

## About Deborah Tucker

Deborah is a licensed marriage, family and child therapist. She has lived and practiced in Simi Valley for over 20 years. As owner of Families Counseling Center, she is privileged to work with several other therapists with many specialty areas.

Deborah enjoys working with many types of clients, and feels honored that so many of her former clients refer friends and family members, sometimes years after their own therapy experience.

Deborah has been married for over 25 years, and is the proud mother of two sons, both currently away at college. She is a member of St. Rose of Lima parish in Simi, and has often given talks at many local churches and schools on topics related to family life, personal growth, and emotional health.

Currently, Deborah's practice is focused on three areas:

- Recovery from trauma, both old and recent
- Negotiating life's transitions
- Helping parents help their children

- If you are ready to make changes in your life
- If you have emotional wounds you would like to heal
- If you would like to improve your parenting, communication and relationship skills

Call or e-mail Deborah Tucker. She has worked with hundreds of individuals, couples and families during over twenty years of private practice.

**Families Counseling Center**

**and**

**Coaching for a Better Life**

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# **Anxiety — what it is, and what can help**

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# Fears, Phobias, and Anxiety

## What are they?

Our brains and bodies are “wired” to protect us. When we encounter something that we think might hurt us, we experience fear, which triggers a response called the “fight or flight” response. We want to combat the frightening situation, or run away to protect ourselves. When the fear is very overwhelming, there may be a third response called “freeze”, where we feel like we just can’t move.

Fears can be rational, like a fear of fire, vicious dogs, or falling. When fears become irrational, about “ordinary” things in life, and interfere with our daily functioning, they are called phobias. If a fear or phobia goes on for a long time, we may find that just thinking about the frightening situation can bring on anxiety.

Anxiety is the term used to describe our bodies’ reactions to fears and phobias. Some of these include:

- Sweating, trembling and nausea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Extreme avoidance of the fear situation
- Automatic, uncontrollable reactions that consume the mind and body
- Alcohol or substance use in an attempt to ease the anxious feelings

## What can help?

Try these simple techniques to lower anxiety. You may need to repeat them many times, if anxiety is severe. They work best when used together, and practice definitely helps

**Change your breathing** — Take a short breath in through the nose, and then breathe out slowly. Focusing on exhaling helps change your body chemistry, and will begin to calm you.

**Relax your body** — Sit comfortably, breathe out a few times, and then allow your body parts to gently tense, then relax. Start with your feet, and work your way up. When you find spots that are especially tense, spend some extra time there.

**Change your thinking** — While breathing calmly and relaxing your body, let yourself notice what you see, hear and feel. Notice that you are safe, and tell yourself that you are taking care of yourself by using these techniques. Notice the messages you may be giving yourself about the frightening situation. Later you may be able to examine these, and decide if they are really true, or are old “self-talk” messages that can be changed.

## If self help isn’t enough

Anxiety symptoms can be very disruptive. If the techniques above don’t help enough, consider working with a therapist to learn these skills more intensively. Therapy can also help identify and resolve old issues that may be triggers to present anxiety.

Don’t continue to suffer in silence. Help is available, and is usually very effective.