

Parenting Solutions for Anxiety

1. Faith in Jesus Christ
2. A Strong, Vibrant Marriage
3. Dependability and Consistency
4. Teach Them to Decompress (Fun Time)
5. Tech Free Spaces
6. Personal Investment Over Performance Driven
7. Set Clear Boundaries (Family Rules)
8. Healthy Lifestyle
9. Culture of Open Conversations
10. A Strong Sense of Community. (Church)



When students attribute their value to their performance, they tend to increase in activities because this leads to increased approval.

Additional Resources

Cynthia Tobias and Sue Acuña
Middle School: The Inside Story
What Kids Tell Us, But Don't Tell You

Kevil Leeman
Planet Middle School: Helping Your Child Through the Peer Pressure, Awkward Moments, and Emotional Drama

Anxiety and Depression Association of America
adaa.org

National Institute of Mental Health
Nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics

For More Parenting Resources
visit my website.



jasonstanland.com/resources



MSM exists to declare Christ to students, their families, and their schools.

Anxiety And Middle School



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What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion that is characterized by tension, stress, difficulty regulating emotions, and can result in physical consequences like changes in blood pressure. Anxiety is a normal and often healthy emotion that enables people to recognize fear and respond accordingly. An anxiety disorder is when the levels of anxiety are *disproportionate* to the circumstances causing the anxiety. Sometimes a healthy response to stressful circumstances is high levels of anxiety, signaling to the person to change habits and actions.

What are indicators to look for that could lead to anxiety problems?

Most teens are embarrassed by their inability to control their anxiety problems, and due to this shame, they tend to hide their problems as best as possible. Therefore, a parent must be keenly aware of what to look for in his child.

1. Sharp decline in grades.
2. Withdrawal in general, but especially from close friends and favorite activities.
3. Lack of emotional self-regulation.
4. Prolonged mood swings. (Note: Teens naturally exist in the extreme because of hormonal fluctuations. These must be prolonged).
5. Tooth enamel erosion. (Eating Disorder)
6. Wearing winter clothes in hot weather.
7. Easily irritated when you ask how they are doing.
8. Immediate switch of friend groups.
9. Displaying character that is inconsistent with the rest of your family.

Prevalence of Mental Health and Anxiety in Students

St. Johns School District

- 20% of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental condition.
- 11% of youth have a mood disorder.
- 10% of youth have a behavior conduct disorder.
- 8% of youth have an anxiety disorder.
- 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)

- 80% of children with a diagnosable anxiety disorder are not receiving any treatment or help.

National Institute of Mental Health

- In 2017 77.2% of diagnosed anxiety problems were mild or moderate cases.
- Only 22.8% were serious cases.
- In 2017 females were twice as likely to suffer from anxiety as males.

Child Mind Institute

- Before adolescence mood disorders are about equal in boys and girls.
- By mid adolescence girls are twice as likely to be diagnosed with a mood disorder.



Studies show a connection between obsessive smartphone use and mood disorders.

What are Anxiety Phases?

Anxiety is a natural part of life. In middle school all students will experience some sort of anxiety due to this particular phase of life. If one word could describe the middle school years, it would be *insecurity*. Their bodies and self-perception is changing at such a rapid rate they become naturally anxious. Furthermore, their emotions are constantly in flux because of their hormonal swings. Their ability to self-regulate their emotions is practically gone. This is almost always true.

Help your child by teaching an emotional vocabulary. Anxiety and fear is not a primary emotion because they come from other emotions. Your child needs to know the following terms and be able to identify them (among others).

- Embarrassed
- Guilty
- Disappointed
- Jealous
- Insecure

What are Anxiety Triggers?

Every child's personality is different, but your child can be predictable. There are certain stressors or triggers that can cause anxiety and be easy to predict. For example, some students enjoy a strict routine and clear plan. Having to adjust in unpredictable circumstances will cause anxiety. By identifying triggers, a parent can help their child become more self-aware, leading to more self-control.

Jesus and Anxiety

Jesus told his disciples not to be anxious in Matthew 6:25-34. Instead of focusing on our anxiety, we are to focus on the dependability of God. Security is the opposite of accountability, and Christ says that security is found in him. As parents we must first place our faith in Jesus. As we live out this faith in front of our children, they too will be blessed from that security. This will lead to spiritual affinity for God.