

# SINAI TEMPLE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Living and Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Emotional Reactions to Stress: **ANXIETY**

We all experience some degree of **ANXIETY** periodically and in a variety of situations. "Signal anxiety" is our natural alert system to anything we perceive threatens our survival and against which we feel vulnerable. Danger, either perceived or real, triggers the "fight, flight, or freeze" response. If we are unable to emotionally self-regulate or use this response to master new skills, feeling this intense apprehension chronically can activate a "state of anxiety" and can lead to challenges in functioning. There are effective treatments for anxiety disorders and accessible strategies to manage stress.

Common symptoms of **Anxiety** include:

- Feeling restless, nervous, or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Rapid breathing (hyperventilation)
- Sweating
- Trembling or muscle twitching
- Feeling weak or tired
- Trouble concentrating or controlling worry
- Sleep disturbance (quantity or quality)
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Headaches and muscle tension
- A strong desire to avoid, or actually avoiding, things or activities that trigger anxiety

Common causes of **Anxiety** include:

- Traumatic experiences
- Genetics
- Underlying medical issue
- Co-occurrence with other mental health conditions, like depression or bipolar disorder
- Drug and substance misuse
- Environmental Circumstances
- Life and situational circumstances, especially those beyond control

Treatment Options for **Anxiety** include:

- Psychotherapy
- Psychiatric consultation for medication
- Coping strategies such as physical activity, meditation and relaxation exercises, adequate sleep and nutrition
- Social support and communal engagement