

▶ When Anxiety Likely Requires Professional Support

(Adapted from Dr. David Rosmarin's clinical guidance and research lens)

Dr. Rosmarin's core premise is that **anxiety itself is not the enemy** — it's often adaptive, protective, and even spiritually or psychologically catalytic.

But it crosses into “needs treatment” territory when it becomes:

1 Functionally Impairing

If anxiety is interfering with your ability to:

Work effectively

Maintain relationships

Sleep consistently

Parent responsibly

Complete normal daily tasks

Leave the house or attend events

...it's no longer just “normal stress.”

Clinical rule of thumb:

If your life is shrinking because of anxiety, get help.

2 Persistent and Unrelenting

Temporary anxiety is normal.

But seek help if:

Symptoms last most days for several weeks or more

You feel “keyed up” or on edge nearly all the time

Your baseline nervous system never fully settles

You can't remember the last time you felt relaxed

Chronic activation matters.

3 Physiologically Intense or Escalating

Especially if you experience:

- Recurrent panic attacks
- Heart palpitations not explained medically
- Chest pain (always rule out cardiac issues first)
- Dizziness, nausea, or fainting episodes
- Hyperventilation
- Trembling/shaking
- GI distress tied to anxiety

If your body is regularly hijacked, that's a sign.

4 Avoidance Is Increasing

Avoidance is one of the biggest clinical markers.

If you notice:

- Avoiding conversations
- Avoiding conflict
- Avoiding social settings
- Avoiding responsibilities
- Avoiding driving, travel, or public places
- Avoiding medical appointments
- Structuring life around not feeling anxious

Anxiety thrives in avoidance.

5 Compulsive Coping Is Developing

Watch for:

Alcohol use increasing “to take the edge off”

Overworking to outrun anxiety

Over-exercising compulsively

Doom scrolling

Reassurance-seeking constantly

Checking behaviors (locks, health symptoms, email, etc.)

Rigid routines that feel non-negotiable

When coping becomes compulsive, it’s time for support.

6 Rumination Is Consuming Mental Bandwidth

If you:

Replay conversations for hours

Catastrophize automatically

Can’t shut off worst-case scenarios

Obsess about health symptoms

Feel mentally exhausted from thinking

Anxiety has moved from “signal” to “overdrive.”

7 You're Experiencing Depressive Spillover

Rosmarin notes anxiety and depression often overlap.

Watch for:

Hopelessness

Loss of motivation

Emotional numbness

Irritability

Withdrawal

Loss of interest in things you normally enjoy

If anxiety is collapsing into despair, get help.

8 You Feel Out of Control

A key differentiator:

Healthy anxiety → You feel challenged.

Clinical anxiety → You feel hijacked.

If you think:

“I can't control my thoughts.”

“I don't recognize myself.”

“My mind won't stop.”

“I'm losing it.”

That's a strong indicator.

9 Anxiety Is Affecting Your Identity or Self-Worth

Especially relevant for high performers (👁️👁️ this one's yours).

If anxiety is telling you:

“You’re failing.”

“You’re weak.”

“You’re broken.”

“You shouldn’t feel this way.”

...and you believe it — professional support can help untangle that.

10 Any Thoughts of Self-Harm or Suicide

Immediate help is required if anxiety leads to:

Thoughts of not wanting to exist

Self-harm behaviors

Suicidal ideation

That’s urgent, not optional.

Rosmarin’s Big Clarifier

He often frames it this way:

Anxiety becomes a disorder when it is disproportionate, persistent, and impairing.

Disproportionate → far exceeds the situation

Persistent → doesn’t subside

Impairing → limits your functioning

If all three are present, therapy is appropriate.