

## Generalized Anxiety Disorder Websites Reviewed by Claire Leisring Buerk

The first four of the following websites are the first four supplied to a client searching for “Generalized Anxiety Disorder”, using the Google search engine. The fifth website is WebMD, another popular search engine for clients looking for answers to symptoms, both physical and mental.

1. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/generalized-anxiety-disorder/DS00502>

This is a helpful, user-friendly site, in that it offers a good amount of information without offering so much, or going so in depth, that a client might be turned off. The site, generated by the Mayo Clinic, offers a definition of generalized anxiety disorder, common symptoms, risk factors, assessments, and possible medications and treatments. It also offers guidance on when to seek professional help, coping strategies. Finally, this website offers information about other diagnoses often co-morbid with generalized anxiety disorder.

I think this site would be incredibly beneficial for a client, or professional looking for supplementary resources on generalized anxiety disorder. One of the things I like most about the site, is the normalizing effect of the first sentences of the disorder’s definition (“It’s normal to feel anxious or worried at times. Everyone does.”). However, it is relatively easy to get ‘lost’ in this site. For example, I clicked on a generalized anxiety disorder link to a “Choosing the Right Antidepressant” article, and was taken to a Depression page. It would have been easy to keep reading symptoms, risks, and so on, without realizing I was researching a totally different disorder.

2. [http://www.effexorxr.com/pdf/checklist\\_gad.pdf](http://www.effexorxr.com/pdf/checklist_gad.pdf)

This website is written by the drug company that produces Effexor, a prescription antidepressant used to treat generalized anxiety disorder. Effexor is also used to treat depression, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder. The website offers information on all four disorders, including common symptoms, causes, and brain chemistry. It also offers additional articles and resources for support for an individual and his or her family during treatment.

I would not recommend this website to someone looking for information regarding generalized anxiety disorder. First, the company that wrote this website claims their product treats ‘Social Anxiety Disorder’, which is technically not a diagnosis. The proper name for the diagnosis, ‘Social Phobia’, is not listed anywhere on the website. Second, the website offers a PDF version of a generalized anxiety disorder checklist. The checklist consists of three questions. However, the checklist does contain a disclaimer at the bottom of the page, stating it is not a formal diagnostic tool.

3. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad/index.shtml>

This site was created by the National Institute of Mental Health. It offers information not only on generalized anxiety disorder, but also many other anxiety disorders. It offers information regarding the definition, signs and symptoms, and treatment of generalized anxiety disorder. In addition, it offers information concerning who to talk to if you believe you have an anxiety disorder, and how to locate mental health services.

This site has some wonderful patient testimonies, which are enlightening. I also think it is helpful for a client to have ready access to the signs and symptoms of alternate anxiety disorders when doing research. However, this site can also be difficult to navigate. The

information is initially presented briefly and simply; if a client wants additional information, however, it is easy to navigate away from generalized anxiety disorder without realizing it.

4. <http://psychcentral.com/disorders/sx24.htm>

This website from PsychCentral offers information regarding the symptoms and treatment of generalized anxiety disorder, as well as other disorders. It also offers multiple screening assessments; one of which is for anxiety disorders. The assessment is more in depth than others I have come across, but still not adequate as a diagnostic tool.

I would not recommend this site to persons looking for credible information regarding generalized anxiety disorder. Not only does the site ignore important information, such as the cause of GAD or its risk factors, it is covered with advertisements for counselors who will chat online for a couple of dollars per minute. It also has a feature that allows a person to type a question for a counselor, and have the answer emailed to him or her. It takes some time and energy before a person discovers they only get an answer if they pay for it.

5. <http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/tc/generalized-anxiety-disorder-topic-overview>

WebMD offers a detailed compilation of generalized anxiety symptoms, causes, assessments, common co-morbid diagnoses, and treatments. It also offers information regarding other anxiety and panic disorders, possible medications for treating GAD, and a search engine for locating mental health offices and hospitals in a client's geographic area.

WebMD offers a good amount of well-written information. It is easy to read, and easy to navigate. Concerning treatment, the site provides much more information on medicinal treatments than psychological treatment. WebMD also discusses some reasons clients may not seek help for anxiety problems, and offers resources aiding in making that decision.