The Expert Says

Fear can be debilitating, says Kent State University psychologist Angela Neal-Barnett, PhD. But with a little help, you can overcome anxiety—and improve your life overall.

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Why is overcoming your fears important for overall mental health?
Fears and phobias prevent us from realizing our potential. These worries keep us on high alert and not only affect our mental health, but also our physical and spiritual health as well.

When does a fear become a phobia?
If fear prevents you from doing things you want to do, or you experience distress and discomfort in the presence of the feared person, place or thing, it has become a phobia.

When should someone seek professional help?
Many people with phobias think they are beyond help, but that's not true. The important thing is to seek help from a mental health professional who practices cognitive behavioral therapy—a type of mental health counseling.

What steps can someone take to overcome fear?
First, face them. We also teach people to use tools, such as music, visioning [goal setting] and relaxation, to help reduce anxiety.

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