

Mental Health Information for Parents from FSUS

ANXIETY IN MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat.

Causes

- Genetics
- Environment
- Personality type
- Chemical imbalance in brain
- Physical problems
- Stress

Common Symptoms

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty controlling worry
- Feeling on-edge
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Sleeping too much or too little



Facts

8% of U.S. children have a diagnosed anxiety disorder.

80% of these youth do not receive treatment.

6 is the median age of onset for anxiety disorders.

Mental Health Information for Parents from FSUS

Negative Effects

Childhood anxiety has been shown to impact school performance and social interactions and can predict later health concerns. These include panic attacks, depression, separation anxiety disorder, conduct disorder, social phobia, suicidality, and physical problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

Are middle and high school students prone to anxiety?

Adolescence is a stage when many students are wrought with emotional turmoil and anxiety. Youth must balance a desire for autonomy with a need for structure. They also deal with increasing concerns about fitting in and navigating social interactions. Being on a semester schedule, extracurricular activities and/or jobs, homework, exams, and performance anxiety are even more reasons middle and high school students may be prone to anxiety.

Strategies to Help

- Seek help from a mental health professional. They can provide psychotherapy or medications.
- Contact the school for help finding a provider.
- Stress management techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and exercise are helpful but **should not replace** standard care.

Resources

- <https://www.apa.org/topics/anxiety/>
- <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety>
- <https://childmind.org/2015-childrens-mental-health-report/>
- <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2016/03/understanding-anxiety-disorders>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>