

IND-1407A: Neuroscience of Anxiety

Course Syllabus

- **Instructor: Dr. Maryam Torbati**
- **Number of Credits/Units: 3 Semester Credits/Units**
- **Format: Online Self-Paced Course**
- **You will have 6 months from your date of registration to complete the course.**

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the importance of anxiety in our everyday lives and how to overcome the anxious mind in our classroom. As researchers explain, some anxiety is warranted in our lives, but when it becomes persistent & relentless, it becomes a problem and disorder. According to Stanford University “Anxiety is a pattern that develops over time, and it is something we have a degree of control over. One anxious thought can create a habit of rumination, and everyone has the capacity to develop anxiety by focusing on fearful or undesirable outcomes.” Also, according to Harvard University, “Anxiety can be beneficial as it helps increase your focus and keeps you alert for danger when the situation warrants it. However, when feelings of fear or distress become overwhelming, their intensity is out of proportion to the situation, or they interfere with daily activities, it could indicate an anxiety disorder.”

Student anxiety is rising at alarming rates, starting in kindergarten with anxiety levels continuing to rise as our students progress through their elementary, middle, and high school years. What can teachers and school personnel do to help these students? In this course, you will learn how to recognize students with excessive anxiety, learn the difference between occasional anxiety vs. a chronic anxiety disorder, learn how to talk with students & parents about your concerns, and most importantly, learn tools and strategies to help students manage their anxieties and succeed in school.

Course Highlights

1. **Understanding Anxiety's Spectrum:** Anxiety isn't a monolithic condition. It's a spectrum, ranging from occasional nervousness to debilitating phobias. We probe deep into the many forms of anxiety disorders.
2. **The Mind-Body Connection:** Move beyond age-old contrasts as we explore the intrinsic link between our mental well-being and physical health.
3. **Anatomy of Anxiety:** Decode the workings of the human brain and its physiological responses to external stressors. .
4. **Tailored coping mechanism:** Every individual's experience with anxiety is unique.
5. **Empowerment Through Knowledge:** This course doesn't merely focus on knowledge.
6. **The Societal Impact:** Explore the societal problems!

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. How anxiety gets created in the brain & how it shows up.
2. Learn how to recognize anxious students.
3. Learn how to talk with students about their anxieties.
4. Learn how to talk with parents about their student's anxieties.
5. Learn tools and strategies to help students manage their anxieties and succeed in school

Also,

- Know how to safely talk about mental health, if they need to discuss their own, or want to support a colleague
- Spot the signs that students may be struggling
- How to Create a culture in your classroom where mental health is a subject people are comfortable talking about!

Learning Objectives II

Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to know:

- Brain & anxiety
- What is anxiety?
- Difference between stress & anxiety
- What are types of anxiety?
- What are Trigger points?
- How to calm the anxious brain?
- What are the strategies to cope?
- How do you teach them to your students?

Furthermore

How our brain reacts & gets impacted by anxiety

- Understand the definition and role of anxiety in our daily life & in our classrooms
- Identifying when anxiety is becoming more of ‘disordered’
- Describe how anxiety manifests in the brain and nervous system
- Recognize signs of regulation
- Exploring varieties of Symptoms
- Identifying Characteristics of individual/students with high anxiety
- Integrating plan for treating anxiety in the classroom
- Apply strategies for increasing regulation and reducing anxiety in the classroom situation

How to MANAGE ANXIETY?

- Learning progressive muscle relaxation
- Learning a Write down thoughts

- Practice the 3-3-3 rule.
- Use aromatherapy.
- How to Pay attention to the good things.
- BONUS TIP: Emotional Freedom Tapping (EFT).

STATS on Anxiety

An estimated 4% of the global population currently experience an anxiety disorder (1). In 2019 to 2021, 351 million people in the world had an anxiety disorder, making anxiety disorders the most common of all mental disorders

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses in the U.S. and affect over 44 million adults, or 23.1% of the population¹

The report on Youth survey of nearly 346,000 students from 845 Youth partner schools across 20 states. 33% of fifth & 6th graders, Fifty percent of middle school students and 56 percent of high school students identified feeling depressed, stressed, or anxious as the biggest obstacle to learning.

One of the Most contributors to anxiety is high stress in the classroom, then Social media, which has opened new avenues for comparison, bullying, and the constant fear of missing out, known as FOMO. Young people may often feel the pressure to present a perfect & an idealized version of themselves at school & online, leading to heightened anxiety and self-esteem crisis of our times!

Then we cannot forget about our teachers, teaching profession can be highly anxiety driven & stressful (constant fear of failure, disappointing others ,&a need to overachieve), and this may lead to reduced job satisfaction, burnout, and poor work performance.

Approximately 64% of teachers experience job-related anxiety & stress frequently or always.

According to a 2022 Gallup poll, 44% of K-12 teachers report feeling burned out at work always or very often. In fact, K-12 educators are the most burnt-out workers, when compared to all other professions!

Psychological conditions among teachers were considered, the prevalence of burnout ranged from 25.12% to 74%, stress ranged from 8.3% to 87.1%, anxiety ranged from 38% to 41.2% and depression ranged from 4% to 77% in just the last 10 years

Worldwide, in terms of the total number of individuals living with anxiety disorders, China (49.8 million cases), India (41.8 million), the United States (33.2 million), Brazil (17.3 million), and Indonesia (9.5 million) have the highest burden in the world.

With these kinds of statistics, it is warranted to pay attention to this topic & to be aware of the cause, symptoms, signs, strategies to cope with it

FINALLY

Facts and statistics about anxiety (among all advanced nations):

1. Anxiety disorders are the world's most common mental disorders, affecting 301 million people in 2021.
2. More women are affected by anxiety disorders than men. USA is among the highest
3. Symptoms of anxiety often have onset during childhood or adolescence.
4. most civilized nations have free therapy not USA.
5. Approximately 3 in 4 people with anxiety disorders do not receive treatment for this condition.
6. In the U.S., over 65 million adults & 33 million kids have an anxiety disorder.
7. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness worldwide.
8. Young people are more likely to experience symptoms of anxiety than older adults.

We will learn how Finland does it:

- Finland Score: 2.95/10. ...
- Sweden Score: 3.20/10. ...

WHY Finland has the happiest classrooms in the world?

This course is based on these texts:

- Stop Overthinking Quotes: Stop Worrying, Anxiety and Stress and Start Living by [Daniel Bulmez](#) (Author)
- Rewire Your Anxious Brain: How to Use the Neuroscience of Fear to End Anxiety, Panic, and Worry [Catherine M. Pittman PhD](#) (Author)
- Unwinding Anxiety: New Science Shows How to Break the Cycles of Worry and Fear to Heal [Judson Brewer MD PhD](#)
- The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness [Jonathan Haidt PhD](#).(Author, Narrator)
- The Anxiety Book: 30 Proven Principles to Rewire Worry, Overcome Overthinking, and Stop Being [Ryan A Bush](#) (Author)
- You're Not Alone: The Only Book You'll Ever Need to Overcome Anxiety and Depression Paperback – [Zachary David Westerbeck](#) (Author)
- Finland - Culture Smart! The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture [Elena Barrett](#) (Author), [Terttu Leney](#) (Author)
- [Livewire: The Inside Story of the Ever-Changing Brain](#) by David Eagleman PhD.
- How Your Child Learns Best Author: Dr. Judy Willis MD, PhD.
- [Whole Brain Living: The Anatomy of Choice and the Four Characters That Drive Our Life](#)by [Jill Bolte Taylor](#) MD, PhD.
- [Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#) Carol S. Dweck PhD