Table of contents. What is a phobia? Symptoms. Causes. Treatment. Takeaway. A phobia is a type of anxiety disorder that causes an individual to experience extreme, irrational fear about a situation, living creature, place, or object. When a person has a phobia, they will often shape their lives to avoid what they consider to be dangerous. The imagined threat is greater than any actual threat posed by the cause of terror. Phobias are diagnosable mental disorders. The person will experience intense distress when faced with the source of their phobia. This can prevent them from functioning...