


Helping Teens Focus on What They CAN Control: Tips for Reducing Anxiety

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**G5: Wednesday June 28, 2023
12:00pm-1:15pm**

1




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2




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3

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Introductions! Who is in the room?

Waiting for answers





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4


Learning Objectives

“
Anxiety is something
that is part of me but it's
not who I am.
”
Simon Sinek

1. Describe at least three interventions or strategies to alleviate signs and symptoms of anxiety.
2. Discuss the importance of developing innovative programming and partnerships with their respective school(s).
3. Apply the knowledge learned during the session to develop a mini-treatment plan.

5

Breathe



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What are you hoping to learn today?

Please feel free to type in what you want to learn or a specific question that you may have.

6

Signs & Symptoms of Anxiety: Overview

Being very afraid when away from parents (separation anxiety)

Having extreme fear about a specific thing or situation, such as dogs, insects, or going to the doctor (phobias)

Being very afraid of school and other places where there are people (social anxiety)

Being very worried about the future and about bad things happening (general anxiety)

Having repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected, intense fear that come with symptoms like heart pounding, having trouble breathing, or feeling dizzy, shaky, or sweaty (panic disorder)

(CDC, 2023)

7

Is it Stress or Anxiety?

Stress	Stress & Anxiety	Anxiety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally a response to an external cause Goes away once the situation is resolved Can be positive or negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive worry Uneasiness Tension Headaches or body pain High blood pressure Loss of Sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally is internal (your reaction to stress) Usually involves feelings of apprehension or dread that doesn't go away Constant, even if there is no immediate threat

(Adapted from "I'm So Stressed Out" Fact Sheet, NIMH)

8

Types of Anxiety in Children & Adolescents
(Ehmke, 2023)

Separation Anxiety



Social Anxiety

Selective Mutism

Generalized Anxiety

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Specific Phobias






9

Recognizing Anxiety in Children & Adolescents in School

- Inattention and restlessness
- Attendance problems and difficulty separating at drop-off
- Disruptive behavior
- Trouble answering questions in class
- Frequent trips to the nurse
- Problems in certain subjects
- Not turning in homework
- Avoiding socializing or group work

(Ehmke, 2023)



10

School-Based Health Center Services
Traditional Interventions

Universal Screening

Individual or Group Therapy

Psychiatric Evaluation & Medication Management

11

School-Based Health Center Services
Going Beyond Traditional Services



CALM ROOM



“TIME-OUT”



FAST-PASS




12

School Avoidance


- School avoidance is when a child refuses to attend school or has difficulty remaining in school the entire day.
- Four Functions of School Refusal
 1. To stay away from objects or situations at school that make the child feel unpleasant physical symptoms or general distress
 2. To avoid social or evaluate situations at school that is painful to the child (i.e. school-related performance issues)
 3. To receive attention from a parent or significant other
 4. To obtain tangible rewards that make staying home more enjoyable/comfortable than going to school

(School Avoidance Alliance, 2023)

13

What is School Avoidance?


This Student Mental Health Crisis is Growing




(USA Today, 2023)

14


School Avoidance Interventions & Treatment



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Exposure Therapy are the primary/first-line treatments for school avoidance



Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

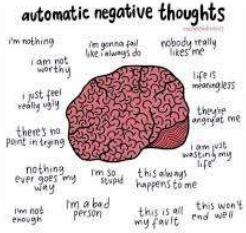


Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions (SPACE)—parent-based treatment program for children and adolescents

15

Kids Struggling with School Avoidance Commonly Experience Persuasive Automatic Thoughts (ANTS)

automatic negative thoughts



16

Techniques in Exposure Therapy

Social Anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering questions about being absent • Talking with a peer • Asking for help • Giving a speech • Asking a question in class 	Perfectionism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice making mistakes on assignments • Completing an assignment, not very well • Playing a game and getting questions wrong 	Physical Symptoms & Panic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair spinning or rocking • Deep breathing or breathing through a straw • Put head between legs and sit up quickly • Drinking water 	Separation Anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying home while parent goes out • Parent leaves and turns off cell phone • Parent does not make a big deal at transition times
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Slide Adapted from [Dr. Marie Ablano](#)

17

How We Cope With Anxiety & Stress | MTV's Teen Code

Let's hear it from the teens!

18

Coping Skills for Anxiety

Let's Practice!

- Deep Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Challenging Irrational Thoughts
- Imagery
- Meditation

(TherapistAid, 2018)

19

Deep Breathing Exercises

Four Square Breathing
Box Breathing

20

Coping Strategies

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you spot anxiety by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. For each area of the body listed below, you will tense your muscles tightly, but not to the point of strain. Hold the tension for 10 seconds and pay close attention to how it feels. Then, release the tension, and notice how the feeling of relaxation differs from the feeling of tension.

Challenging Irrational Thoughts

Anxiety can be magnified by irrational thoughts. For example, the thoughts that "something bad will happen" or "I will make a mistake" might lack evidence, but still have an impact on how you feel. By examining the evidence and challenging these thoughts, you can reduce anxiety.

Put thoughts on trial. Choose a thought that has contributed to your anxiety. Gather evidence in support of your thought (verifiable facts only), and against your thought. Compare the evidence and determine whether your thought is accurate or not.

(TherapistAid, 2018)


21

Coping Strategies

Imagery

- Imagery using the 5 senses can help decrease anxiety
- Simple, 5-10 minute exercise
- Guided Script

Meditation




The graphic features a dark background with the text "Sunday Scaries Identify Anxious Thoughts" in yellow and white. Below the text is a stylized orange sun with eyes and a small grey square.

(TherapistAid, 2018)

22

Other Coping Strategies



- Exercise regularly
- Journaling
- Reading
- Meditation
- Spending time with Friends
- Spirituality
- Limit alcohol/caffeine
- Slowly count to 10
- Talk to someone!
- Eat Healthy
- Identify Triggers
- Establish a sleep routine

23

What Schools Can Do

504 Plan/IEP

Accommodations

Hall Passes

Alternative School Settings (i.e. Remote School)

Referrals to SBHC, Community Based Providers (i.e. School Refusal Programs, IOP/PHP)

24

Examples of School Accommodations



TRANSITIONS: ALLOW STUDENT TO LEAVE CLASS EARLY, PROVIDE CHANGES IN SCHEDULE IN ADVANCE



CLASSROOM: ALLOW USE OF HEADPHONES, PREFERENTIAL SEATING



CLASSWORK: ALLOW EXTENDED TIME OR MODIFIED WORK, ASSIST WITH BREAKING DOWN TASKS



CLASS PARTICIPATION: ALLOW STUDENT TO ANSWER YES/NO QUESTIONS, ALLOW STUDENT TO DO ORAL PRESENTATIONS 1:1 WITH TEACHER



SUPPORT SERVICES: ALLOW STUDENT TO ACCESS SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS OR COUNSELORS AS NEEDED

(Anxiety in the Classroom, 2023)

What Parents Can Do at Home

- Acknowledge fears and emotions; don't ignore or dismiss concerns
- Normalize anxiety
- Start with low levels of exposure
- Make time to talk every day
- Encourage positive coping skills
- Seek out professional support

(Katzenstein, 2023)

25

26

Parents: How to Get Accommodations/Support at School

1. Reach out to the School: talk with the teacher, social worker, counselor, or administrator about your concerns
2. Know Your Children's Rights—your child may be eligible for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan
3. Request an evaluation IN WRITING
4. Take an Active Role in Meetings—ask questions, bring an advocate
5. Maintain Regular Communication—provide requested documentation

(NAMI, 2023)

Case Presentation 1

A 16-year-old African American student named Josh attended a private school in the City prior to transferring to your much larger public school. Initially, he blended in, was attending classes, and came to school regularly. As the semester went on, his grades began to fall, he was avoiding 3 out of his 7 classes, and he was referred to his school social worker. When he met with his school social worker, he expressed some signs and symptoms of anxiety, put his head down, and said he didn't know what to do.

If you were his social worker, what would be your next step?

What can the school do to best support him?

27

28

Case Presentation 2

A 15-year-old Latinx male named Bryan is incredibly smart, receiving all A's but found himself experiencing severe symptoms of anxiety which began to impact his overall mood. Bryan started and ended his day with his school social worker. As time progressed, he was with his school social daily for multiple class periods and was unable to complete his work due to crippling anxiety. His school social worker referred him to his SBHC where he began therapy. Despite receiving weekly individual therapy and a psychiatric evaluation, he still was not making any progress. Bryan was finding himself spending the day between the two social worker's offices.

What should they do?

29

Case Presentation 3

An 18-year-old Latina student named Emilia was initially seen in her school-based health center for a sports physical. The nurse practitioner noted that she seemed particularly anxious and referred her to the SBHC social worker/therapist. Emilia engaged in weekly therapy, was referred for an intensive outpatient program when she indicated that she couldn't stop thinking about self-harm, and meets with the psychiatrist on a quarterly basis. Emilia does well in most of her classes (except math), has a good support network of peers, and has the support of her therapist.

Is there anything that the school should be doing to support Emilia?
What else do you think Emilia needs to reduce her anxiety?

30

Provider Resources & Tools

- [Anxiety Disorders Resource Center](#): American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- [DIY Tools](#): Mental Health America
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)
- [Positive Psychology](#)
- [Therapist Aid](#): Anxiety

31

Creating a Mini Treatment Plan Activity

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Mental Health Treatment Plan

Area of Need: _____

Present Level: _____

Measurable Long-Term Goal: _____

Parents will be informed of progress	Periodic Review Dates	Progress Toward Goal	Sufficient Progress to Meet Goal
<input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly	1. _____	1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Semester	2. _____	2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Announced Goals/Objectives	3. _____	3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	4. _____	4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Benchmark/Short-Term Objective: _____ Date: _____
 Achieved Revisited

Person(s) Responsible: _____

Benchmark/Short-Term Objective: _____ Date: _____
 Achieved Revisited


Person(s) Responsible: _____

<https://positivepsychology.com/mental-health-treatment-plans/>


32

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What is one thing that you learned that you will take back to your SBHC?



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33

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34



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35