

# Nicole Noble

## What is anxiety and overwhelm? Are those medical terms?

0:06

Generalized anxiety disorder is a disorder in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental health disorders, and it is some of the criteria to define it include an unsettled feeling along with various mood concerns, irritability can be a part of it, we also can have sleep disturbance. So a variety of things can play into that. But there's a lot of different types of anxiety. So we could have social anxiety, phobias of various things like snakes or going to the dentist, and even sometimes, people define post traumatic stress disorder as an anxiety disorder related to the previous stress that they've had. But overwhelm that, that feeling of being overwhelmed. We wouldn't define that as a clinical term, but overwhelm is when we are overpowered with emotions or with some specific experience, when something overcomes us and we feel like we don't know where to begin to solve it. And when that happens, we have this perception that we should try to complete everything. That's the exact wrong approach. We should try to slow down, take a moment and then think intentionally about what our most important priorities should be.

## Why do people experience fear?

1:42

Fear, is an emotion that we have for a specific reason to protect ourselves from various threats. So it's a universal emotion. We can look at someone and identify that that's fear on their face that we see widening of their eyes so they can perceive more of the room around them, taking a quick breath in all of that indicates fear which we have, and if we didn't have that emotion, we likely wouldn't be alive. Because we need to be afraid of certain things to protect ourselves.

## Does fear show up in other ways throughout the body?

2:25

Yes. So there's the fight and flight response. When we have a threat that enters our awareness, we engage in that and so that some of our heart rate goes up, our amygdala is pushing chemicals that slow down our prefrontal cortex, which make us less likely to be able to make rational decisions, and we're doing that fight or flight, so we have energy that's being rushed to our core, And we lose the sensations in our hands and feet. We get cold and clammy. All of the blood flows, leaving us our digestion, stops, reproduction, stops all of those things, and we need to lower our heart rate to reduce that response. The problem is that we perceive something as a threat that may not actually be a threat to our survival, or we have constant encounters with various threats that makes that increase our stress chemicals in our body.

## What are the long term effects of our bodies responding this way when it isn't necessary?

3:40

It changes the way our brain thinks and functions. So every time we have a fear, it magnifies it, and that makes us less likely to be able to handle a future, actual event if it were to occur. If

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we're constantly in that state of arousal, we need to be able to lower our anxiety and reduce that so that we can get back to baseline.

### How can people manage anxiety symptoms?

4:12

So if we're talking about a general anxiety for everything, focusing on things that help us establish well being overall would be helpful. So self care routines, every time we take care of ourselves, engage in ritualistic brushing our teeth, showering, we're telling ourselves we have the resources necessary to be okay in this world and that we're safe, but whenever we, so we need to engage in those things. But if we're talking about a specific anxiety when if we can approach that thing we're most afraid of, that can help us and see that we're okay at the end of that, that can help us reduce it, but breathing deeply, guided imagery, relaxation techniques, meditation, just being hyper aware of our present moment. Mindfulness really helps us overcome some of those feelings and move forward.

### Do our social connections impact these feelings?

5:14

Yes, connections. So social support, feeling supported by others. If, if we feel that, then we feel a greater sense of safety in the world. If we know we have someone, if we were in a state of need, we could call who could help us, if we know our co workers aren't trying to embarrass us, if we feel supported that helps our overall well being.

### Why is it important of seek other perspectives?

5:44

If we're trying to navigate all of our anxiety on our own, we typically get in this feedback loop where we're just increasing it. We're thinking about the thing that makes us most anxious, and it just keeps going spiraling up so but if we talk with someone about it. often they'll give us a different perspective. We'll feel supported in some way. We'll realize that there's other things in the world for us to think about, and that's not necessarily something we should fixate on in every moment. So social support, feeling connected with others, just sharing our burdens with someone else can it's like it takes it from us, and we're able to think more clearly after we do that, because it helps stop that cyclical process of us just perceiving it as more extreme.

### Can people rely on AI tools for help with these issues?

6:39

If we are trying to use AI to get guided imagery, relaxation techniques. It can be very effective for some specific like information we want to gather. But as far as us sharing information with it about our lives or what we're anxious about, that actually is likely not going to improve us like a human connection would. So we may have surface level I feel supported. This thing kind of seems like it understands my perspective, but it will usually give us advice. It will typically which we usually just want to feel heard if we're really anxious about it, and only a person can do that really well. So giving us advice or making us feel like it has some solution, it can be that

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feedback loop where we just get stuck in the same thought. It just magnifies what we say back to us. So it's like, like a mirror that's like, like a filter or something that we're seeing ourselves through instead of like reality, and sometimes we need that dose of reality that only another person can provide.

### Why is it important for AI to be able to challenge us?

7:56

Yeah the biggest problem with AI is it never challenges us. It never asks us to critically evaluate something, and a human who cares about us likely will do that for us. A therapist should do that for their client. Should confront us in a way that we can hear that confrontation and consider a different reality or alternative.

### How does modern society make these problems worse?

8:20

So we're constantly bombarded with tons of information and things that we feel like we have to immediately respond to or do something with. That feels like a lot of pressure, and we're never off, and we're usually consuming something all the time. So podcast, music, we're almost never alone with our thoughts and having mindful minutes, and in that time, it helps us reflect on and be aware of our problems. But because we're constantly bombarded, it's we can't do it all, and we know we can't do it all, so we just feel overwhelmed and we don't know where to begin. And again, once that happens, we just try a little bit of everything. That's a terrible way to get anything done. Single tasking. Our brains were designed to do one thing at a time and not like a bunch at once. So if we can slow down, make a list, rethink our priorities. That can help us become a little less overwhelmed. But we think we have to have all information, because information is so easy for us to get, and nobody's capable of that, so it's just overwhelming all the time.

### Do you have any advice for helping children deal with these issues?

9:46

Children often play well, so helping support that imagination, allowing fostering that and not always making them think they have to be on every moment or available to their friends every time. Turning off, unplugging helps us feel better. There's a quote that everything, most everything, can get back to normal. If it's unplugged and restarted, and you can too. I think that's a cute quote. So unplug to try to, you know, take care of yourself would be a big recommendation for young people.

### What can children teach us about dealing with these issues?

10:36

Well, they look at the world through curiosity and openness and interest, and that really is freeing. So if we could, yeah, approach the world more like that, more like a child, that would be helpful.