



Understanding & Supporting Youth Anxiety

Presented By:

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Our Mission:
A world where every young person benefits from mental health support

Our Services:
Online counseling, designed for teens

Agenda

- Learn about the prevalence and impact of anxiety
- Differentiate between feelings (stress, anxiety) & anxiety disorders
- Identify signs and symptoms of anxiety
- Learn actionable ways to help support your child with anxiety
- Connect to available resources
- Q&A

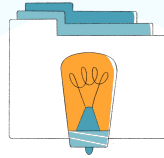


Anxiety: How Common Is It?



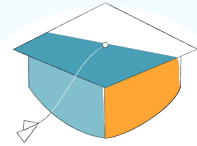
31.9%

of teens are estimated to
have an
anxiety disorder¹



8.3%

of these teens
experience a **severe
impairment** due to their
symptoms of anxiety¹



10%

of teens believe stress
causes them to get
lower grades than they
think they can get²

Emotions

- A **typical reaction** to situations, people or thoughts – *emotions can be messengers for what we need*
- **Emotions** usually do not impact life functioning
- A **temporary** feeling state such as “worry” or feeling “stress”
- Only **one symptom** of an anxiety disorder

Anxiety Disorders

- A **mental disorder** impacts quality of life
- A **persistent** mood state– Cannot “*snap out of it*”
- Symptoms feel **intrusive** and are often connected to physical symptoms
- Can last for **weeks, months** or **longer**

Different types of Anxiety

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Feelings of constant, exaggerated worry and tension about routine life events/activities
- Always expecting the worst with little reason to do so
- Difficulty relaxing or sleeping

Social Anxiety Disorder

- Extreme fear of social or competitive situations
- Being terrified of humiliation, rejection, or being judged negatively
- Often leads to avoidance of social situations, severe distress when they can't be avoided

Phobias

- Extreme, disabling and irrational fear of something that really poses little or no actual danger
- Results in avoidance of objects or situations and can cause people to limit their lives

Panic Disorder

- Unexpected attacks of extreme terror that strike repeatedly and without warning
- Feeling like you're losing control, going crazy, or dying
- Intense fear between attacks about when & where the next one will happen

Signs of Youth Anxiety

Common signs and symptoms of anxiety may include:

- Changes in **moods**– sadness, fear, anger, worry, numbness, irritability, anxiety, panic
- Using **substances**
- Changes in **appetite** or **sleeping habits**
- **Physical reactions** – headaches, body pains, and stomach issues
- Avoidance, procrastination, **low motivation**
- Frequent trips to the nurse or complaints of **feeling sick**
- Not turning in homework, **declining grades**
- **Truancies** or refusing to go to school

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Supporting Youth

Supporting Someone with Anxiety

When someone is experiencing anxiety or panic, they may be feeling: overwhelmed, judged, afraid, or out of control.

You can help by:

- **Exposure** – short periods where they are uncomfortable, but learn they can overcome their anxieties
- **Routines** – create predictability to provide sense of security
- **Positive Reinforcement** – Praise and reward positive experiences
- **Coping Skills** – help them develop strategies to deal with big feelings – increase control, ground in the present

Ideas for Calm

Mindfulness

- Trying to bring focus & awareness into the present moment, accept without judgment the behaviors, thoughts and emotions we notice.
 - Meditation, journaling, visualizing a person/place you love

Distraction

- Choosing an intentional distraction to try and shift emotions can help reduce their intensity and frequency (different than a passive distraction to numb out).
 - Watching tv or a funny video, going for a walk, listening to music

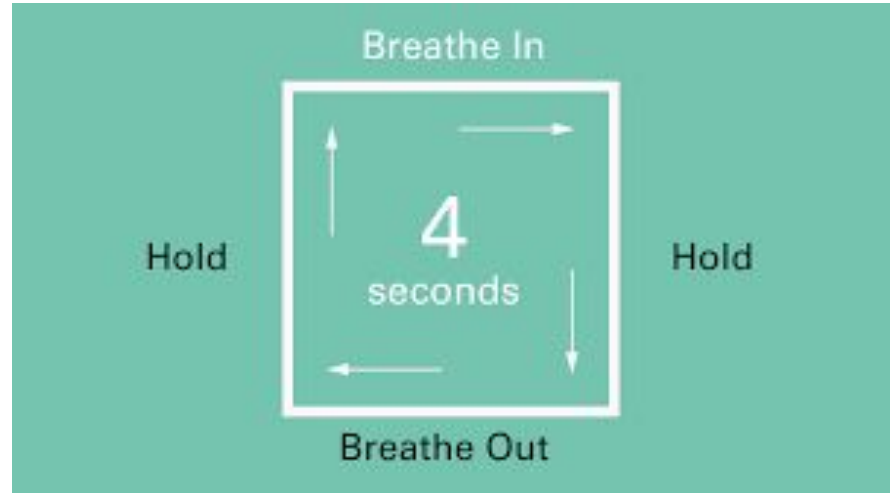
Connection

- Reaching out for connection with our supports and those we feel safety and caring from can help us regulate our emotions, problem solve and help calm our nervous system.
 - Reaching out to someone, talking or sitting quietly, hugging someone

Breathing Techniques

There are many quick and simple [breathing techniques](#) you can use in almost any situation.

- Box breathing
- Smiling breaths
- Finger count breathing



Connecting With Your Body

54321 Exercises

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 *grounding* TECHNIQUE

- 5 THINGS YOU CAN *see*
- 4 THINGS YOU CAN *feel*
- 3 THINGS YOU CAN *hear*
- 2 THINGS YOU CAN *smell*
- 1 THING YOU CAN *taste*

Body scans



Connecting With Your Body

Additional strategies:

- Clenching and release your fists/muscles
- Rub your palms together
- Stomp
- Exercise/stretch, go for a walk
- Take a shower or bath, splash cold water on your face
- Drink something hot
- Smell something (*lavender is very calming!*)

When to Seek Help

- **You know your child best.** Talk to child about your concerns, especially when you notice *changes* in their behavior.
- **Access resources.** Talk to your child's healthcare professional or school supports if you have concerns about the way your child behaves at home, in school, or with friends.
Treatment options can include a check-up with pediatrician, individual or family therapy, school counseling, support groups, medication
- **Early diagnosis & treatment.** Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can be very impactful, though treatment can be effective at any point.

Resources

Hays CISD Resources



- [Hays CISD Guidance & Counseling Resources](#)
- [Hays CISD Community Resources 23-24](#)

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Thank You!

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