

Screening for Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Did you know?

Regular anxiety screenings can help identify symptoms that go beyond what is considered normal, creating opportunities for timely treatment.

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is a mental health disorder characterized by persistent anxiety and worries for at least six months, causing significant impairment in daily functioning.



Important: GAD is not a normal part of aging, nor is it a normal part of living in a nursing home.



To Screen for GAD:

1. Conduct a brief interview with the resident to understand their anxiety symptoms, the sources of their worries, and the impact on their daily functioning.
2. Use the [*Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 \(GAD-7\)*](#) screening tool to actually measure the severity of the anxiety. Severity levels will range from minimal to severe.

Interpreting Results:

- ▶ The interview, along with the GAD-7 results, will guide the clinical decision to determine if a resident is positive for GAD.
- ▶ A score of 5 or higher on the GAD-7 indicates presence of anxiety symptoms.
- ▶ Note, a positive screening result does not confirm that the resident has GAD; it indicates that the resident may have GAD-like symptoms that require further evaluation.

Next Steps After a Positive Screen:

1. Share the screening results with the resident.
2. Reassure the resident that further evaluation is a standard next step.
3. Share the screening results with the interdisciplinary team and healthcare provider, including any observations from the brief interview.
4. Refer the resident to a healthcare provider for a comprehensive evaluation to rule out other conditions that may present with similar symptoms, such as thyroid disorders, steroid-induced anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
5. If medical conditions are ruled out, the provider should diagnose the specific anxiety disorder and collaborate with the resident to create a person-centered care plan.

Pro Tip: Incorporate GAD screening into your regular assessment routine. This simple, consistent action can have a significant impact on the well-being of residents.



Scan the QR code to view additional resources and trainings from the COE-NF.

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