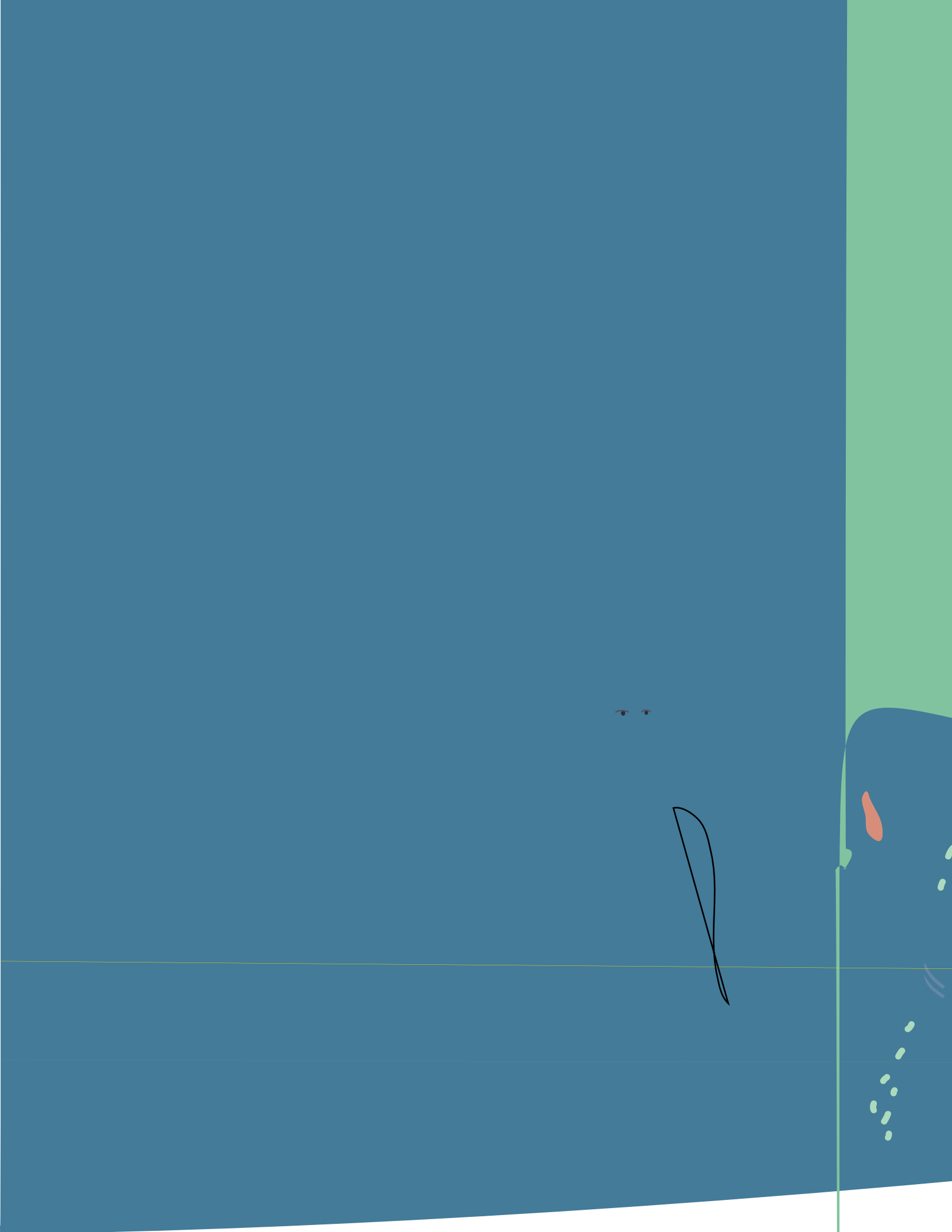

Are you in crisis?
If you feel you need immediate help:

If you’re a family member or friend:

Anxiety disorders are common. One in three people has an anxiety disorder.

Questions you can ask your health care provider:

How do we figure out if I have an anxiety disorder?

Do I have an anxiety disorder? If yes, what kind?

Will I get better?

> *When somebody takes you seriously, the positive emotion is that sense of relief … that you have a partner in your care.*
>
> PERSON WITH AN ANXIETY DISORDER

Write it down

If you're a family member or friend, questions you can ask the health care provider include:

- What do I need to know about this diagnosis?
- As a parent or guardian of a child with an anxiety disorder, how can I provide support (for example, through arrangements at school)?
- Who should I contact if I have questions?

Talking about: treatment options

There are different ways to treat anxiety disorders, but your treatment plan will be designed just for you. For example, learning about things you can do to deal with anxiety could be the first treatment step for someone. Another person might need therapy as their first step.

Health care providers usually recommend education, self-help, or cognitive behavioural therapy before they suggest medication.

Education and self-help

Your health care provider can give you information about your disorder and share self-help resources and Internet-based tools to help you manage anxiety. They can also recommend support groups that can help you cope.

Questions you can ask your health care provider:

What education or self-help resources, such as workbooks or websites, can help me manage my anxiety?

What support groups are available near me?

Resources for self-help and peer support

_____

_____

_____

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

CBT teaches you to notice negative thinking patterns and learn how to replace them with more positive ones. It doesn't pressure you to be cheerful if you're nervous or scared, but it will gradually help you shift the way you think about and react to the things that make you anxious. For example, CBT can help someone who's anxious around social situations to gradually become more comfortable being around other people.

CBT is very helpful for most anxiety disorders for the long term. On its own, it can work just as well as medication; or, depending on the disorder type, it can be part of a treatment plan that includes medication.

Questions you can ask your health care provider:

Is CBT a good choice for me?

Who provides CBT? What kind of training do they have?
How can I find a health care provider who is a good fit for me?

Will I have to pay for treatment? Are there free or low-cost options?

> *[It's] important to have a good provider … It is possible to get the right fit. It might be a long process, but there is definitely hope.*
>
> PERSON WHO FOUND HELP FOR THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

Medication

Your health care provider might prescribe medication, too. The type of medication will depend on the type of anxiety disorder you have. In some cases, like treatment for specific phobias, medication may not be as effective as cognitive behavioural therapy.

Common medications for anxiety disorders include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs). These medications are also known as “antidepressants,” but they are used to treat many different conditions, including anxiety disorders.

If your health care provider suggests a medication for your anxiety disorder, they should explain the risks and benefits so that, together, you can make an informed decision about what’s right for you.

Questions you can ask your health care provider:

What medication might be a good choice for me?

What are the side effects of this medication?

If I’m feeling better, can I stop taking the medication?

How long will it take before I feel better?
What should I do if don’t feel better or my symptoms get worse?

If you’re a family member or friend, you can ask the health care provider:

- What can I do to help and support my family member or friend during their treatment?
-

Additional resources

Navigation and referral services

ConnexOntario (1-866-531-2600): A 24/7 information and referral service that is free and con dential for people experiencing mental illness, problems with alcohol and drugs, and/or gambling.

Family Navigation Project at Sunnybrook: A non-pro t program designed to provide expert navigation of the mental health and addictions service system for youth aged 13 to 26 and their families in the Greater Toronto Area (Durham, Halton, Peel, Toronto, and York).

Helplines

Good2Talk (1-866-925-5454): A free, con dential, and anonymous helpline for post-secondary students in Ontario, with a primary focus on those aged 17 to 25. It provides professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions, and well-being.

Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868): This service offers bilingual professional counselling, information, referrals, and support for young people by phone, live chat, and texting.

Ontario Distress Centres: A free telephone helpline for people experiencing emotional distress (including suicide), providing con dential and caring emotional support.
Find a local distress centre near you.

Youth programs

Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario: “One-stop shops” to help youth ages 12 to 25 get help with a variety of needs, including their mental health.

Identification

Comprehensive Assessment

Support for Family

Stepped-Care Approach

Remember, everybody is di f erent.

The support you need and the care plan you develop with your care providers in hospital and in the community will be unique to you.

This conversation guide is only a starting point.

You may have other topics you want to cover with your care providers.
It's important to speak to them about any other questions or concerns.

Need more information?

If you have any questions or feedok