STRESS & ANXIETY: WHAT'S NORMAL, WHEN TO WORRY & HOW TO HELP

SINGAPORE AMERICAN SCHOOL

2022-23

INTRODUCTIONS



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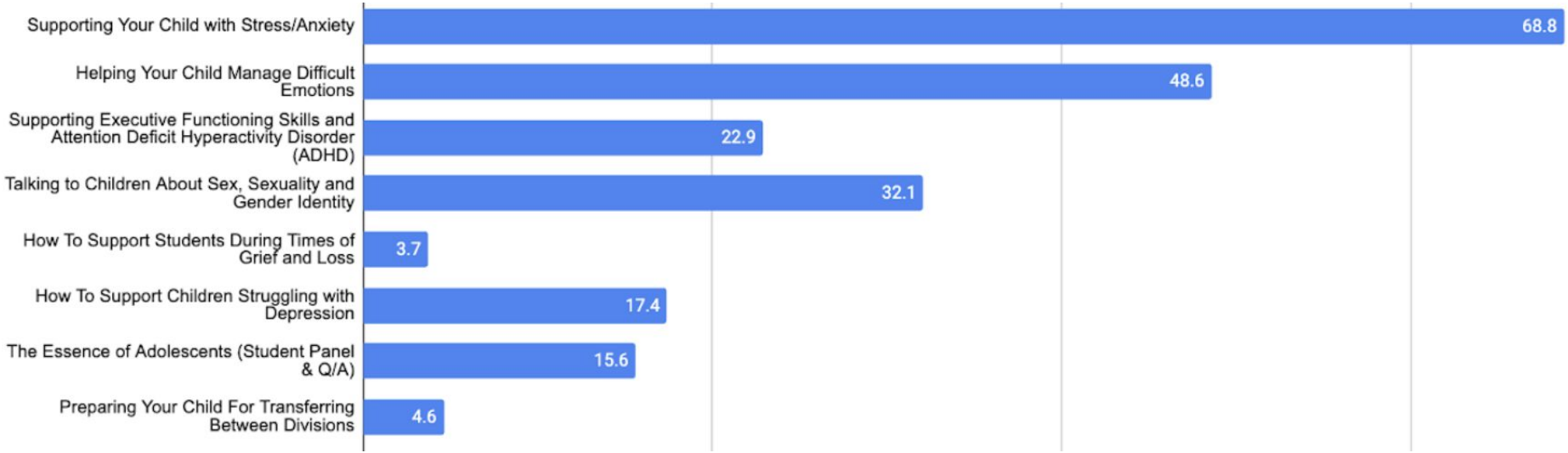
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PARENTS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT STRESS & ANXIETY

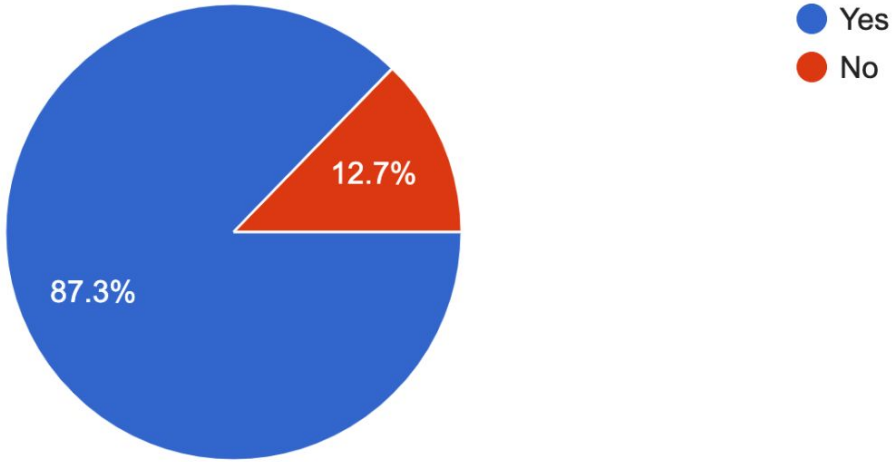
Out of the 109 SAS parents that completed our SEL workshop interest survey, 68.8% of families reported that "Supporting Your Child with Stress/Anxiety" was their number one topic of interest.



MS STUDENT WELL-BEING DATA: DECEMBER SURVEY

Do you feel you are equipped to handle your stress?

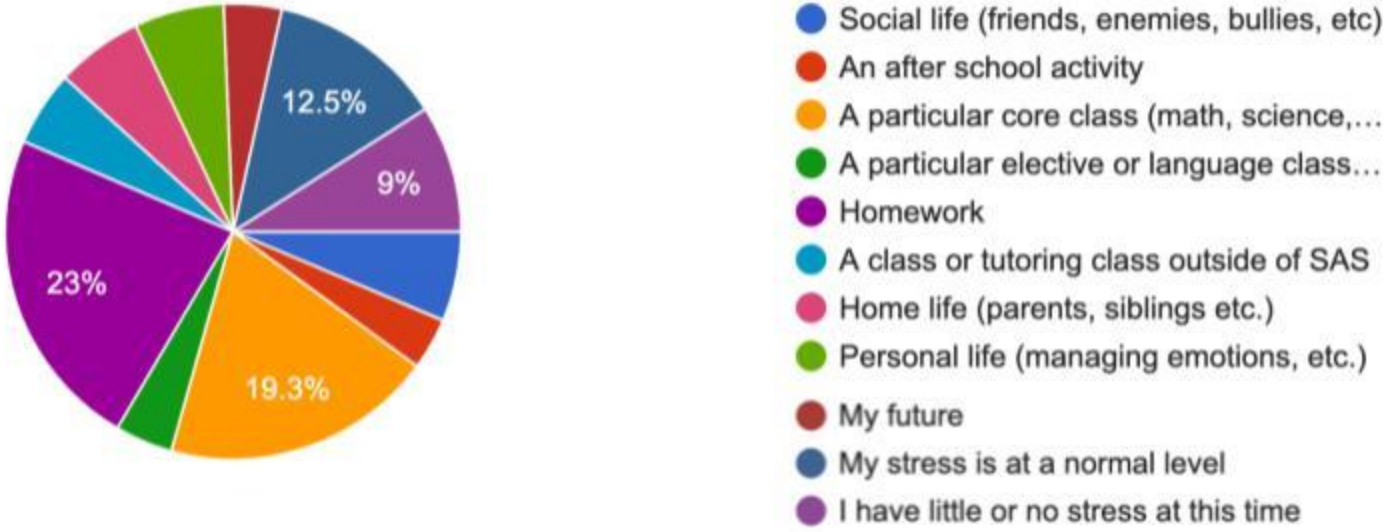
487 responses



MS STUDENT WELL-BEING DATA: DECEMBER SURVEY

Please mark the area that is contributing the MOST to your increased stress.

487 responses



*These items listed are typical middle school stressors

STRATEGIC DIRECTION



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COMMUNITY NORMS

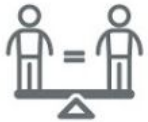
As an SAS community member I agree to hold myself to a high standard of personal conduct in my interactions and communications with students, faculty, and parents. This means I will adhere to the SAS Statement of Community by:



CONTRIBUTING PRODUCTIVELY AND POSITIVELY



ASSUMING POSITIVE INTENT



REFRAINING FROM DISCRIMINATION

(religious, ethnic, racial, sexual, or gender)



SHARING ACCURATE INFORMATION



GOING TO THE SOURCE

Questions to consider before posting:
1) Is it the truth?
2) Is it fair to all concerned?
3) Will it build better community and friendships?
4) Is it beneficial to all?

TABLE INTRODUCTIONS

Your Name, What Grades Are Your Children In? And...

WHICH IS YOUR CHILD?

Headless Chicken



Duck on a Pond



Wise old owl



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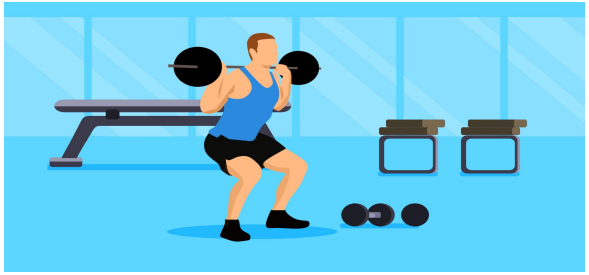
WHAT IS STRESS? WHEN TO WORRY?



ONE DEFINITION OF STRESS



Stress:



“Stress can be defined as **any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain**. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action.”

-World Health Organization

3 TYPES OF STRESS

Acute Stress

- Short term
- Reaction to new or challenging situations
- Body returns to normal state relatively soon

Episodic Acute Stress

- Frequent, consistent periods of stress on regular basis

Chronic Stress

- Continue for long periods of time
- Seems never ending
- Difficulty seeing any way to improve or change
- Could lead to anxiety disorder, depression, etc.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT MIGHT CAUSE STRESS FOR STUDENTS



Moving to a new school/home

Training for your swim meet

Project due date approaching

Exposure to lots of violence and harm in your community

Dealing with an ongoing health problem in your family

Disagreement and/or fight with a friend

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What does it mean to manage stress?

1. It is about learning to cope, in a positive way, with life's inevitable stressors

2. We do our greatest good by equipping ourselves (and our children) with a wide range of coping strategies

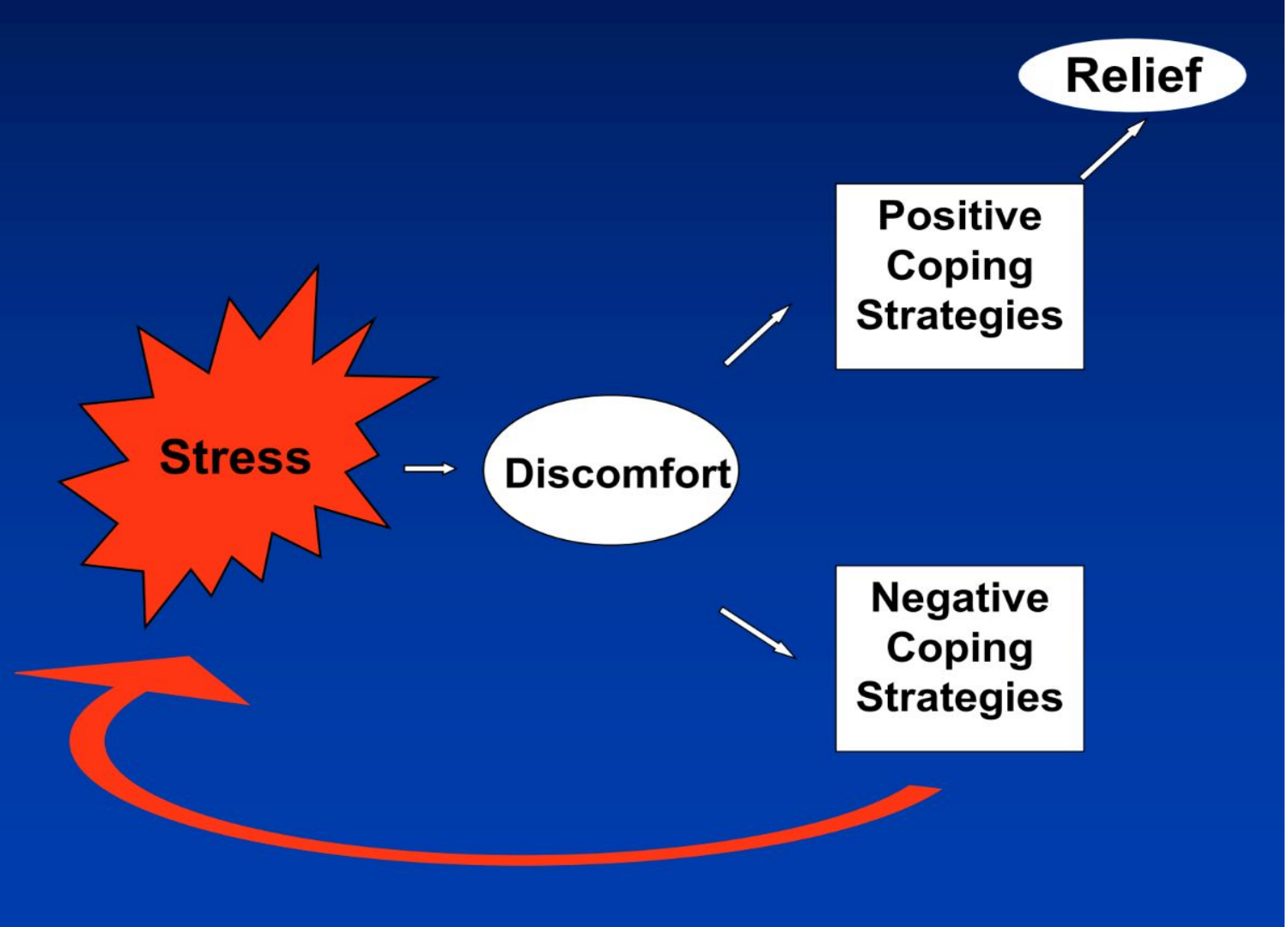
3. People/children who can choose positive coping strategies gain control

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Common “Negative” Coping Strategies

- Avoidance
- Distractions
- Escape

Coping is coping, whether negative or positive. Sometimes avoidance, distraction, and escape is what we need in the immediate moment to cope with our stress. However, it is NOT sustainable long term.



Graphic by:

Ken Ginsburg, MD, MS Ed

The Center for Parent and Teen Communication
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Covenant House Pennsylvania

POP QUIZ!

True / False

It is normal to feel stress when you experience changes and challenges.

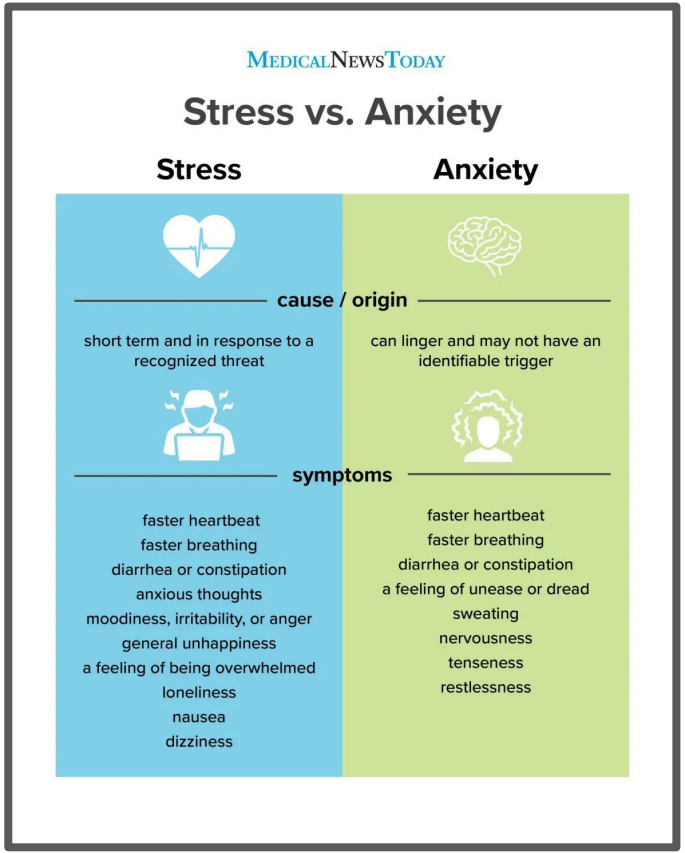
True / False

Not all stress is bad. A moderate amount of stress can be good for you.

STRESS VS. ANXIETY

Stress vs. Anxiety: What's the difference?

- Stress and anxiety are part of the same bodily reaction and have similar symptoms. That means it can be hard to tell them apart.
- Stress tends to be short term and in response to a recognized threat.
- Anxiety can linger and can sometimes seem as if nothing is triggering it.
- We often use these terms interchangeably

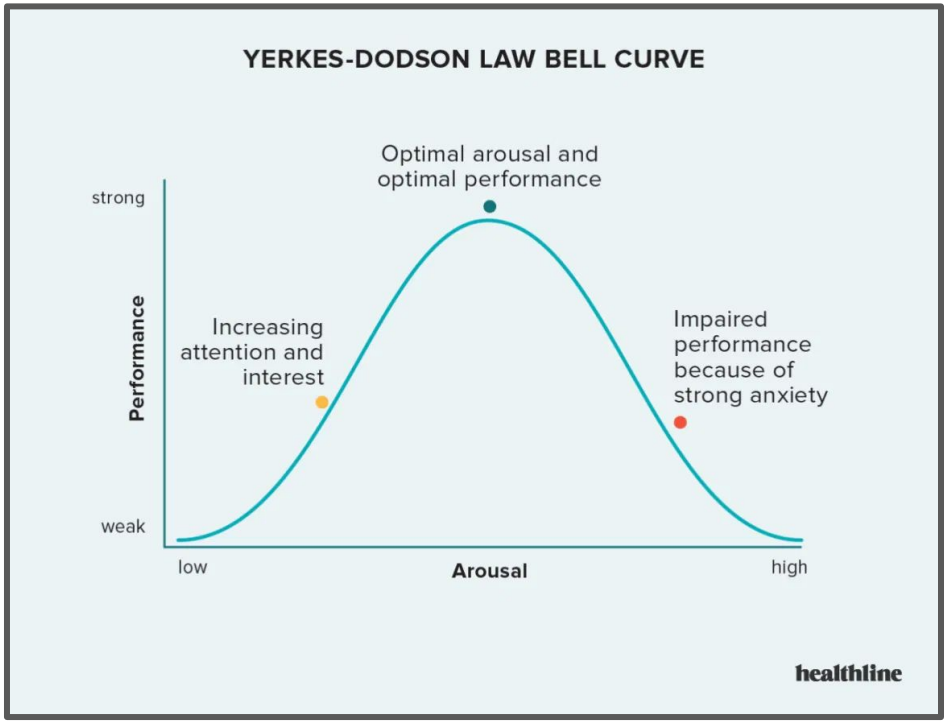


FEELING PERIODIC ANXIETY OR IS IT MORE...

Helpful vs. Unhelpful anxiety

- Anxiety & stress can be helpful in certain situations and can increase performance.
- However, high levels of anxiety can impair performance some children experience anxiety that is so serious that it can be diagnosed as a disorder.

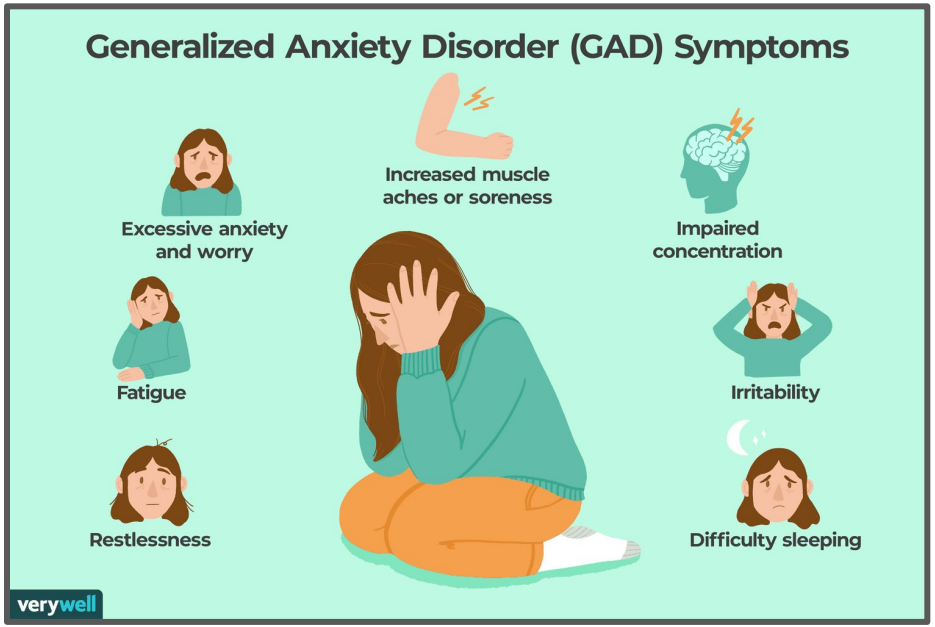
Table Share: A specific situation where you perform better with *some* anxiety



HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT?

Be aware of the signs of anxiety:

- Sometimes children may say that they are anxious, but others may not even realize it themselves. Signs can include:
  - Recurring fears and worries about routine parts of everyday life
  - Changes in behavior, such as irritability
  - Avoiding activities, school, or social interactions
  - Dropping grades or school avoidance
  - Trouble sleeping or concentrating
  - Substance use or other risky behaviors
  - Chronic physical complaints, such as fatigue, headaches, or stomachaches (*frequent visits to the nurse's office)



Keep communication open:

- Talk with kids about potential stressors.
- Be mindful of the expectations you set for children and teens.
- Talk with kids about their social media use.

*Data Source CDC

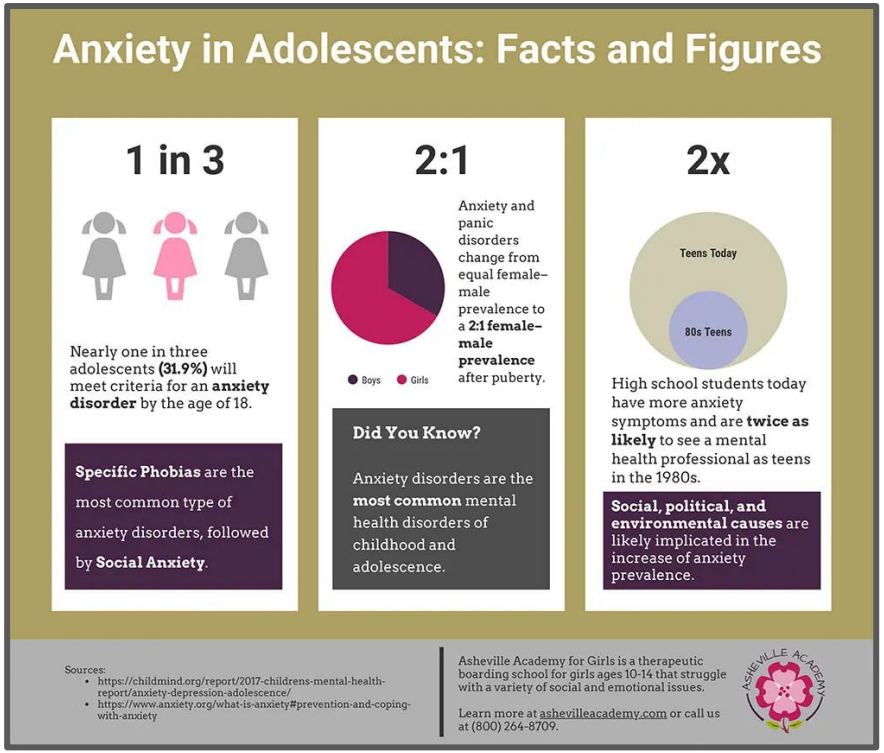
PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

How Common are anxiety disorders in teens?

How common are anxiety disorders in children and adolescents?

Anxiety is the most common emotional problem in children. Kids with anxiety respond well to treatment, but it is often overlooked or misunderstood.

- The NIMH reports that about ⅓ or 31.9 % of adolescents will meet criteria for an anxiety disorder before the age of 18.
- After puberty girls vastly outpace boys in terms of prevalence of anxiety and panic
- Anxiety is increasing in the last 40 years with a significant jump during COVID.



FEELING ANXIETY OR IS IT MORE...

Types of Anxiety Disorders

The Child Mind Institute reports that:

- 19.3% of teens have a specific phobia
- 9.1% of teens have social anxiety disorder
- 7.6% of teens have separation anxiety
- 2.3% of teens have a panic disorder
- 2.2% of teens have Generalized Anxiety Disorder



WHEN TO SEEK HELP FOR YOUR TEEN

WHEN should I ask for help?

Signs that anxiety is becoming problematic include the following:

- Your child begins to routinely avoid situations or activities in which he previously participated. For example, he attempts to avoid going to school, doesn't want to go to a friend's house or won't go upstairs by himself.
- Your child is too anxious or distressed to enjoy daily activities.
- Your child spends a significant amount of time worrying most days of the week.
- Your child experiences physical symptoms that have no medical basis, and which get in the way of participating in activities (ex: frequent visits to the nurse, stomach aches).
- Your child's anxiety persists for a prolonged period of time (weeks to months).



WHO can help?

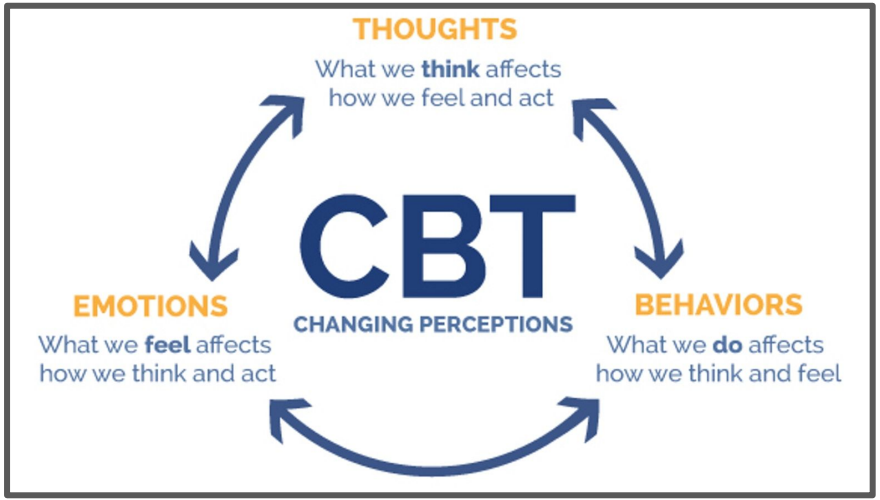
- School Psychologist & School Counselor
  - Screeners, implementing accommodations, etc.
- External counselor or psychologists that specialize in working with adolescents suffering from anxiety

*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

WHAT CAN HELP?

WHAT can help?

- Anxiety disorders are highly treatable! As with most problems, the earlier it is diagnosed the easier it is to treat.
- Studies have found a combination of CBT and medication for 12 weeks yields a positive response in 80% of children with anxiety disorders, while CBT alone yields a positive response in 60% of children.*
- Learning life skills to manage and cope with anxiety at a young age can actually serve as a protective factor to manage future stressors (ex: transition to college).



*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Manage Anxiety By Anchoring In The Present



*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Safe, stable adult relationships



Safe and supportive environments



Targeted resources, supports, and interventions

1. One such study: Murphy, et. al. "Caring Adults: Important for Positive Child Well-Being" (2013)
2. Resnick et. al. "Protecting Adolescents from Harm: National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health" (1997)

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

You can build supportive relationships with your child by:

- being in the moment with your child
- spending quality time with your child
- creating a caring environment of trust and respect.
- listening with care and compassion



CARING CONNECTIONS: Strengthening Relationships by Practicing Kindness, Being Grateful, and Spending Quality Time With Those We LOVE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Do something helpful for a family member or friend. 	Connect with a relative to say hello and chat. 	Count your blessings: List the kind things others have done for you. 	Create and then share a card or a piece of art with someone you love. 	Go outside and find one thing that reminds you of someone. Share what you find and your why.	Create a cell phone / device parking lot so you can enjoy device-free moments together each day.	Find a deck of cards and play a game like Crazy Eights, Spoons or Go Fish. 
Find a joke that you love and share it with 2 other people in person, by phone, or virtually.	Work together to plan a 3-course meal. Write down / draw each part of the meal to share as the menu for the evening.	Go outside and find materials to create a centerpiece for others to enjoy! 	Name 3 things you are grateful for. Draw a picture or write a list of these things and then post in a prominent place.	Work to create 5 “happy cards” for seniors that are in a local nursing home. Drop them off for them to enjoy.	While washing your hands look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself one thing you like about YOU!	Do one act of kindness to make life easier for someone. 
Thank 3 people you are grateful to and tell them why. 	Smile at the people you are with to brighten their day. 	Learn one new thing today and share what you learned with someone. 	Choose a favorite song(s) and enjoy a spontaneous dance party. 	Get a deck or two of cards and build a home. Talk about what makes a home safe and what connects us to others.	Go outside and enjoy a game of “Red Light, Green Light.” Be sure to run, walk, slide, jump and enjoy other creative ways to move.	Design and create a musical instrument. Enjoy a sharing concert. 
Ask someone to do what you LOVE to do today. 	Send a message or letter to someone you cannot be with today. 	Find a favorite book and read it or share it with someone. 	Enjoy a scavenger hunt with someone. Both write lists of 5 things the other person will look for, switch lists and then GO!	Notice 5 things that are beautiful within your world. Share your ideas with someone. 	Learn how to play hopscotch and then PLAY! 	Thank someone and tell them how they make a difference for you. 

CREATE SAFETY AND STRUCTURE THROUGH PREDICTABILITY

What Makes a Good Family Routine?

Well planned

In a good routine, everyone understands their roles, knows what they need to do and sees their roles as reasonable and fair. For example, your children know that they take turns with washing up and drying up each night after dinner. As children get older, they can have a say in planning routines.

Regular

Good routines become part of everyday family life. For example, you might all look forward to Sunday night barbecues with your children's grandparents.

Predictable

In a good routine, things happen in the same order each time. Everyone knows what to expect for the day. For example, you always wash school uniforms on the weekend, so you know they'll be ready for Monday morning.

Setting Limitations

Limits help children and adolescents feel more secure. Set clear and reasonable expectations and boundaries, and be consistent with how you handle problems and discipline at home.

CONNECTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES TO BELONG

You Can Support Your Child By Building Connections:

- Extracurricular Activities
- Physical Activities
- Planned Time with Friends
- Faith-Based Supports
- Counseling Services



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Breathing Exercise

4 times
~30 seconds

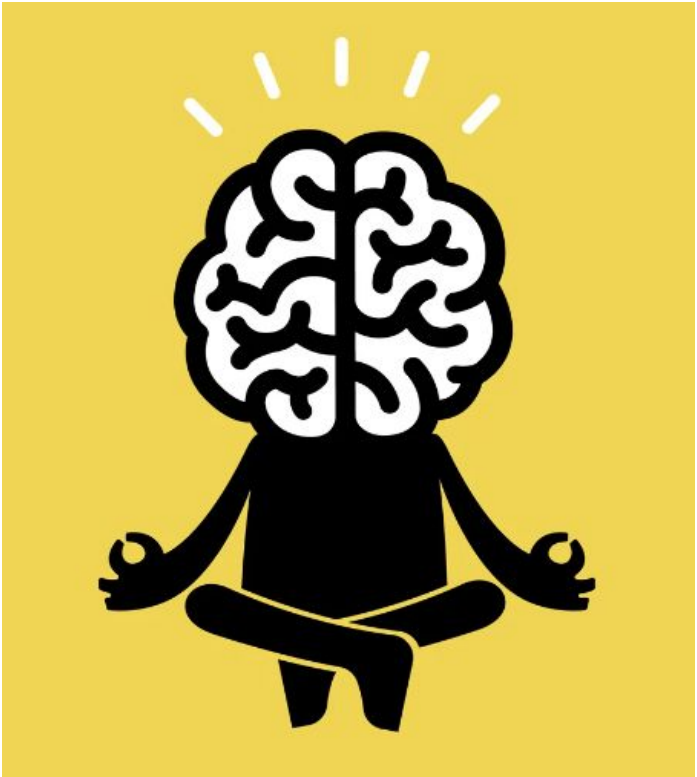


WHAT ARE COPING STRATEGIES?



HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES FOR STRESS & ANXIETY

- **Take a time-out.** Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head.
- **Eat well-balanced meals.** Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
- **Get enough sleep.** When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest.
- **Exercise daily to help you feel good and maintain your health.**
- **Take deep breaths.** Inhale and exhale slowly.
- **Count to 10 slowly.** Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
- **Do your best.** Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.

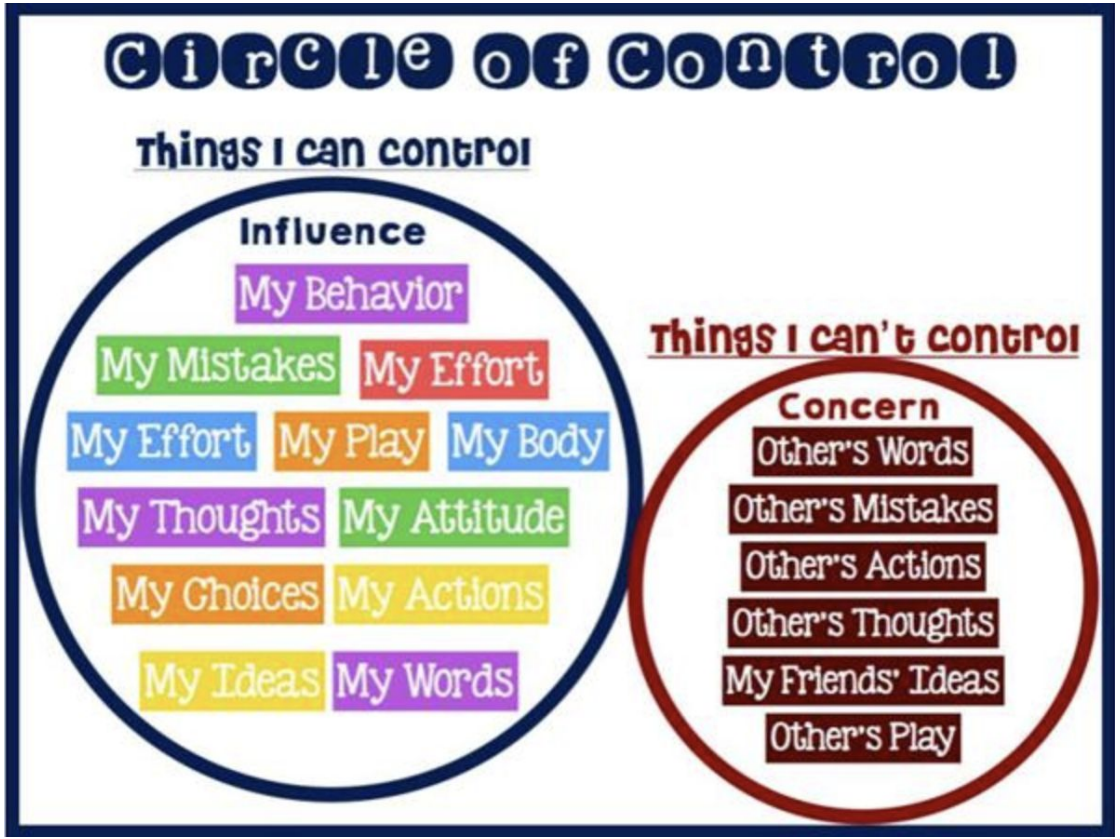


Source: https://adaa.org/tips

HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES FOR STRESS & ANXIETY

Accept that you cannot control everything.

How can you apply this to some common situations that cause you stress?



HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES FOR STRESS & ANXIETY

- **Welcome humor.** A good laugh goes a long way.
- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
- **Get involved.** Volunteer or find another way to be active in your community, which creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.
- **Learn what triggers your anxiety.** Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.
- **Talk to someone.** Tell friends and family you're feeling overwhelmed, and let them know how they can help you. Talk to a physician or therapist.

Source: https://adaa.org/tips

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QUESTIONS

RESOURCES

Coping Strategies for Kids - Strong 4 Life

At Home Brain Breaks - Conscious Discipline

Guided Meditation App - Headspace

Stress Management Tip Sheet - Therapist Aid