

Professionals in metro cities suffer from anxiety disorder

Opinion

According to a survey conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), out of every 10 Indian professionals across metropolitan cities, four suffered from general anxiety disorder or depression.

In the list of the top diseases that affect corporate executives, depression ranks high at 42 per cent. Roughly half the respondents admitted to feeling exhausted too often and over a quarter said that headaches were a common feature of their working lives. What's more worrying is the age distribution, where over half were under the age of 30 and a quarter was between 30 and 40 years.

This distress usually comes from high pressure, meeting deadlines, multi-tasking, dealing with politics at the workplace, etc. Other contributing factors are breakdown of work-life balance and neglect of one's own basic health or needs such as eating on time, sleeping well and exercising.

Another aspect is that many young adults do not really plan or know where their passions or dreams belong. There might be significant peer influence, financial stress or parental expectations wherein they end up in jobs that they may not truly enjoy. That leads to an early burn out. All these factors sometimes mask anxiety or clinical depression.

Common symptoms

Consistently feeling low or irritable is one main symptom. Lack of interest in most aspects, including previously pleasurable activities, social withdrawal, changes in sleeping patterns or eating habits, etc, are also common. Feeling restless or overwhelmed over small issues, hypersensitivity, lack of concentration, inability to function, perform or meet deadlines, feeling helpless, and loss of self-confidence, high levels of negative thoughts and sometimes suicidal ideations are some other symptoms. Some may constantly feel exhausted or tired most of the time. Over usage of medication increased consumption of alcohol, cigarettes or substance abuse; issues with relationships or spouses are also some.

What next?

Early intervention, getting the right diagnosis and initiating timely treatment is the key to positive outcomes. Counseling and using anti-depressants should be considered as a holistic path in this process. Striking a work-life balance and adopting healthier lifestyles is imperative. Exercising in any form is mandatory, as this releases endorphins and naturally balances out certain neuro chemicals in the brain that are responsible for mood disruption. Finding and planning to do something 'different' every week or incorporating a hobby; efficient ways of setting priorities, goal setting and de-stressing; building inner resilience towards certain seniors or peers that create problems at work will also give good results.¹

Life's short and work should not be stressful. It should be a space where you look forward to reaching each morning.

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