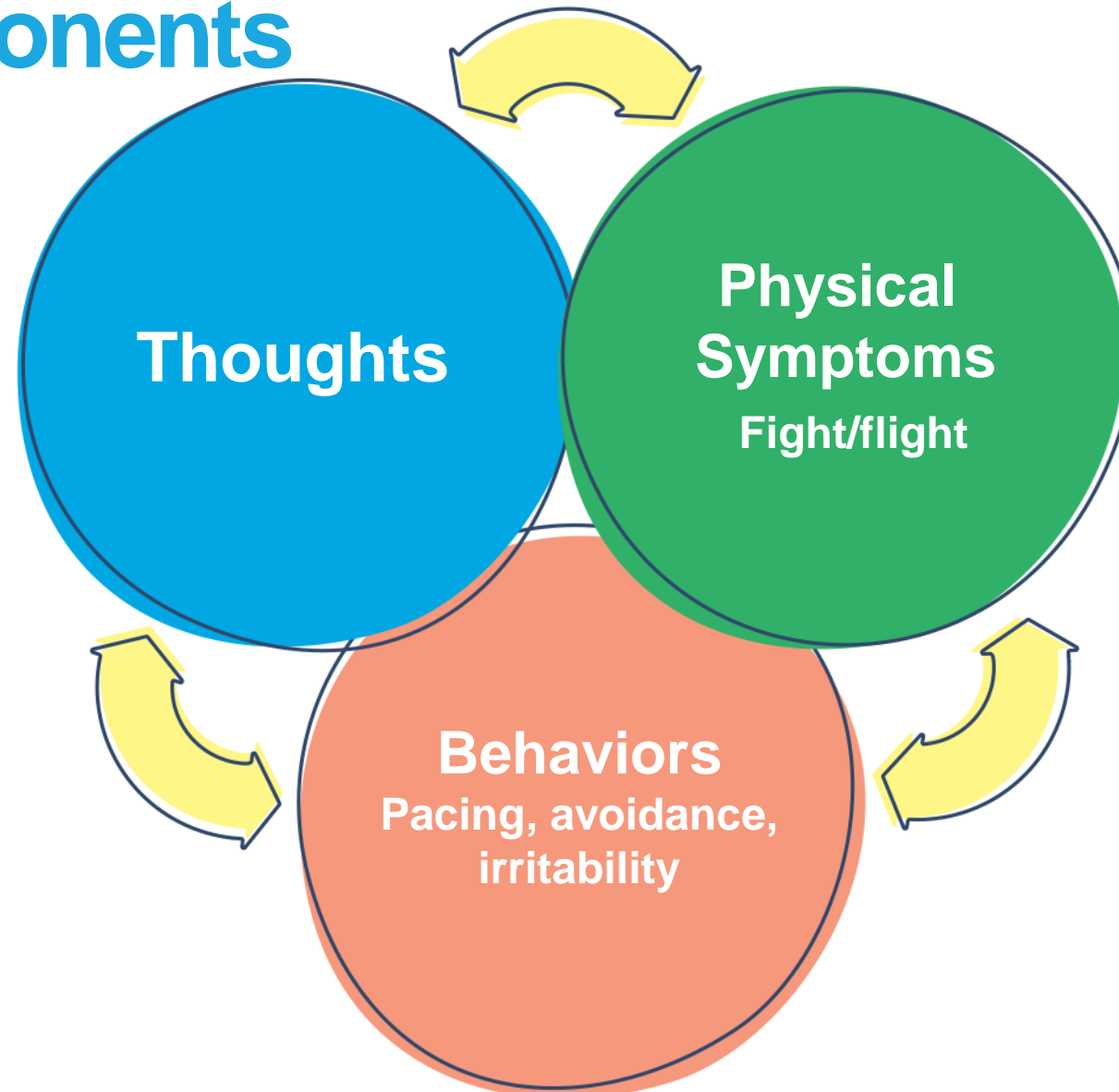
BRAIN
Dizzy, faint, lightheaded, feeling of being detached from yourself, fear of losing control or dying

CHEST
Pounding heart, rapid heart beat, or chest pain/discomfort



WHOLE BODY
Sweating, trembling /shaking, chills, or hot flashes

Three Components of Anxiety

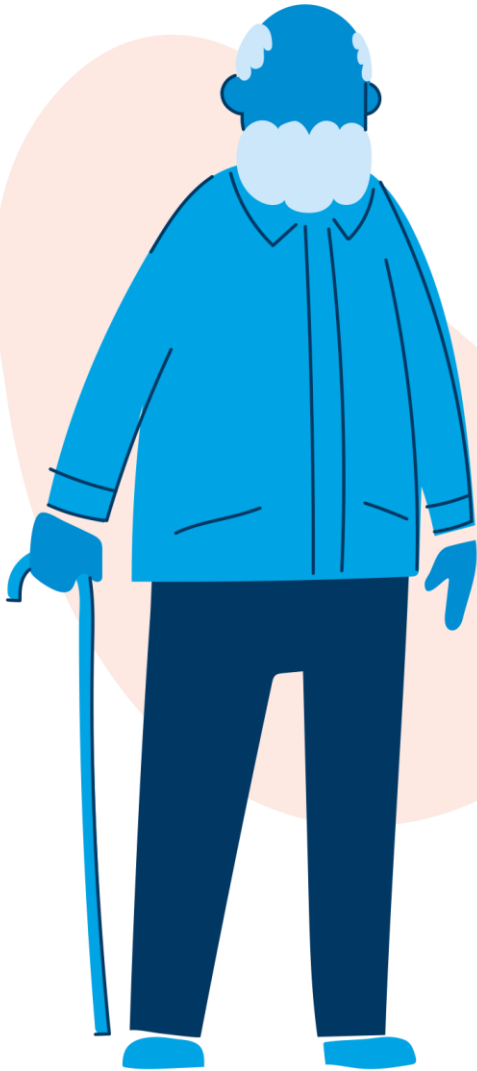


Emotional Well-Being and Coping



- Self-care: diet, exercise, adequate sleep pattern
- Maintain social connections, take breaks, schedule activities
- Depend upon reliable sources of information (but limit exposure)
- Manage the stress: targeting sensations, thoughts, emotions and behaviors, relaxation strategies, breathing retraining, cognitive behavioral therapy, pharmacotherapy

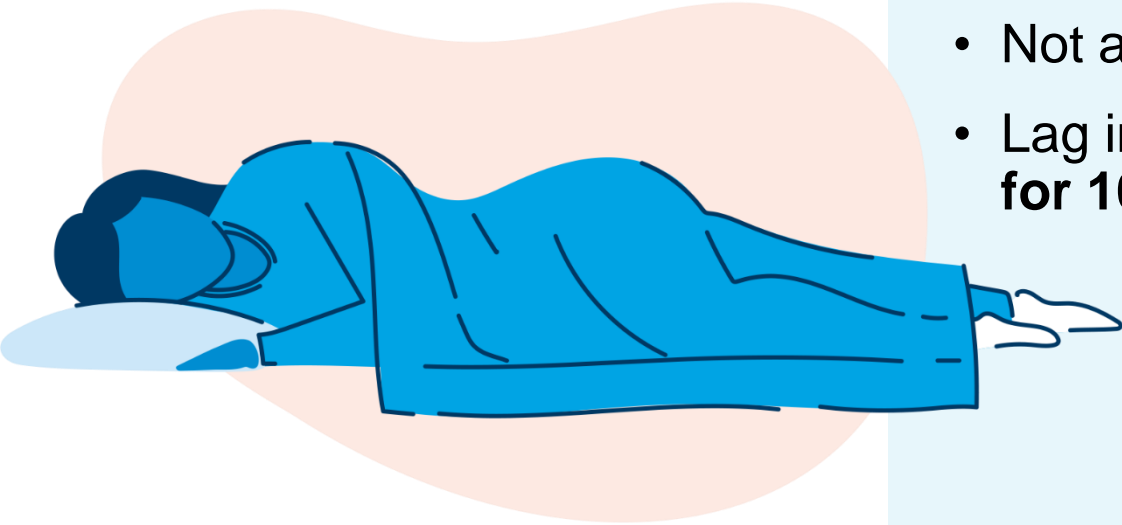
Anxiety Disorders



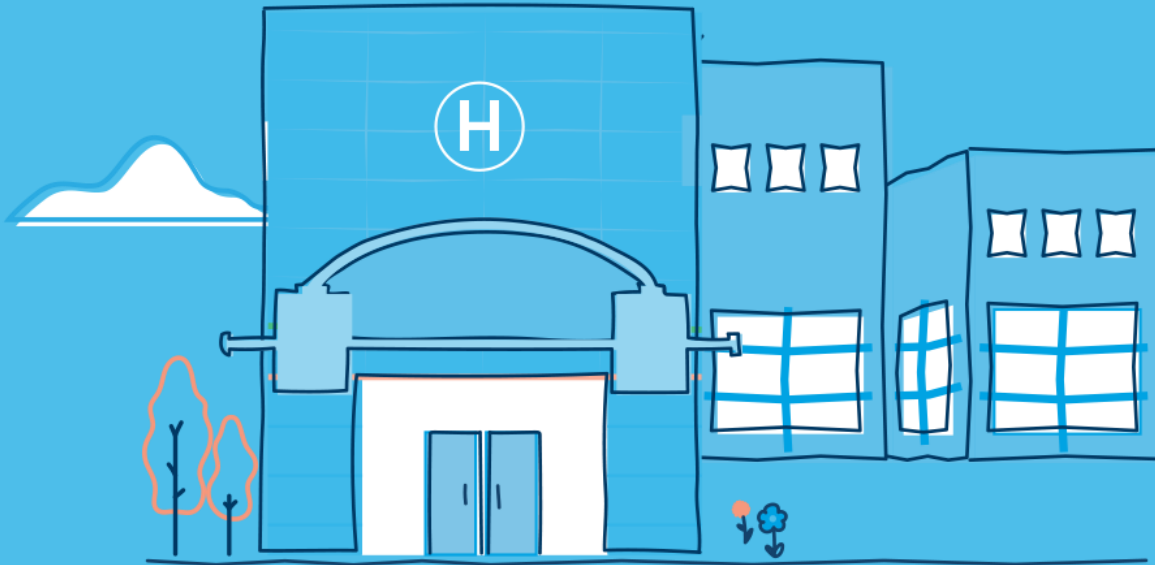
- Most common class of psychiatric disorders in the United States
- 40 million adults or 18% of the U.S. population (NIMH)
- Highly treatable, yet only 1/3 of individuals get treatment

Anxiety Disorders

- Somatic symptoms often serve as presenting complaint – insomnia, fatigue, gastrointestinal distress
- Not aware of having an anxiety disorder or help available
- Lag in treatment — **many report experiencing symptoms for 10 or more years before seeking help**



How Are Anxiety Disorders Diagnosed?



- Fear and dread of nonthreatening situations, events, places, or objects become excessive and are uncontrollable.
- Anxiety has lasted for at least six months and it interferes with social, work, family, or other aspects of daily life.
- Symptoms, medical history, physical exam, or other tests to rule out other health problems that could cause symptoms.

Management During COVID-19—Telemedicine



- Symptoms, medical history, physical exam, or other tests to rule out other health problems that could cause symptoms.
- Stress management, cognitive behavioral therapy, and/or medication management.
- Biofeedback.

The Freespira® Technology

An FDA-cleared, drug-free, 28-day, home-based treatment that does NOT require a clinical visit

- Includes a proprietary sensor, nasal cannula, tablet with pre-loaded software and, remote training/coaching services.
- Respiration rate and exhaled CO₂ levels are measured in real time.
- The software graphically displays physiological parameters and guides patients to regulate exhaled CO₂ levels and respiration.
- The twice-daily treatment normalizes breathing patterns which eliminates/reduces panic and PTSD symptoms.



Economic Study Results

Clinical Outcomes

- 94% clinically significant reduction in panic symptoms
- 85% panic attack free immediately post-treatment
- 81% panic attack free 12 months post-treatment
- 91% protocol adherence

Cost Reduction

- 50% reduction in total costs
- 64% reduction in emergency department costs
- 53% reduction in pharmacy costs

Freespira can reduce
annual medical
costs by up to

50%

Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback 2020; 45: 175–181.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10484-020-09465-0>

Evaluating the Impact of Freespira on Panic Disorder Patients' Health Outcomes and Healthcare Costs within the Allegheny Health Network

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Additional Support and Resources

Find a doctor at AHN

If you or a loved one needs support, we can help. We have a wide range of providers with different experiences and specialties, including treatment for depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders. **Call us at (412) DOCTORS (412) 362-8677.**

Sign in to your Highmark member portal or call the number on the back of your Highmark ID card for help finding participating providers near you.

Check out Highmark's guide to mental health resources at HighmarkEmployer.com under the Wellness tab and learn more about community resources at HighmarkAnswers.com

Community resources to address socioeconomic stressors

- You can dial 211 or text your ZIP to 898-211 for help finding community resources through the United Way.
- Check out AuntBertha.com for local resources to address a multitude of socioeconomic stressors such as financial, housing, food, and other programs as available by area.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) provides a text and phone line if you're experiencing emotional distress related to national disasters such as the coronavirus outbreak – and it's free.

- **National helpline for treatment referral and information: 1-800-662-4357**
- **Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990**
- **Text "TalkWithUs" for disaster distress support to 66746**

NAMI Keystone Pennsylvania's HelpLine helps with locating support groups and educational programs, accessing information on the mental health system, and finding general information about mental illness.

- **NAMI PA Helpline: 1-888-264-7972**
- **Text "PA" to 741741 to text with a trained counselor**

Thank you for attending the webinar today.

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