



IDENTIFYING & SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH ANXIETY

Parent University – February 26, 2024

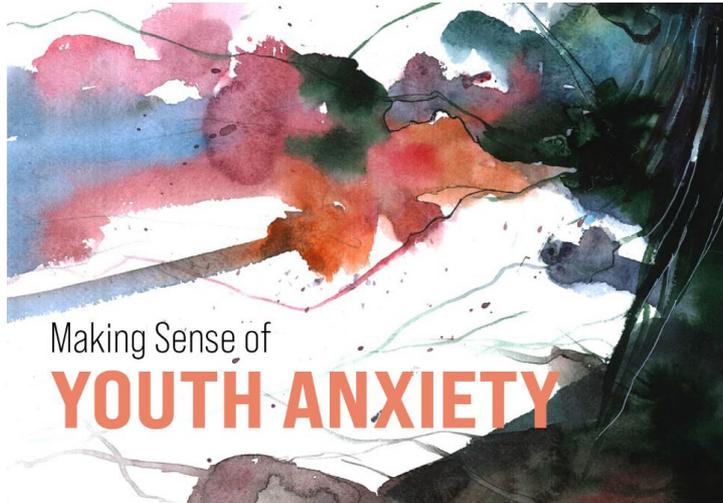
RUTGERS UBHC - SCHOOL BASED COUNSELING



- On-Site Crisis Intervention & Screening
- Access to Mental Health Services
- Collaboration with Mental Health Providers
- Mental Health Awareness & Education
- Consultation to Support Current Practices
- Referrals made through School Counselors



AGENDA:



- **What is Anxiety?**
 - **Epidemic of youth anxiety - Why is it so much higher now?**
 - **What are the warning signs and symptoms of anxiety and stress in our youth?**
 - **How we can support and help our anxious youth at school, in the classroom and at home?**
 - **What are some strategies, resources and interventions used to treat youth anxiety?**
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According to the National Institute of Mental Health, approximately 25% of 13- to 18-year-olds have an anxiety disorder, and just under 6% have a severe anxiety disorder.

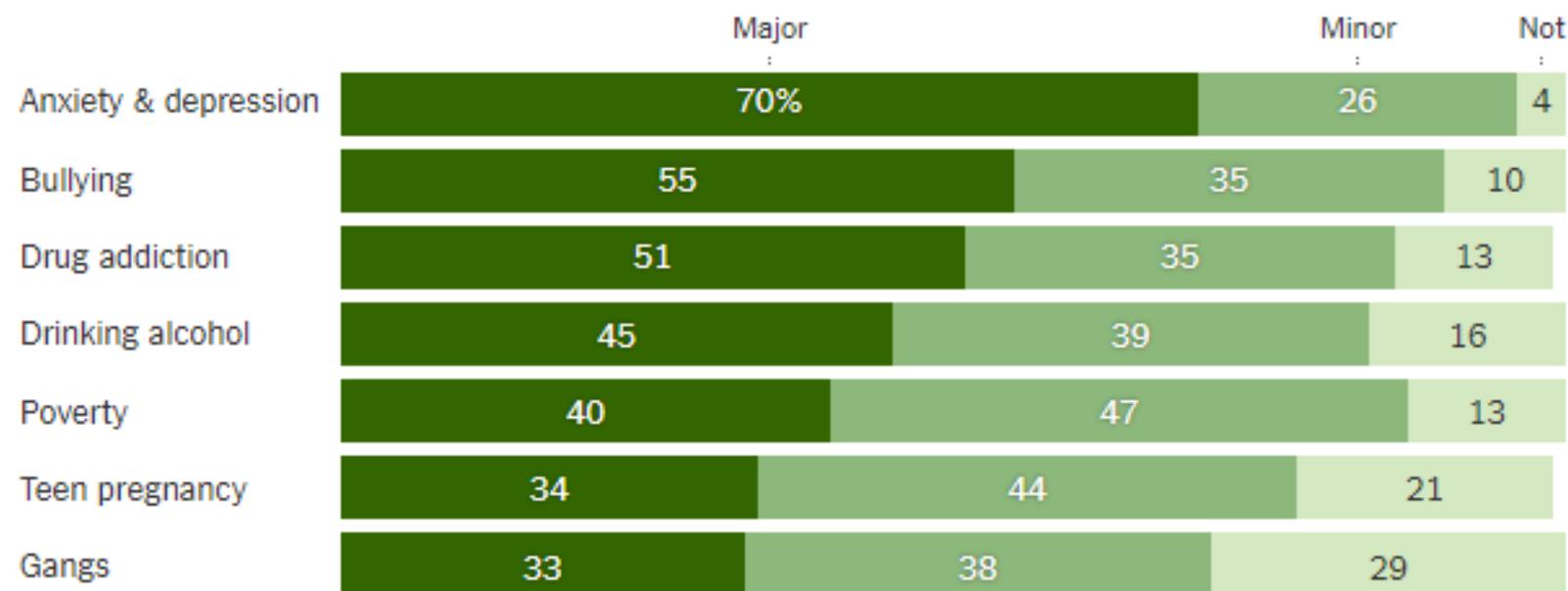




1 in 6 children aged 2-8 years
has a mental, behavioral, or
developmental disorder.

Teenagers see depression and anxiety as a major problem

The share of teens who perceive each of the following as major or minor problems among their peers. All but 4 percent cited anxiety and depression as a problem.



Source: Pew Research Center

WHAT IS STRESS?

- Stress is a state of tension related to your body attempting to cope with its environment, it's the body's way of preparing to deal with a tough situation.
- The stress response involves the nervous system and specific hormones in the body, and it can help us to enhance our ability to perform under pressure as well as avoid danger.
- Stress is individualized, affecting everyone uniquely in terms of the symptoms they experience.



SYMPTOMS OF PROLONGED STRESS

Behavioral	Physical	Emotional
Over Eating	Fatigue / Sleep Difficulties	Loss of Motivation
Under Eating	Stomachaches	Increased Irritability & Anger
Drug or Alcohol Use	Shortness of Breath	Anxiety
Social Withdrawal	Chest Pain	Depression or Sadness
Nail Biting	Muscle Pain & Tension	Restlessness
	Headaches & Migraines	Inability to Focus/Concentrate
	Indigestion	Mood Instability
	Nausea	Feeling Overwhelmed
	Increased Sweating	Feeling Nervous or Jumpy
	Weakened Immune System	
	Neck & Back Pain	

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.
- A feeling of apprehension and fear, characterized by physical symptoms such as palpitations, sweating and feelings of increased stress.
- Anxiety is the normal human feeling of fear that we all experience when faced with threatening or difficult situations.
- It can help us to avoid dangerous situations, making us alert and giving us the motivation to deal with problems, but if these feelings of anxiety are too strong, it can stop us from doing the things we want to do.

WHAT IS ANXIETY? (CONTINUED)

- A person's anxiety may or may not have a clear cause and it can be a typical and appropriate response.
- Anxiety symptoms fall into three categories: physical, behavioral and cognitive.
- Some common forms of anxiety can include: general anxiety and worries, phobias, panic, obsessions, compulsions, social anxiety and trauma reactions.

STRESS VS ANXIETY

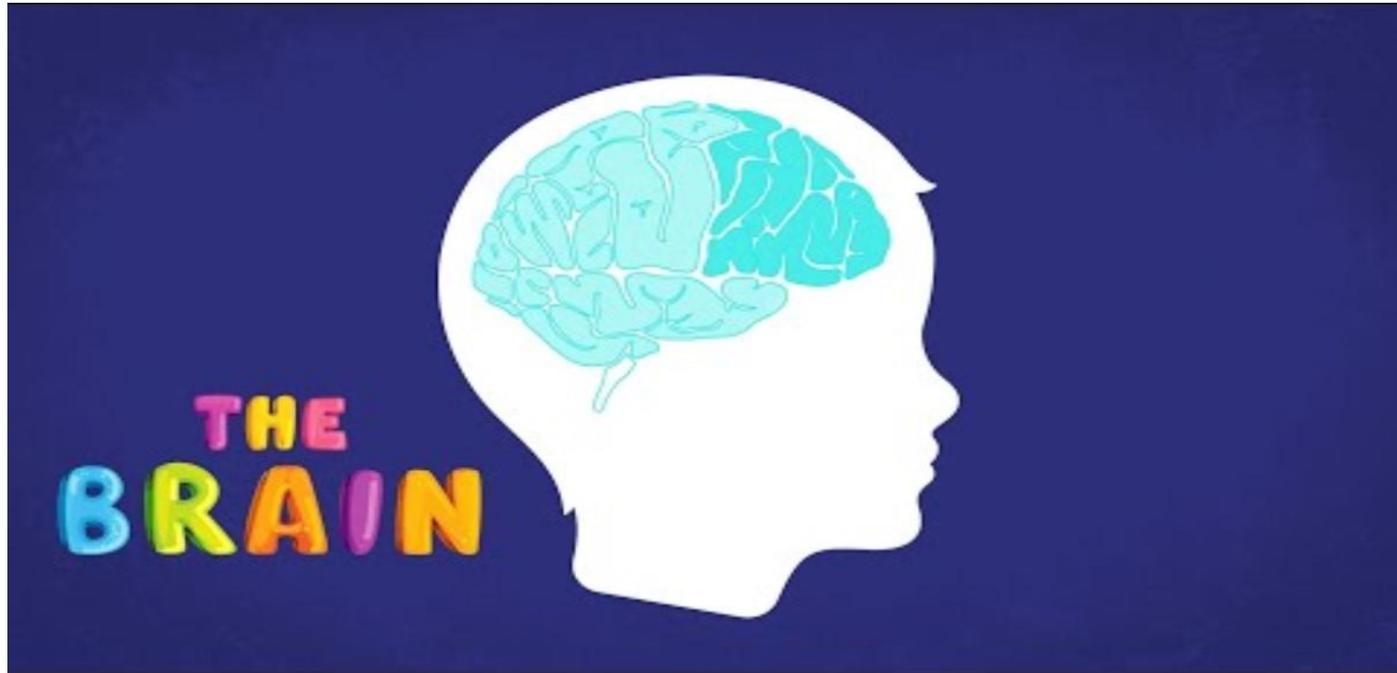
Stress is normal and can be adaptive.

It is when stress is excessive or ongoing and interfering with functioning that stress becomes a problem.

While stress is temporary, anxiety is ongoing. When stress becomes anxiety, that is when it can become a problem and interfere with one's daily functioning.

ANXIETY BRAIN BASICS

- <https://youtu.be/okS3XbeoA6U>



SOME CAUSES OF ANXIETY

There is no specific cause for anxiety disorders. Several factors can play a role, such as:

- Genetics
- Brain biochemistry
- An overactive "fight or flight" response
- Can be caused by too much stress
- Life circumstances
- Personality and people who have low self-esteem and poor coping skills may be more prone.

CONTRIBUTORS TO A CULTURE OF TEEN ANXIETY

- Culture of high achievement (what your teen wants vs. What you want and think your teen wants)
- Perfectionism
- Autonomy from parents
- School Safety & Social justice movements & the fight for equal rights
- Tech changes i.e. constantly being connected on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and the blast of stimuli with no escape
- The hurry to grow up too fast
- Overscheduling to strive for perfection
- Navigating relationships and developing a sense of self

WHO IS THE WWP STUDENT?

- They are a family member
- They are a friend
- They work / volunteer / intern
- They have homework
- They are in band
- They are in sports
- They have responsibilities at home
- They have chores
- They participate in spiritual and cultural programs
- They participate in college bound programs that involve a lot of work, time and planning
- **They are trying to navigate life the best they can!**

WHEN SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT MY CHILD'S ANXIETY?

- **Frequency:** When irrational or disproportionate fears are experienced often and impact your child's life on a daily basis.
- **Duration:** The time spent worrying is significantly longer than the time spent in the triggering situation, and your child struggles to get over the fear.
- **Impairment:** The anxiety interferes with normal child development, impacts relationships with family or friends, or prevents them from taking part in activities they enjoy.

IF YOU NOTICE ANXIETY OCCURRING MORE OFTEN, FOR LONGER DURATIONS AND CAUSING MORE AVOIDANCE, IT MAY BE TIME TO INTERVENE.

WHAT EXACTLY IS ANXIETY?

ANXIETY

A normal reaction to stress or difficult times..

Triggered by a specific stressor.

Has a start and ending point.

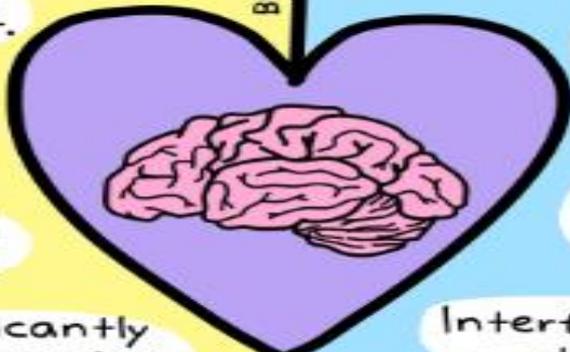
Can be helpful or motivational.

Lessens significantly or disappears away from stressful situations.

Relaxing often helps you feel better.

A response to toxic situations.

Blessing/Manifesting



ANXIETY DISORDERS

Often comes out of nowhere.

Intense or disproportionate emotional response.

Ongoing and lasts weeks or months.

Interferes with day-to-day life.

Physical symptoms like sweating, trembling, lightheadedness, racing heart.

Feels impossible to control or manage.

Children With Anxiety May...



Appear more clingy than normal



Be restless and fidgety



Complain of stomachaches



Display changes in eating and sleeping habits



Express negative thoughts or worries



Get upset or angry more quickly



Have bouts of unexplained crying



Struggle to concentrate

SOME SIGNS YOUR STUDENT STRUGGLES WITH ANXIETY



IMPULSIVE +
DISTRACTED

ON EDGE...EASILY
DEFENSIVE OR
AGITATED

MELTDOWNS

AVOIDS
PARTICIPATING

SEEKS
REASSURANCE &
ASKS REPETITIVE
QUESTIONS

ISOLATES HER
OR HIMSELF

ACTS OUT OR
IS "DEFIANT"

HAS TROUBLE
PAYING
ATTENTION

POOR ATTENDANCE

FEAR OF TALKING IN
FRONT OF GROUP

EXPERIENCES
FREQUENT STOMACH
ACHES OR
HEADACHES

OFTEN TIRED
OR SLEEPY



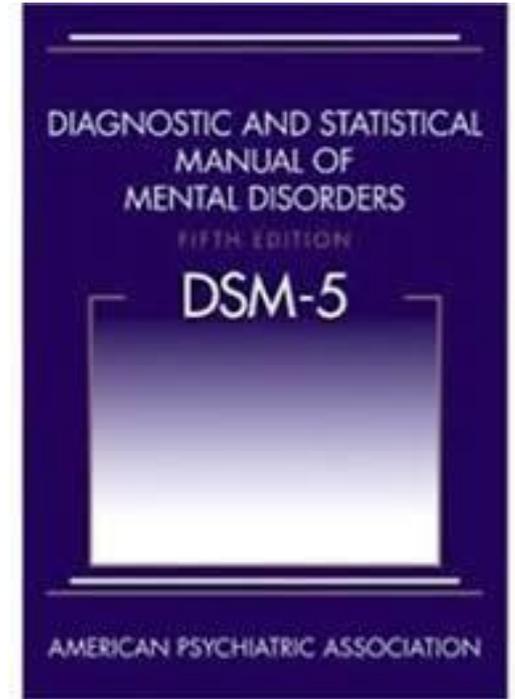
PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ANXIETY

- Pounding or racing heartbeat
- Excessive sweating
- Shakiness
- Rapid breathing/hyperventilating
- Dizziness
- Stomach pain
- Headaches
- GI issues
- Fatigue
- Appetite changes

DSM-V

Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition by The American Psychiatric Association

- Diagnostic manual that provides licensed professionals the criteria necessary for diagnosing mental health disorders



SCREENING TOOLS FOR ANXIETY

Screening tools and assessments can be conducted at the beginning and throughout the course of treatment.

- Severity Measure for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) - Child Age 11-17
- Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED)
- For social anxiety: Leibowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)
- For panic disorder: Child Anxiety Sensitivity Index (CASI)
- For GAD/worry: Penn State Worry Questionnaire, Child (PSWQC)
- For Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Children's Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder scale (CY-BOCs)

Clinical evaluation generally includes a combination of questionnaires/assessments, a diagnostic interview and behavioral observation to determine if an anxiety diagnosis is appropriate and could benefit from treatment.

Severity Measure for Generalized Anxiety Disorder—Child Age 11–17

Name: _____ Age: _____ Sex: Male Female Date: _____

Instructions: The following questions ask about thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, often tied to concerns about family, health, finances, school, and work. **Please respond to each item by marking (✓ or x) one box per row.**

							Clinician Use
	During the PAST 7 DAYS, I have...	Never	Occasionally	Half of the time	Most of the time	All of the time	Item score
1.	felt moments of sudden terror, fear, or fright	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
2.	felt anxious, worried, or nervous	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
3.	had thoughts of bad things happening, such as family tragedy, ill health, loss of a job, or accidents	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
4.	felt a racing heart, sweaty, trouble breathing, faint, or shaky	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
5.	felt tense muscles, felt on edge or restless, or had trouble relaxing or trouble sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
6.	avoided, or did not approach or enter, situations about which I worry	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
7.	left situations early or participated only minimally due to worries	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
8.	spent lots of time making decisions, putting off making decisions, or preparing for situations, due to worries	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
9.	sought reassurance from others due to worries	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
10.	needed help to cope with anxiety (e.g., alcohol or medication, superstitious objects, or other people)	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	
Total/Partial Raw Score:							
Prorated Total Raw Score: (if 1-2 items left unanswered)							
Average Total Score:							



Panic Disorder

Sudden feelings of terror when there is no real danger.



Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts/behaviours (compulsions) that you feel the urge to repeat.



Social Anxiety Disorder

Intense anxiety or fear of being judged, negatively evaluated, or rejected in a social or performance situation.

Different Types of Anxiety



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Persistent and excessive worry about a number of different things



Phobias

An excessive and irrational fear. You may experience a deep sense of dread or panic.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Re-experiencing trauma through intrusive distressing recollections of the event, flashbacks, and nightmares

@AnxietyGone

Hidden Behaviours Of Someone With Social Anxiety:

Saying "I'm busy" when
too overwhelmed to
attend an event

Avoiding situations
where attention may
be put on them

Rehearsing responses
to questions before
going out

Hyper-focusing on
others non verbal
cues for any signs
of disapproval

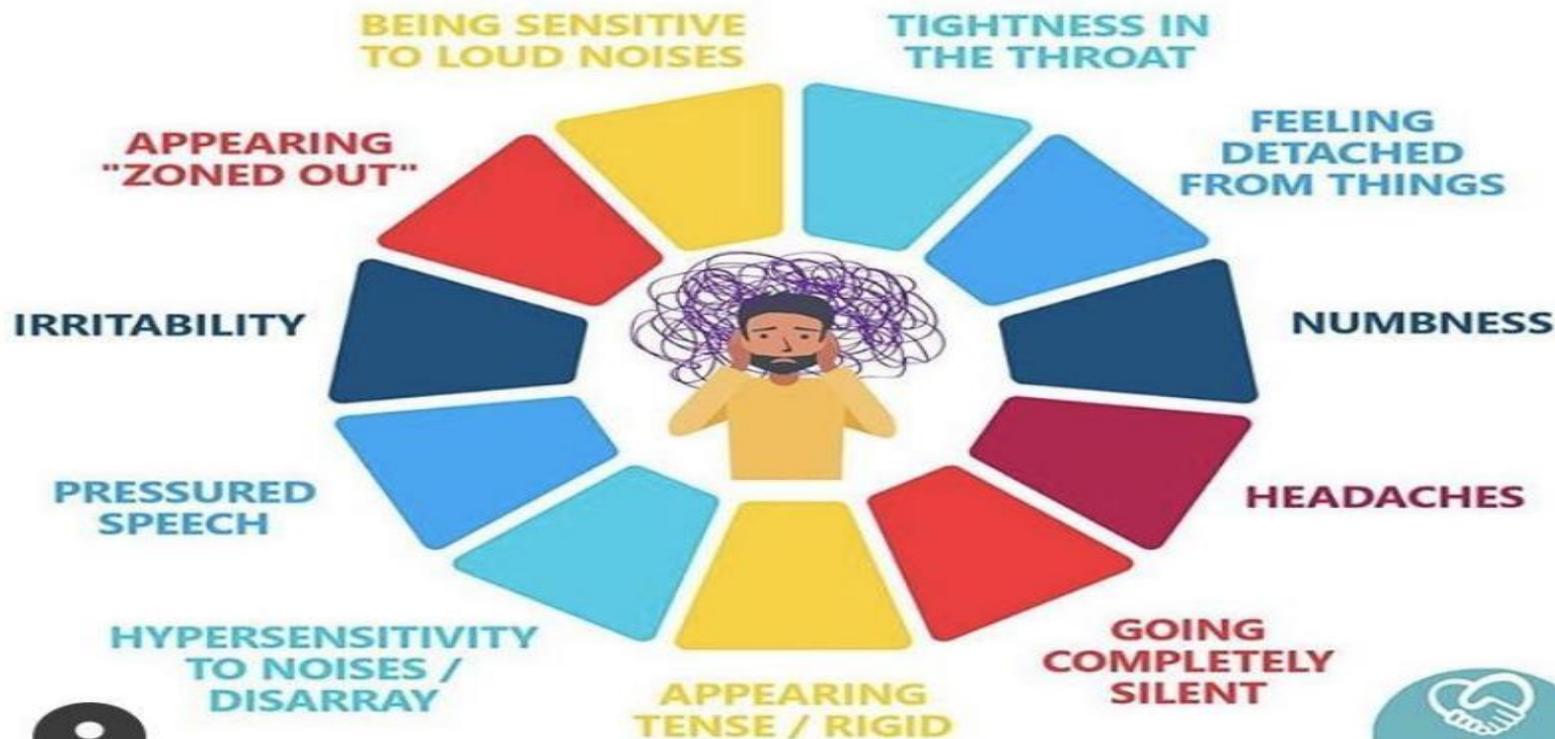


Being overly
self-reliant to
avoid asking
for help

Criticizing yourself for
saying something "silly"
long after the event



Anxiety Attacks Aren't Just Hyperventilating And Rocking Back And Forth. They Can Also Be...

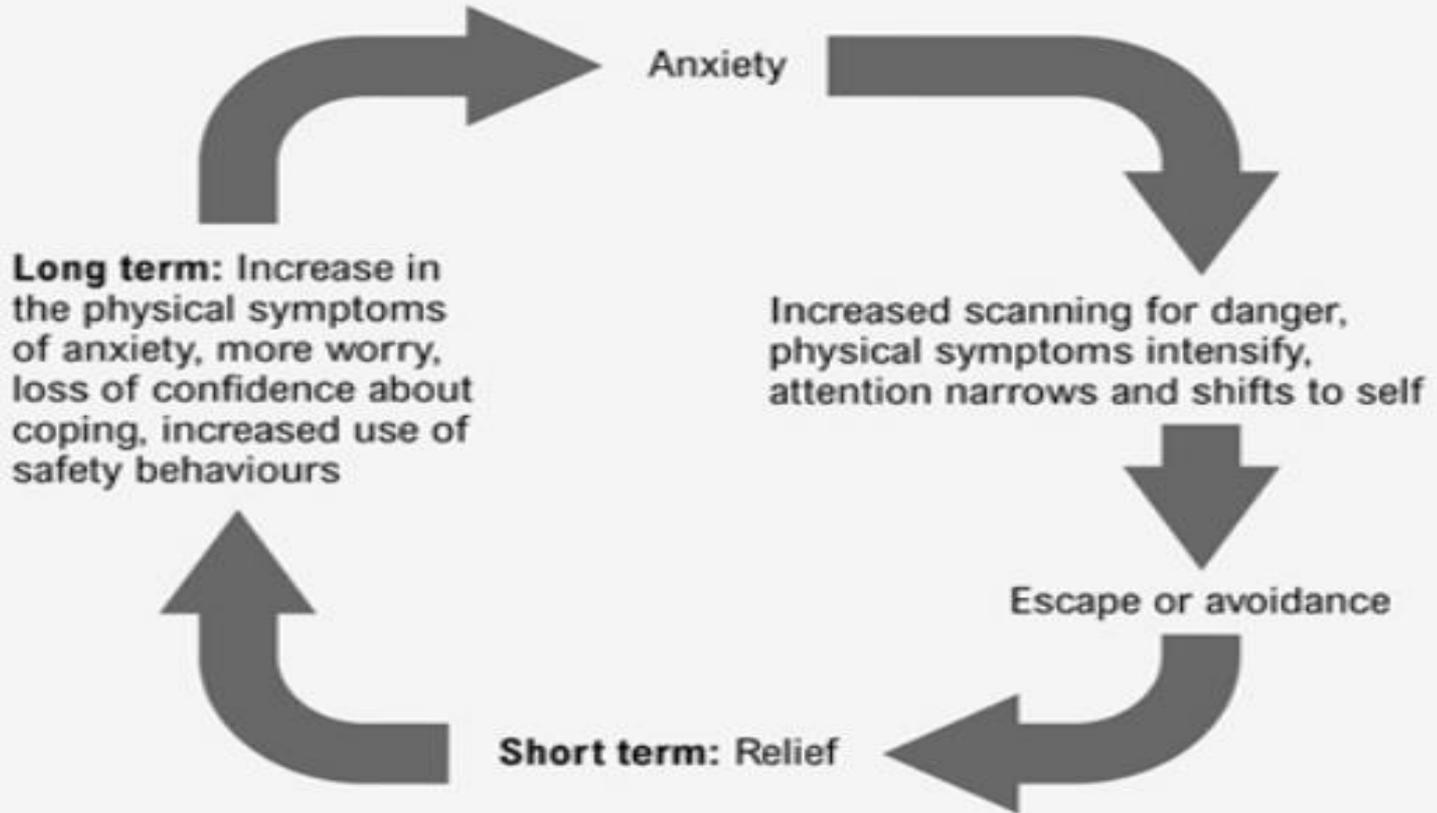


How kids with anxiety disorders differ from their peers

- They misinterpret threat, danger
- They think too much...to the point that academic performance, family functioning, friendships, extracurricular activities are compromised...rumination, perseveration, indecisiveness, perfectionism

We treat when anxiety interferes with daily functioning

The vicious cycle of anxiety

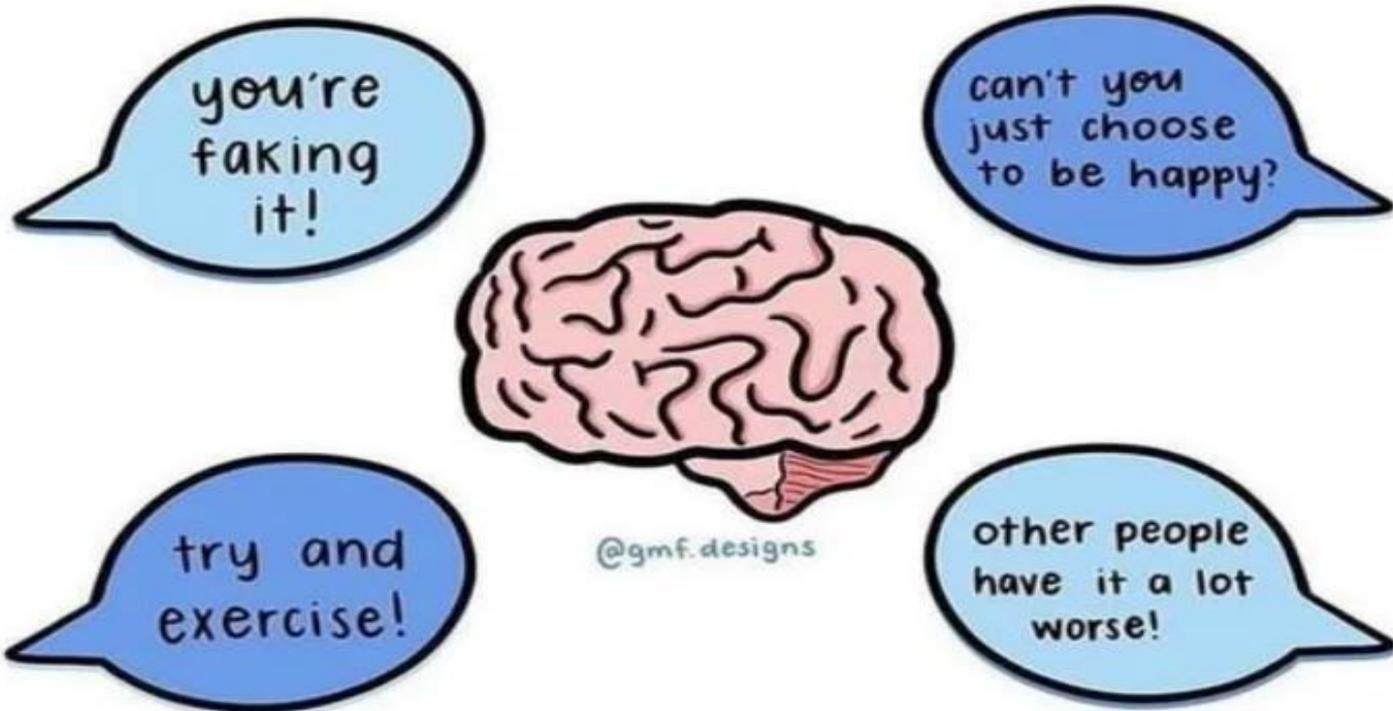


ANXIETY DISORDERS CAN 100% BE TREATED!

- **Psychoeducation** - Learning about anxiety, what causes it, and how it causes the feelings in your body.
- **Behavioral** - Learning relaxation techniques, exercise, adequate sleep etc.
- **Cognitive** - Learning about patterns of anxious thinking and how to change them.
- **Graded Exposure** - Facing the most tolerable portion and gradually increasing to full exposure as you learn to decrease symptoms of anxiety.
- **Parent Training** - Teaching parents how to support their child when they are anxious.
- **Coping skills Training** - Problem solving skills, assertiveness skills and social skills.

TIPS FOR PARENTS &
EDUCATORS

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA SOUNDS LIKE



@gmf.designs

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT ANXIETY

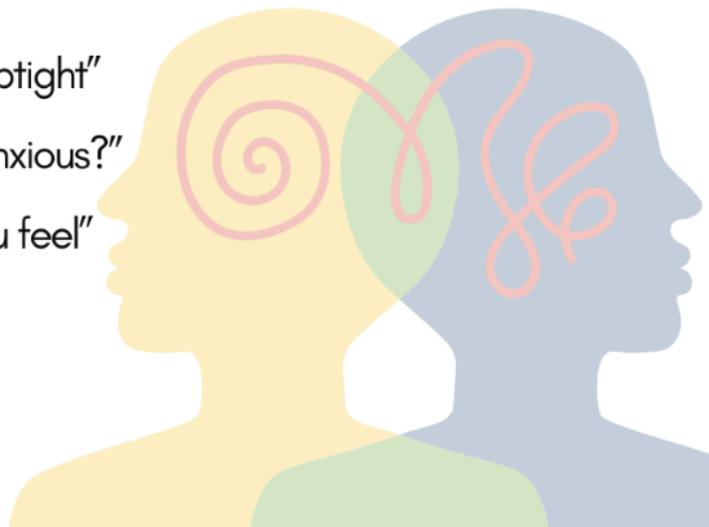
- **MYTH:** People can just "snap out" of being anxious.
- **MYTH:** Anxiety isn't treatable.
- **MYTH:** People need medication to manage their anxiety.
- **MYTH:** Kids aren't anxious, they're just shy.
- **MYTH:** Children and teens don't have anxiety, they're just looking for attention.

Why the Way You Speak About Anxiety Matters

Being mindful of how you speak about anxiety is crucial. Dismissing or judging others for their symptoms can make them feel guilty or ashamed about their anxiety disorder. Doing so also perpetuates harmful stereotypes about mental health and contributes to apprehension or avoidance of professional support.

What Not to Say to Someone With Anxiety

- “This is what ____ does to help with their anxiety”
- “You should just try meditation”
- “But it’s such a nice day!”
- “Stop worrying about it”
- “Calm down”
- “You are very uptight”
- “Why are you anxious?”
- “I know how you feel”
- “Are you sure?”
- “You’ll be fine”



What to Actually Say to Someone With Anxiety

- Remind them they are safe with you
- Remain judgment free
- Help put things in perspective
- Be validating
- Offer help
- Keep calm



12 TANGIBLE TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Validate your child's experience - don't minimize or maximize concerns.
2. Build daily life skills and teach your teen to plan ahead.
3. Set reasonable expectations and help your child set manageable goals.
4. Model effective coping strategies. Monitor your own stress level and take care of yourself.
5. Touch base with your child/teen regularly *even if they act like they don't want you to.*
6. Encourage proper rest and nutrition (non-screen time activities).

12 TANGIBLE TIPS FOR PARENTS (CONTINUED)

1. Put stressors into perspective (facts vs. Fears)
2. Encourage your child/teen to tell you if they are feeling overwhelmed.
3. Provide structure, consistent rules, and predictability.
4. Work with your child/teen to set up a reasonable schedule.
5. Work with you child/teen to understand their hopes and dreams.
6. Seek the assistance of a mental health professional or school psychologist, or school counselor if stress and anxiety continues to be a concern.

HOW CAN STUDENTS MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY?

Incorporate Mindfulness Exercises Throughout the Day	Check In With Students & Focus on Relationship Building	Exercise and Get Moving!
Have Structured Routines	Encourage Positive Self-Talk	Read Books About Managing Anxiety
Maintain Clear Rules and Expectations	Set Achievable Goals	Model Using Coping Tools Yourself
Cultivate a Calming Classroom Environment	Create a Strong Classroom Community	Give Students A Choice to Work Alone or With Others
Provide a Calm Corner in Your Classroom	Validate Your Student's Feelings	Refer Out for Additional Support



HEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

Positive talk- “Reminded I am not expected to be perfect”

Sleep / Exercise / Nutrition

Mindfulness / Meditation / Breathing

Music / Art

Journaling

Pet Time

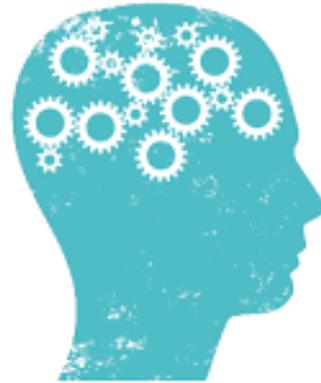
Talk it Out

Cuddles

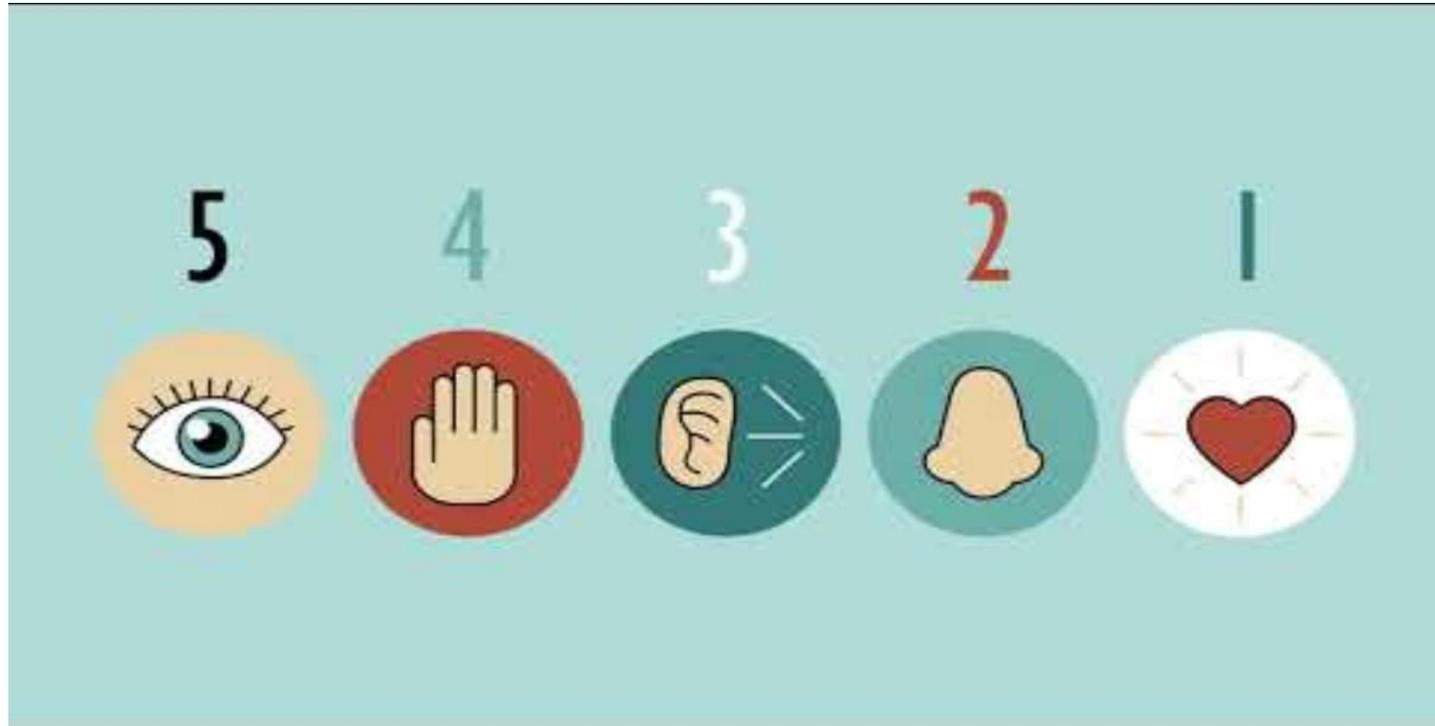
Build on your strengths

Laughter

Happiness



MINDFULNESS EXERCISE:



OTHER MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

- Five Finger Breathing Activity
- Belly Breathing
- Color Counting
- 5 Senses Body Scan
- Mindfulness Activities for Teachers -
<http://www.mindfulteachers.org/p/free-resources-and-lesson-plans.html>
- Mindfulness Card Deck
- Guided Imagery

MINDFULNESS APPS

- Headspace
- Calm
- Smiling mind

Mental Health Hotline Resources

2nd Floor Youth Helpline of New Jersey: Call or Text 888-222-2228

New Jersey Hopeline: 1-855-654-6735

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

Rutgers UBHC Acute Psychiatric Services: 855-515-5700

Princeton Medical Center ER: 609-853-7730

NAMI Mercer County: Parent Support Network

- National Alliance on Mental Illness: Mercer County
- The Parent Support Network of Central New Jersey, developed by the Youth Mental Health Project and sponsored by NAMI Mercer, is a parent-driven family-focused program to support parents/caregivers who are concerned about their kids' struggles with anxiety, depression and/or emotional dysregulation.
- NAMI Mercer hosts regular monthly meetings of The Parent Support Network of Central New Jersey, providing parents/caregivers who are concerned about their child's mental health and well-being valuable peer connections and the opportunity to share insights and resources through confidential, informational meetings run by and for parents.
- <https://namimercer.org/find-support/parent-support-network/>
- [Phone: \(609\) 799-8994](tel:6097998994)



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

- <https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/tips-parents-and-caregivers#>

The website of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America provides tips for parents and caregivers on how to help youth manage their anxiety, as well as a directory of licensed mental health professionals who specialize in treating anxiety disorders.

- <https://childmind.org/topics/concerns/anxiety/>

The Child Mind Institute's website provides psychoeducational information about anxiety and several resources for addressing children's anxiety at home and at school.

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/dont-worriemom/201302/12-tips-reduce-your-childs-stress-andanxiety>

The Psychology Today webpage, 12 Tips to Reduce Your Child's Stress and Anxiety, has advice for parents and caregivers to reduce their children's anxiety and stress.

- **National Association of School Psychologists/Information for parents/Anxiety & Anxiety Disorders in Children: Information for Parents**
- <https://www.nasponline.org/>
- **Coping skills for kids**
- <https://copingskillsforkids.com/>

OTHER MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology: Youth Anxiety and Depression Clinic

<https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/centers-clinical-services/YADC>

- Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care
Access Center: 1-800-969-5300

<https://ubhc.rutgers.edu/clinical/outpatient/children-and-adolescent-outpatient-services.xml>

- Stress and Anxiety Services of New Jersey

<https://stressandanxiety.com>

- NJ Center for OCD and Anxiety

<https://www.njocd.com/about-the-center>

- Children and Youth Resources/NAMI

<https://naminj.org/where-to-get-help/children-resources/>

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS TO KNOW:

- **[Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) — 988**

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Since its inception, the Lifeline has engaged in a variety of initiatives to improve crisis services and advance suicide prevention.

- **[New Jersey Hopeline](#) — 1-855-654-6735**

The Hopeline is New Jersey's 24/7 peer support and suicide prevention hotline. The specialists at the NJ Hopeline are available to provide confidential phone counseling, support and referrals to local resources to help youth and families get through difficult times.

- **[Performcare](#)— 1-877-652-7624**

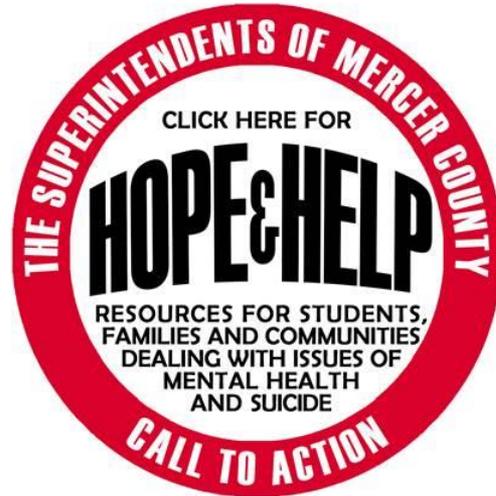
The New Jersey Children's System of Care (CSOC) serves children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral health care challenges and their families; children with developmental and intellectual disabilities and their families; and, children with substance use challenges and their families. CSOC is committed to providing services based on the needs of the child and family in a family-centered, community-based environment.

- **[2NDFLOOR — New Jersey's youth helpline](#)— 1-888-222-2222**

The New Jersey statewide youth helpline, 2NDFLOOR, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to youth and young adults ages 10 – 24 to help find solutions to the problems they face at home, school or play.

The helpline is supervised at all times by a mental health professional. Youth are provided with relevant and appropriate links to information and services to address their social, emotional and physical needs. Calls to the 2NDFLOOR youth helpline are anonymous and confidential, except in life-threatening situations.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



https://www.west-windsor-plainsboro.k12.nj.us/departments/Guidance/call_to_action

Questions?

