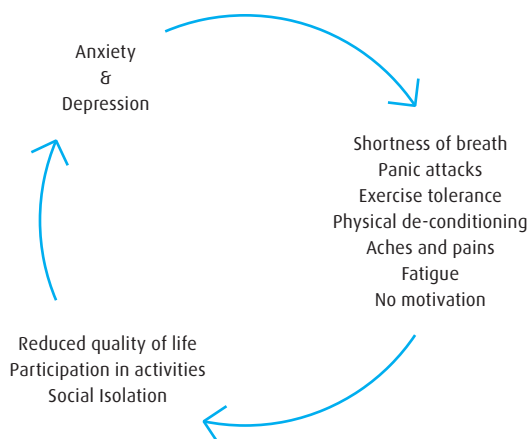


# Community respiratory service.

## Anxiety and depression.

Living with a condition which affects your breathing can influence many aspects of your life. The symptoms of a chronic lung condition can be disabling and restrict your activities of daily living. This may mean you have had to give up activities you previously enjoyed causing you worry and distress. The overall affect of this may lead to the development of anxiety or depression. Anxiety and depression are common in people with a chronic lung condition but are often missed or overlooked because the symptoms are similar to those of a chronic lung condition. Anxiety and depression often coexist but there are differences between the two. Depression relates to low mood whereas anxiety is related to feelings of fear. Both can have negative impacts on your quality of life.

### This can lead to a vicious cycle:



### Anxiety

The symptoms of anxiety are a normal physiological response to stressful situations and perceived threats whether real or imaginary. Anxiety is part of the body's "fight or flight" response and everyone experiences

this from time to time. When you have a condition that affects your breathing, you may start to anticipate and experience feelings of anxiety much more frequently. Feeling breathless can be frightening and cause you to worry about your health. Often shortness of breath is the main cause of anxiety and can trigger panic attacks, which further worsens your shortness of breath. You should also think about what rooms in your house you need the oxygen to reach to.

### Symptoms of Anxiety

- Fear & excessive worry
- Shortness of breath
- Panic attacks
- Chest pain or tightness
- Racing heart
- Butterflies in stomach
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling restless
- Irritability and lack of patience
- Obsessive behaviours
- Poor sleep
- Trembling
- Dizziness or feeling faint
- Headaches
- Poor concentration
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches and cramp
- Pins and needles
- Profuse sweating
- Diarrhoea, wind or increased urination
- Loss of interest in sex

## Depression

Depression is characterised by persistent low mood and a lack of self-worth. It can affect people at different times in their lives and can be triggered by a range of causes. Depression is common in people with a chronic lung condition. Negative feelings and low mood can affect your ability to cope with your lung condition and may lead to more hospital admissions. A vicious cycle of depression can exist where low mood leads to decreased participation in activities you enjoy. This can lead to social isolation and amplify low mood. Being less active than you were previously, not getting enough good quality sleep and poor nutrition can take its toll and lead to depression.

## Symptoms of Depression

- Low self-esteem
- Lack of self-worth
- Negative thoughts and emotions
- Lack of energy/lethargy
- Lack of lustre for life
- Disinterest in previously enjoyed activities/pursuits
- Disassociation from people
- Difficulty solving problems
- Crying frequently
- Feeling unhappy more often than happy
- Being hypersensitive to criticism
- Feelings of guilt
- Unable to laugh or see the funny side
- Irritability
- Disrupted sleep pattern
- Poor concentration
- Altered appetite/eating habits
- Thoughts of death or suicide

## Ways of Coping with Anxiety and Depression

- Exercise
- Relaxation
- Breathing control techniques
- Support groups
- Getting enough good quality sleep
- Participating in activities you enjoy
- Positive mental attitude
- Talking to someone and not bottling concerns up
- Eating a well-balanced diet and avoiding excess alcohol consumption
- Confronting and rationalising the thoughts that trigger anxiety or depression
- Distracting yourself from the triggers
- Complementary therapies
- Medications (when prescribed appropriately by your GP)

## Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Pulmonary Rehabilitation can help you manage anxiety and depression. The exercise component will assist you by increasing your exercise tolerance and decreasing your shortness of breath. Additionally, exercise releases endorphins (giving you a natural high), uses up excess adrenaline and decreases levels of stress hormones circulating in your body. Pulmonary Rehabilitation will also increase your knowledge and understanding of your condition, helping to allay fears and misconceptions and provide a support network.

## BOC: Living healthcare

### BOC Healthcare

Community Respiratory Service, Priestley Road, Worsley, Manchester M28 2UT, United Kingdom  
[www.bochealthcare.co.uk](http://www.bochealthcare.co.uk)