How To Help Your Anxious Partner — And Yourself

Living with anxiety can be tough — your thoughts might race, you might dread tasks others find simple (like driving to work) and your worries might feel inescapable. But loving someone with anxiety can be hard too. You might feel powerless to help or overwhelmed by how your partner's feelings affect your daily life.

If so, you're not alone: Multiple studies have shown that anxiety disorders may contribute to marital dissatisfaction. "We often find that our patients' ... partners are somehow intertwined in their anxiety," says Sandy Capaldi, associate director at the Center for the Treatment and Study of Anxiety at the University of Pennsylvania.

Anxiety is experienced at many different levels and in different forms — from moderate to debilitating, from generalized anxiety to phobias — and its impacts can vary. But psychiatrists and therapists say there are ways to help your partner navigate challenges while you also take care of yourself.

**Start by addressing symptoms.**

Because an anxiety disorder can be consuming, it can be best to start by talking with your partner about the ways anxiety affects daily life, like sleeplessness, says Jeffrey Borenstein, president and CEO of the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation in New York. Something as simple as using the word "stress"
instead of clinical labels can help too. "Often people may feel a little more comfortable talking about stress as opposed to ... anxiety [disorders]," Borenstein says.

**Don't minimize feelings.**
"Even if the perspective of the other person absolutely makes no sense to you logically, you should validate it," says Carolyn Daitch, a licensed psychologist and director of the Center for the Treatment of Anxiety Disorders in Farmington Hills, Mich. Try to understand your partner's fears and worries, or at least acknowledge that those fears and worries are real to your partner, before addressing why such things might be irrational. Anxiety doesn't have an easy solution, but helping someone starts with compassion. "Too many partners, particularly male partners, want to fix it right away," Daitch says. "You have to start with empathy and understanding. You can move to logic, but not before the person feels like they're not being judged and ... misunderstood."

**Help your partner seek treatment — and participate when you can.**
If your partner is overwhelmed by anxiety, encourage your partner to seek therapy. You can even suggest names of therapists or offices, but don't call the therapist and set up the appointment yourself, Borenstein says. You want the person to have a certain level of agency over treatment.

Capaldi says she often brings in a patient's partner to participate in therapy and to bolster the patient's support system at home. "The three of us — patient, partner, therapist — are a team, and that team is opposed to the anxiety disorder," she says.

But don't talk to your partner at home the way a therapist might. For example, don't suggest your partner try medication or ways of modifying behavior. "Let the recommendations about treatment come from the professional" even if you yourself are in the mental health care field, Borenstein says. "I personally am a professional, and I wouldn't [prescribe anything] to a loved one."

It can also be helpful to do some research on whatever form of anxiety your partner might be living with, Capaldi says (The National Alliance on Mental Illness' guide to anxiety disorders is a great starting point). "Many times, people with anxiety feel as if they're misunderstood," she says. "If the partner takes the time to research it a little bit, that can go a long way."

For tips on how to help your partner pick the right type of therapy, check out this guide from the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. **Encourage — don't push.**
When your partner suffers from debilitating anxiety and you don't, your partner's behavior can be frustrating, says Cory Newman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine. But you should never patronize or diminish your partner's fears. Comments such as "Why can't you do this? What's your problem?" will probably be ineffective. Instead, try to encourage your partner to overcome the anxiety. "Channel your encouragement in a positive direction," Newman says. "Say something like 'Here's how it will benefit you if you can face [this] discomfort.'"

Daitch cites the example of someone with an immense fear of flying: "Start off saying, 'I really understand how scared you are of flying. It makes sense you'd be scared. You can't get off the plane if you have a panic attack, [you're] afraid you might embarrass yourself ... or it feels like you're out of control when there's turbulence.' See things from their perspective."

Then you can try to gently push your partner to overcome those fears.

**Cultivate a life outside your partner's anxiety.**
To maintain your own mental health, it's important to cultivate habits and relationships that are for you alone, such as a regular exercise regimen or weekly hangouts with friends. Have your own support network, like a best friend or a therapist (or both), for when your partner's anxiety overwhelms you.

Partners definitely need support of their own, Capaldi says, "whether that means their own therapeutic relationship or just friends, family [and] other interests or activities that set them apart from the world of anxiety they might be living in."

And don't let your partner's anxiety run your family's life. For example, someone with obsessive-compulsive disorder, which is closely linked to anxiety disorders, might want family members to keep everything very clean or organized in arbitrary ways. Newman says it's important to restrict how much you will organize your household around your partner's anxiety — and not to indulge every request or mandate.

"Try to be respectful, but also set limits," he says.

**Help your partner remember that the goal is to manage anxiety — not to get rid of it.**
"A lot of people with anxiety disorders understandably view anxiety as the enemy," Newman says. "Actually, it's not. The real enemy is avoidance. Anxiety
causes [people] to avoid things — like applying to schools, flying to a cousin's wedding — [that can lead to] an enriched life. ... And that causes depression."

It can also reduce the number of life experiences you and your partner share.

"You can have an anxious life, but if you do things — you're doing that job interview, you're saying yes to social invitations, you're getting in that car and driving to the ocean even though ... you don't want to drive 10 miles — you're doing those things still," Newman says. "OK, you might need [medication] or therapy, but you're still living life."
10 WIFELY TIPS EVERY SINGLE WOMAN SHOULD LEARN

Here’s how you can prepare for marriage and be a good wife!

1. Develop an intimate relationship with God.
   Seek Biblical wisdom, study the word, develop a life of prayer, and be dedicated to living for God.

2. Master the art of fidelity and trust.
   Learn to be 100% committed prior to a serious courtship and be a woman of your word.

3. Develop the ability to emotionally and physically help take care of the house.
   Set an atmosphere of peace and love and practice gentleness with others that cross your path.

4. Learn how to cook!
   Cooking at home is a great way to eat healthy and save money. No matter your circumstances, you can learn to make a few favorite meals with help from family, friends, or the internet. Create meals that you and your new husband will cherish together as you grow.

5. Make smart financial decisions.
   Work on your budget and be sure to have an emergency fund that covers 3-6 months of expenses along with retirement savings.

6. Be complete as one.
   Take the time before marriage to be comfortable in your own skin as a single lady. Soon “I” will become “us” and you’ll want to remember who you are as an individual.

7. Learn the art of compromise.
   Be willing to sacrifice what you want for the benefit and happiness of others. You are a partnership now.

8. Be committed to pursuing your dreams and supporting others.
   Develop your own goals and motivations, and learn how to support family and friends in their endeavors as well.

9. Know what submission is and be ready to walk in it.
   Practice how to yield in love, and put others before yourself. Practice submitting to God and trusting in him, just as you will your future husband. Learn to dote on, communicate with, and respect each other.

10. Be holy and feminine in your conduct.
    Carry yourself with high esteem, walk gracefully, and respect yourself and the people around you.
12 lucky tips to be a good husband to your wife.. Check them out..

1. Never lie!
2. Be a gentleman!
3. Be respectful!
4. Never cheat!
5. Don’t be Lazy!
6. Don’t be selfish!
7. Never be abusive!
8. Be open!
9. Make her feel important!
10. Show that you love her!
11. Be supportive!
12. Be romantic!
OCD CIRCLE

Negative thoughts such as anger and guilt

Obsessive thoughts

Tension and anxiety

Compulsive urges to 'neutralize' obsessive thoughts

Short-term relieve of tension and anxiety

Cleaning rituals
Hand washing
Double checking
Counting rituals
Tapping
Worry
Compulsive washing

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