



RESPONDING TO 21ST CENTURY ANXIETY

It's not what it used to be

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Why this topic is so important

- Research shows anxiety is a bigger factor than depression in suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- 8-10% of adolescents have a diagnosable anxiety disorder.
- As many as 30% of adolescents have a high level of anxiety and need help managing it.
- Anxiety happens in all races, SES, etc. but it is more common in girls.

What is Anxiety

- Excessive worry that the person can't control and that interferes with regular life/functioning.
- Other symptoms include restlessness, irritability, trouble sleeping, trouble concentrating, perfectionism.
- Anxiety Disorders are true medical issues that have a biological and genetic component.

About Anxiety

- It goes hand in hand with control issues.
- Also goes hand in hand with depression.
- May show up in the form of specific fears.
- May come with panic attacks.

How Teens May Cope

- Withdrawal
- Cutting/Self Harm
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Trying even harder
- Video games
- Pornography

Where Does It Come From

- Trauma
- Genetics
- Parents' anxiety/pressure/expectations
- Over exposure due to excessive use of media
- Social Media and constant pressure to be “on”
- Not enough family time/influence
- No down time

What Teens Need

- Understanding
- Acceptance
- Support
- Guidance
- Safety/Stability
- Engagement
- Physical Exercise

What You Can Do

- Start a conversation
- Listen!
- Listen!!!
- Listen!!!!!!!!!!!!

What You Can Do

- Try not to judge or rush to give advice
- Normalize their experience
- Provide a safe place where kids are accepted
- Provide a peaceful place where kids can relax and not have to be “on”
- Help kids process and cope with things in the world that are scary

What Else You Can Do

- Offer spiritual guidance
- Encourage meditation
- Teach/model gratitude
- Offer opportunities for belief/involvement in something bigger than themselves.

When To Seek Professional Help

- When you feel worried about a kid.
- When the teen isn't able to talk to anyone about the anxiety.
- When you have done the things you know and the teen is still struggling.
- Anytime the teen talks about hurting themselves or not wanting to live, etc.
- Anytime the teen discloses significant trauma.

Talking to Parents About Anxiety

- Explain that it seems the teen is very stressed
- Ask parents if they have seen the signs
- Gently suggest that their teen might benefit from seeing some sort of professional
- Be completely truthful with parents if the teen is hurting themselves or has suicidal thoughts
- Offer referrals/resources

Resources

- acadiatheroadback.org
- <https://angstmovie.com/>
- <https://www.nami.org/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/>
- www.mentalhealthamerica.net
- <https://www.herefortexas.com/index.html>

Contact Me

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