

01 What is anxiety?

- Anxiety is:
 - Vague, unpleasant emotional state
 - Feeling dread, distress, and uneasiness
 - Occurs out of fear and worry
 - Normal and healthy when managed
- Teenagers often have trouble talking about how they feel
 - Express their emotions in different ways. Can be aggressive or withdrawn or display a variety of other behaviors



02 Causes

- High levels of stress can lead to anxiety. Can come from a range of difficulties:
 - Academic pressure
 - Social problems with peers or friends
 - Conflict with parents or family members
 - Trouble achieving a desired goal



Reactions

Physical responses:

- Increased heart rate
- Sweaty palms
- Light-headed, feeling dizzy
- Rapid Breathing
- Stomach-tightening

These symptoms do not usually last long—especially when the threat is not present. However, sometimes people do not wait long enough for natural slowdown; they rush to escape. May also avoid going back to the situation or to others like it. Intense effects from body's system can lead to the experience of an anxiety or panic attack.

Teenagers may link situations with unpleasant experience of physical sensations. Soon after just thinking about the situations can trigger a milder version of the experience and lead to avoidance.



Has anyone experienced something similar?

Parent's Role



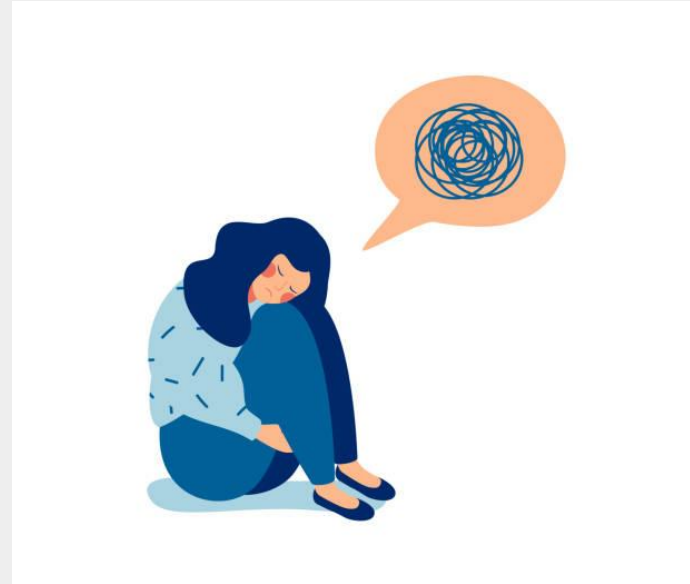
Being too protective or critical can lead teenagers to fear that they cannot cope

Only providing attention when teen is upset accidentally rewards anxiety

If parents have anxiety issues themselves teens observe how they deal with it and may react similarly

What to do if...

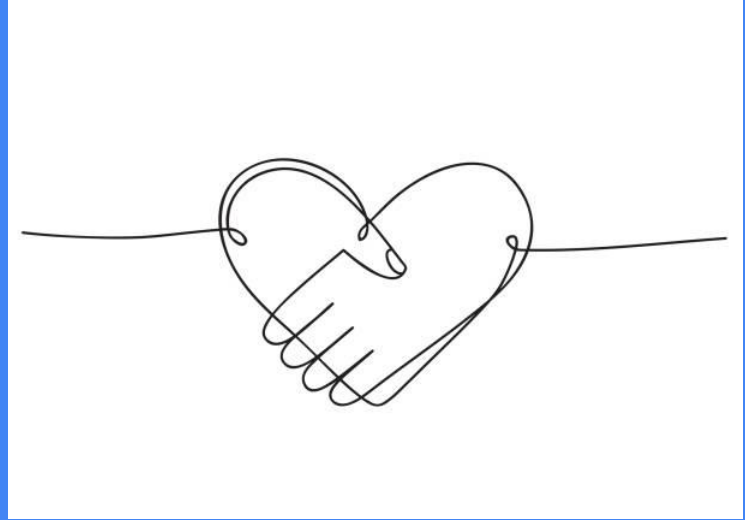
you think your teenager may be anxious



- Monitor your teen's emotions and behavior
 - Look for changes in normal patterns
 - Focus on situations they may be avoiding or whether they are acting compulsively
- Talk to your teenager
 - Try to identify recent events that may have upset them
 - Take care not to add anxiety by asking too many questions. But also ignore attempts to distract away from subject
 - Listen attentively: Do they feel overwhelmed? Do they believe negative things are going to happen and are out of their control?
- Encourage regular school attendance
 - Being involved in activities can help solve problems and provide needed social contact
 - If they complain of illness visit the doctor. If needed, take them to school yourself.
- Talk to someone at school
 - Share concerns with your teen's teachers to get full picture and extend your monitoring network

04

How to help
your teen
manage anxiety



Encourage your teenager to face their fears



- Explain that upset reaction is normal but situation is not really a threat
- Teenagers may feel shame about their anxiety and may not be willing to admit it
- To overcome, teen must stay in feared situation as long as possible, so natural body reactions have time to calm down
 - Learn to slow down breathing
 - Remind themselves that they can cope

Encourage your teenager to practice their coping skills

- Rehearse by guiding to count breathing around 4 or 5 times a day. Goal is to slow breathing to a normal rate.
- To make practice more effective do some brief physical exercise to increase breathing rate before controlling breathing.



Steps for Controlling Breathing

Hold their breath and count to 10

Then breathe out through nose and say word 'relax' to themselves in a soothing manner

Breathe in and out through their nose in six second cycles. Three seconds slowly counting in and then three seconds slowly counted out.

Every 10 minutes (around a minute), go back to step one and repeat.

Should repeat until anxiety sensations are gone.

Coping thoughts

- Ask your teenager to write down the thoughts that they have when they start getting anxious. Often about lack of control in stressful situations
- Then ask them to write down a different positive thought that they can use to replace each of the negative ones.



negative I can't
cope
with
this.

positive I can
handle
this
OK.