

# Effects of Caffeine

We have all heard it before: Caffeine is a drug. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnosis Manual, 4th Edition (DSM-IV), common caffeine withdrawal symptoms are altered mood, headaches, fatigue, irritability, anxiousness, drowsiness, and/or performance impairment. And yet most of us still consume it regularly.

According to a report from the Mayo Clinic (3/07), nine out of ten of us consume caffeine regularly. They advise that when one begins to experience withdrawal symptoms (such as those listed above) it can affect your health.

Other factors affecting one's sensitivity to caffeine might be "age, smoking habits, drug or hormone use and other health conditions such as anxiety disorders." Body mass, stress, and history of caffeine use are also sensitivity factors, according to the report.

They point to the importance of regular sleep. Often we lose sleep due to work and stress, but the report indicates that small disturbances in sleep can disturb daily functioning and limit performance.

Using caffeine to keep yourself going will risk dependence on caffeine. The best way to avoid this is to get more quality sleep.

The report also advises to talk with your doctor if you are taking medication to find out if caffeine can affect the results of your medication(s).

We can learn to curb our caffeine use. The report recommends to become more aware of how much caffeine is in your food and beverages, and gradually reduce the amount you consume (such as drinking a smaller cup of coffee or one less soda per day). This way, the withdrawal will be less noticeable. The report also recommends to switch over to decaffeinated beverages, choose herbal teas, and switch to caffeine-free over-the-counter medications if possible.

The report indicates that, for most adults, caffeine isn't a problem. But the report advises to "be mindful of those situations in which you need to curtail your caffeine consumption."

For a detailed description of the effects of caffeine and physical health, visit <http://www.faqs.org/nutrition/Ca-De/Caffeine.html>.

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## GARY BREUER, MA, LPC



My private practice is located in North Scottsdale, within the offices of PsychArizona. I work with children (ages 6 and older), pre-teens, adolescents and adults. I work with individuals, couples and families with issues of anxiety, depression, trauma, grief and loss, career, academic and workplace issues, relationship issues, LGBT concerns, personal growth and spirituality.

I use various therapeutic approaches depending on the needs of the client. These approaches include developmental, humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, existential, family-systems, mindfulness-based, transpersonal, and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). EMDR is a model used for the treatment of trauma, and has also been found to be successful in the treatment of various other disorders as well.

I have experience providing professional counseling in clinical, business, and school settings.

Apart from my private practice, I am also a Reiki Master and have a great appreciation and respect for alternative as well as conventional treatment approaches.

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