

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a common mental health concern for children and adults. Untreated anxiety can sometimes lead to other problems later in life, such as depression, missed opportunities in career and relationships, increased substance use, and an overall decreased quality of life.

Parents can play an essential role in helping their child or teen manage anxiety. When coping skills and brave behaviour are rewarded and role-modelled in the home, children and teens can learn to face their fears, take risks, and ultimately gain confidence.

It's important for your pre-teen or teen to know that anxiety is normal. Everyone experiences anxiety at some point in time. For example, it is normal to feel anxious before a big event, before a test, or even before exciting events we choose to do for fun, like riding a rollercoaster or playing on a competitive sports team.

Anxiety is a GOOD thing! Although anxiety feels uncomfortable, it is temporary and can be managed. Anxiety helps us prepare for real danger, such as crossing a busy street. It can also help us perform at our best and motivate us to study or practice for a big game. When we experience anxiety, it triggers our body to react. For instance, our heart beats faster so blood can reach our muscles, and we have the energy to run away or fight off danger.

Anxiety becomes a problem when our body reacts in the absence of real danger. For some, difficulty with anxiety starts to cause considerable distress or interference in everyday life. Anxiety may also interfere with normal activities and with the enjoyment of life. When this happens, it may be time to consider professional help. Learning strategies to challenge anxious thoughts can make a significant difference.

If you see your child struggling, please reach out for support.

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