



OVERCOMING ANXIETY

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



WHAT IS ANXIETY IN TEENS?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an event or situation with an uncertain outcome; it is a reaction to situations perceived as stressful or dangerous. Most teens experience some level of anxiety or worry in response to unfamiliar situations and everyday stressors.

If your teen's anxiety becomes severe and starts to interfere with their daily life, talk to their doctor about whether treatment for an anxiety disorder is appropriate. It's important to remember that these disorders are the most common mental health disorders that occur in childhood and adolescence, with almost one in three adolescents (31.9%) meeting criteria for an anxiety disorder by age 18.*

IS MY TEEN ANXIOUS?

- Do they appear tense?
- Do they worry about things that can't be changed?
- Do they worry too much about what other players, coaches, and parents think?
- Do they worry excessively about making mistakes?

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR TEEN'S ANXIETY

- Constantly feels nervous, on edge, or can't stop or control worrying
- Has anxious feelings that go on for weeks, months, or even longer
- Has anxious feelings that interfere with their schoolwork, socializing, and everyday life

SYMPTOMS

WANING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Skipping class, avoiding school, low grades, or very high grades. Low grades can be the result of behaviors stemming from anxiety, including when teens put off completing assignments, have poor concentration, and take a lot longer to complete assignments.

SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

Fewer interactions with friends, skipping extracurricular activities, spending more time alone than usual.

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Frequent headaches, gastrointestinal problems, unexplained aches and pains, excessive fatigue, unhealthy eating habits, or complaints of not feeling well.

POOR SELF-ESTEEM

Doubting their skills or knowledge, going out of their way to seek approval from others, putting themselves down, or reacting poorly to criticism.

UNUSUAL SLEEP HABITS

Going to bed late at night, waking up late in the morning, and/or daytime sleepiness.

Communication and support strategies

Stay calm, patient, and supportive

Normalize your teen’s anxiety (show empathy and compassion)

Really listen to your teen; acknowledge, restate or paraphrase what they say

Encourage your teen to talk about their anxieties

Normalize the use of resources (counselor, psychologist, other helping professionals)

Share how you manage your own anxiety

Model adaptive ways to manage your anxiety

Engage in family time and routines

Help your teen maintain a healthy lifestyle

Express optimism that they will figure out ways to manage their feelings or concerns

Teach teens about the connection between anxiety and physical symptoms

Prompt teens to use their anxiety management strategies when they have physical symptoms

REMEMBER: Use the resources in your community: school counselor, social worker, psychologist or local mental health agency.

**Contact the National Teen help line
call 1-800-852-8336
or
text 839863**

RESOURCES

[ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA](#)

Provides tips for parents and caregivers on how to help youth manage their anxiety and a directory of licensed mental health professionals who specialize in treating anxiety disorders.

[PSYCHOLOGY TODAY](#)

12 Tips to Reduce Your Child’s Stress and Anxiety, has advice for parents and caregivers to reduce their children’s anxiety and stress.

[CHILD MIND INSTITUTE](#)

Provides psycho-educational information about anxiety and several resources for addressing children’s anxiety at home and at school.

This information should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease; anyone seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed professional



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