Anxiety is one of the most common mental health issues. It is more than just feeling stressed or worried. It may be experienced as persistent, seemingly uncontrollable, and overwhelming sometimes, irrational dread of everyday situations, it can be disabling.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS

**COGNITIVE CHANGES**

Look for:
- Impaired concentration
- Trouble with remembering things, such as homework assignments or deadlines
- Chronic worrying
- Anxious thoughts or feelings
- Reduced or impaired judgment
- Panic Attacks

**BEHAVIORAL CHANGES**

Look for:
- Change in eating habits
- Change in sleeping habits
- Significant change in school or work performance
- Nail biting
- Pacing

**EMOTIONAL CHANGES**

Look for:
- Less than normal patience
- Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Expression of loneliness/isolation
- More frequent or extreme pessimistic attitude

**GENERALIZED ILL HEALTH**

Prolonged anxiety can lead to:
- Sleep problems
- Fatigue
- Frequent bouts of unexplained physical ailments
HELPING ANXIOUS STUDENTS

Be patient and understanding while offering hope and encouragement.

Acknowledge concerns

Paraphrase/repeat to verify accuracy – “What I am hearing you say is…”

Use open-ended questions to encourage sharing

Resist problem-solving until student is ready

Avoid arguing, interrupting, lecturing, offering false reassurances, fixing, or challenging/confronting.

Encourage student to seek support at University Counseling Center

Express concern.

Refer them to campus resources.

The University Counseling Services
counseling.vcu.edu

The Wellness Resources Center
thewell.vcu.edu

Student Health
health.students.vcu.edu

Campus Learning Center
clc.vcu.edu