

## Client Handout: CBD and Anxiety

One of the most popular uses of CBD is for anxiety. Both anecdotally and clinically, CBD is quickly becoming the remedy of choice.

Clinical studies have demonstrated that CBD effectively reduces anxiety, discomfort and rescues cognitive function (memory, concentration etc) when volunteers are subjected to public speaking tests [\(1\)](#), [\(2\)](#), [\(3\)](#).

Although anxiety is a psychological process that occurs in response to perceived danger and stress, it has biological underpinnings. Anxiety occurs within certain areas of the brain and nervous system, and is driven by a series of biochemicals which are released in response to a perceived threat or danger.

Thoughts and emotions related to some of these experiences cause a disturbance in endocannabinoid's ability to maintain balance. The result is a revving up of nervous system and hormonal stress signals, which produces anxiety.

CBD helps anxiety in a few ways:

- CBD helps endocannabinoids maintain their grasp of the nervous and hormonal systems, acting as a 'stress brake' which is how it reduces anxiety. People with trauma and phobias suffer from an inability to resolve stress this way, which is why CBD can be useful for conditions such as social anxiety and PTSD.
- CBD is also a serotonin receptor activator (5HT1A agonist). What that means is your brain thinks it has more serotonin than it does, as CBD mimics its activity. Serotonin makes people feel safe, happy and loved.
- CBD has also been shown to alter the way hormones communicate, notably by changing the way the stress hormone cortisol is released [\(4\)](#). This is one of the ways CBD can help reduce stress and anxiety, as cortisol is usually over produced under chronic stress.
- CBD also helps reduce anxiety in a similar way to other calming herbs like lavender and chamomile. Drugs traditionally used to manage anxiety like Xanax and Valium are based on the mechanism of action of these herbs. However these drugs have serious long term side effects. Like chamomile and lavender, CBD naturally targets the same calming circuits in the brain and nervous system as the above drugs, only without the determinate side effects.