

## Anxiety Assessment

Anxiety is one of a few psychological responses to stress. Each patient can exhibit different feelings or behaviors when under stress. However, the feeling of apprehension and the feeling of uncertainty are the main characteristics. Typically, patients can manage anxiety and move on, but in some cases anxiety can become problematic where it start interfering with the ability to meet basic needs. Knowing the different levels of anxiety is important when planning interventions to treat the anxiety.



PLAY PICMONIC

### Mild

#### Increased Alertness

##### Up-arrow Alerting-alarm

At first the body response to anxiety can be known as the “fight or flight” response. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) system is activated. These glands release cortisol and catecholamines (“adrenaline”) to allow the body to have heightened senses.

#### Heightened Perception

##### Heightened Perception of door

As anxiety continues to escalate the body starts becoming overwhelmed by the HPA system, and patients display heightened perception of their environment. Some patients will exhibit the “flight” response and become restless (constantly moving around in bed, trying to climb out of bed, or pace).

### Moderate

#### Perception Narrowed

##### Narrowed Perception of hallway

The ability for these patients to problem-solve diminishes. Patients will need assistance with completing tasks and staying focused.

#### Short Attention Span

##### Shorts with Attention Span

The attention span also diminishes. Patients are easily distracted, but start focusing on a specific detail.

#### Shaking

##### Shaking

Restlessness advances into shaking and muscular tension. The body is unable to relax, and the patient may start becoming disoriented.

### Severe

## Ineffective Problem Solving

### [Inability to Solve Problem-cube](#)

The ability to problem solve comes to a halt, and the patient can have problems completing even the simplest task. The inability to problem solve leads the patient to either focus repeatedly on one detail or on multiple details.

## Automatic Behavior

### [Automatic-robot](#)

Automatic behavior and thoughts are aimed at reducing or relieving the anxiety. Irrational and unrealistic thoughts “flash” in the anxious person’s mind, such as “I can’t cope with this or I’m not going to make it.”

## Hyperventilation

### [Hiker-vent](#)

A response from over production of catecholamines. Breathing becomes more rapid and CO<sub>2</sub> will be blown off leading to a hyperventilation state with symptoms of numbness and tingling in the extremities, lightheadedness, and dizziness (early signs of respiratory alkalosis).

## Panic

## Hallucinations

### [Halloween-hallucination](#)

Patients can experience hallucinations or delusions. These patients need to be approached with caution for their reaction to an intervention is unknown. Nursing care should be supportive and protective.

## Inability to Function or Communicate

### [Inability to Communicate on Malfunctioning telephone](#)

Highest state of anxiety. Patients become withdrawn, and the patient’s behavior can be “wild.” Patients have a feeling of terror and may think they are “going crazy.”