# Examples of Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Trina is a 28 year-old accountant who recently started her first job after graduating with good marks and high performance evaluations. She lives with her 2 cats and her best friend. Trina has always been an anxious person. She describes herself as a "worry bug" and her friends and family often tell her she worries too much. During high school she found it very difficult to control her worry about being on time for class or appointments, her grades, losing her friends, getting her parents angry, her appearance, whether her teachers liked her, and which university she would attend. Since then she has also worried excessively about whether her current boyfriend will leave her, her cats, her work performance, her weight, and having enough time in the day to get everything done. Trina has great difficulty controlling these worries and they often intrude when she is trying to relax alone at the end of each day, during down time at work, and when out with friends. She feels exhausted all the time with constant muscle tension and body aches. She notices that she is frequently irritable (e.g., snaps at her room mate and boyfriend inappropriately). Trina can't remember when she last felt relaxed as she always feels jumpy, tense, and on guard for something bad to happen. For the past 6 months she hasn't been sleeping very well. She often lies in bed worrying for several hours, wakes frequently during the night, or wakes up too early and can't fall back asleep. On days when her worrying is really problematic she has difficulty concentrating at work and several friends have commented that she often seems distracted. Trina also checks her work excessively even though it means she often has to work late. She also asks her friends or family what they think about her appearance or other worries until they get frustrated with her. Trina knows her worry is a problem but she is concerned that without her worrying everything would fall apart or get worse.

Donald is a
54- year old pulp and paper mill employee who lives with his wife of 30 years with whom he has three adult children and 7 grand children. Donald experienced the onset of problems with worry during his first few years of marriage when he would worry excessively about finances, his job security and performance, fixing up the house, his children and their futures, and his parent's health. Since that time he has also worried uncontrollably about the car breaking down, his grandchildren being harmed, saving enough for retirement, his own health and his wife's health. Donald's worry has interfered with his ability to enjoy his life including holidays and special occasions, as he always feels tense, restless, and on guard. He has also turned down multiple promotions at work due to excessive worry he couldn't handle the increased stress and responsibilities. His worrying also prevented him from exploring other jobs outside of the mill due to worry he would fail and end up losing the family home. His back and neck constantly ache from the tension. His worrying has also led to long-term problems falling asleep. He has become dependent upon sleeping pills and still feels easily fatigued most days. Friends and family complain that he is always on the go and never sits still, but this is the only way he knows how to block the worries from his mind. Sometimes he experiences upsetting images about his grandchildren being injured or harmed when worrying about them. Twice in the past these images have triggered a panic attack as they were so upsetting. Around times of stressful life events (e.g., during his daughter's divorce) Donald tends to experience an increase in his worrying frequency and intensity but his reaction is always stronger than other people's. After a bad period of worry he often feels depressed for weeks afterwards including no pleasure or interest in his usual activities. Donald feels envious of the enjoyment and relaxation other people seem to get from life and he often feels

hopeless when it comes to managing his worry. He is very concerned that he may develop health problems due to his excessive worrying and he sometimes wonders whether his worrying actually increasing the odds of bad things happening to him.