

About Shan You Counselling Centre

Shan You Counselling Centre (SYCC) is a non-profit social service organisation set up in 1995 to provide professional counselling and clinical services, based on the guiding values of compassion, mindfulness, morality, and wisdom. Our services are available to all in the community, regardless of race, religion and ability to pay. Our services include:

- o **Counselling and psychotherapy for individuals, couples, and families**
- o **Mindfulness-based programmes for mental health conditions and mental wellness**
- o **Community outreach programmes on mental health and wellness**
- o **Professional training workshops for mental health and healthcare professionals**
- o **Suicide alertness training workshop**
- o **Marriage preparation programme**

SYCC is committed to deliver accessible and effective counselling and clinical services that enhance the mental and social well-being of individuals and families in the community. We strive to build a compassionate and mentally healthy community in which people are empowered to live good and meaningful lives.

Our Counselling Services

We utilize various evidence-based psychotherapies, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Motivational Interviewing, to help our clients improve their mental wellness and achieve a better quality of life. Our team of counsellors and psychologists help clients with a wide spectrum of mental health and other issues, including:

- o **Anxiety and trauma-related issues**
- o **Depression**
- o **Bereavement and grief issues**
- o **Stress**
- o **Marital and couple issues**
- o **Family and relationship issues**

The information provided in this brochure is for informational purposes only and is not professional advice, diagnosis, treatment or care, nor is it intended to be a substitute. Therefore, if you or the person you are supporting may be at risk, please consult a mental health professional.

**A Public Education Campaign
on Mental Health by:**

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**Let's talk about
ANXIETY**



About Anxiety

Feeling anxious when perceiving danger or uncertainty is part of being human. While fear is how our body responds to a real or perceived threat by gearing us up to deal with or escape from the threat, anxiety is a state of tension and caution that prepares us for a possible future threat.

Although uncomfortable at times, anxiety helps us in some way – to focus on what is important (e.g. examination) and protect us from real dangers (e.g. a speeding car). A healthy level of anxiety can be helpful and would not impair daily functioning significantly. For some, however, prolonged and overwhelming anxiety can leave one feeling helpless and impair daily functioning in school, at work and/or when relating to others.

How Counselling Can Help

In counselling, the counsellor would first explore with you the circumstances and factors around the anxiety problem. It is important to know what happened before the onset of the problem, during and after anxiety episodes, and the times when anxiety is less of a problem. Having a better understanding of the anxiety problem would help you to have a clearer picture of what drives the anxiety to the way it is now.

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders are typically characterized by emotional, physical, and behavioural symptoms that include overwhelming feelings of worry and fear, racing thoughts, heart palpitations, dizziness, breathlessness, trembling, sweating and hot flashes, irritability and restlessness, feelings of impending doom, headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, and social withdrawal and avoidance. There are 6 types of anxiety disorders.

1 Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

is most common in Singapore, affecting 1 in every 33¹. It involves repetitive anxiety-provoking thoughts, urges or mental images (obsessions) and repetitive behaviours in response to obsessions (compulsions). Some examples are a fear of germs/untidiness, taboo thoughts of sex/harm to self or others.

2 Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

involves excessive and extreme worry about various aspects of life – money, health, relationship, etc. Persons with GAD find it hard to stop worrying, may experience unexplained physical problems, (e.g. muscle aches, stomach pains), difficulty falling and staying asleep and feeling nervous/tense frequently. GAD affects about 0.9% of the adult population in Singapore¹.

3 Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD)

can develop in someone who is afraid of being judged, shamed or rejected by others. Persons with SAD often feel highly self-conscious about the way they look, sound or act in some or all social situations. When with others and/or having to perform in social situations, they can experience sweating, trembling, rapid heartbeats, nausea and fear of speaking. They may tend to avoid social gatherings and people.

4 Panic Attack

is a sudden, intense and overwhelming fear that lasts for several minutes. Panic Disorder can be diagnosed when someone experiences repeated panic attacks. There is a fear of something bad happening or people feel they are losing control of themselves. Physically, panic attacks can feel like a heart attack – pounding heartbeat, shallow breathing, sweating and chills, chest pain, tingling in limbs.

5 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

may develop in someone who experienced a traumatic, shocking and/or overwhelming event (e.g. witnessing a car accident). Trauma is an experience which can be emotionally distressing and painful. Not everyone who experience trauma develop PTSD subsequently. Persons with PTSD may experience symptoms relating to the event (flashbacks, dreams, worry), have avoidance tendencies (intentionally staying away from reminders of the event), arousal and reactivity (difficulty sleeping, feeling nervous easily) and cognitive and emotional symptoms (trouble recalling the event, thoughts of self-blame, feelings of guilt).

6 Specific Phobia

is an intense but unfounded fear of something that is usually not dangerous. These fears can be about anything, such as fears of height, small space, spiders and sight of blood. People often find ways to avoid their phobias. However, avoiding can negatively interfere with one's life, work and/or relationships.

¹ Institute of Mental Health (2011, November 18). Latest study sheds light on the state of mental health in Singapore. Retrieved from https://www.imh.com.sg/uploadedFiles/Newsroom/News_Releases/SMHS%20news%20release.pdf