

Helping Teens Cope with Anxiety During COVID 19

Tanya Stockhammer, Ph.D.
StrongMinds

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Next Webinar

Prescription Opioid Abuse Among Teen Population (Rebroadcast)

Monday April 13th, 2020
8:00pm – 9:30pm ET

C. Martin Redd
Diversion Program Manager
U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration,
Louisville Field office

Register at www.operationparent.org

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Next Webinar

Marijuana: Parenting for Prevention in 2020

April 27, 2020
2:00pm – 3:00pm ET

Christine Storm
Director of Community Education
Caron Treatment Center

Register at www.operationparent.org

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OPERATION PARENT

Operation Parent's mission is to love and support parents by providing real world information, connection, and hope.

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What We Plan to Cover Today

1. Discuss Anxiety
 - How it works and doesn't
 - How it is helpful and not helpful
2. Risk Factors for Teens
3. Anxiety Management Strategies (COVID-19 Specific)
 - Parents and Teen Strategies
4. Questions & Answers

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Normative Stress and Anxiety

- Anxiety affects everyone, sometimes; it is a natural and normal reaction to pressure & change
- Stress or anxiety response is biologically driven
- The stress response helps keep us safe in times of true danger
- Perception of stress and anxiety depends on age, biology, & life experience
- Good stress* is helpful and makes life interesting
- Chronic stress and anxiety lead to negative outcomes
- When anxiety and stress are regularly debilitating, a disorder is often diagnosed



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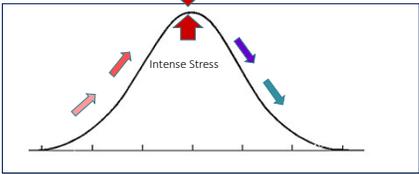
The Function of Stress and Anxiety

- **Activates the Central Nervous System**
 - ✓ mobilize the “Fight, Flight, or Freeze” response
- **Helpful in small doses:**
 - ✓ increases focus, concentration, and efficiency
 - ✓ helps prioritize what needs our attention
- **Unhelpful in large doses or if chronic:**
 - ✓ floods the mind, reducing the ability to focus, think clearly, or problem solve
 - ✓ significant changes in health and brain wiring




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The Stress-response Curve



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Teen Risk Factors: For Problematic Anxiety

- Internal resources for coping are limited
- Immature brain contributes to heightened experience of stress
- Internalized feelings
- Emotionally reactive temperament
- Perfectionist tendencies
- Low *perceived* social support
- Lower physical activity
- Excessive screen time/social media overuse




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Signs of Stress/Anxiety Overload

- **Physiological:** muscle tension, appetite changes, sleep disturbance, headaches, stomach aches, lack of energy, restlessness
- **Cognitive:** inattention, difficulty focusing, reduced problem-solving ability, impaired judgement, indecisiveness
- **Emotional:** anger, irritability, anxiety, sadness, numbness, hopelessness, helplessness
- **Behavioral:** isolation, bad habits, substance use/abuse, risk-taking behaviors, self-harm, aggression



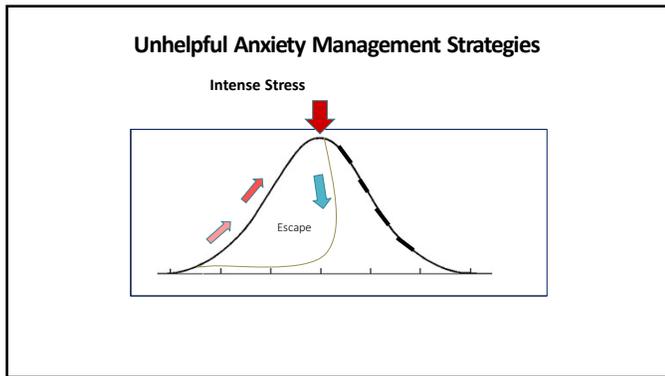

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Unhelpful Anxiety Management Strategies

Meltdowns	Excessive social media
Avoidance	Unhelpful social media
Arguments/blaming	Excessive gaming
Information overload	Excessive eating
Self-harm behavior	Excessive sleep



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Tips for Parents of Teens

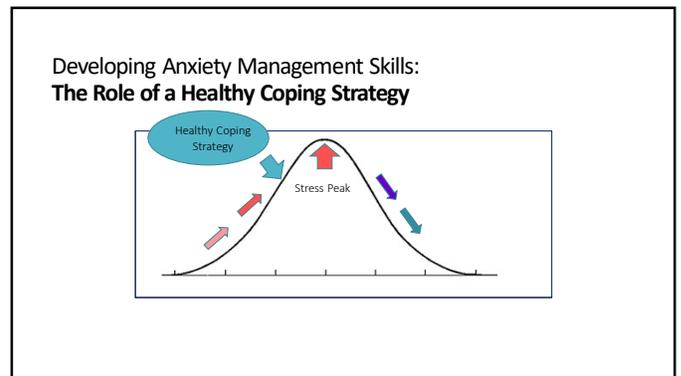
- Place a greater emphasis on goal setting
- Allows teen to engage in problem solving
- Empowers teen to develop and execute effective plans to manage stress
- Remember *don't* be a helicopter or lawn mower parent
- Do be the banks of the raging river guiding your teen

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Adaptive Anxiety Management Skills: The Role of a Growth Mindset

FIXED MINDSET		GROWTH MINDSET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOMETHING YOU'RE BORN WITH • FIXED 	SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COME FROM HARD WORK • CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOMETHING TO AVOID • COULD REVEAL LACK OF SKILL • TEND TO GIVE UP EASILY 	CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHOULD BE EMBRACED • AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW • MORE PERSISTENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNNECESSARY • SOMETHING YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH 	EFFORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESSENTIAL • A PATH TO MASTERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GET DEFENSIVE • TAKE IT PERSONAL 	FEEDBACK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USEFUL • SOMETHING TO LEARN FROM • IDENTIFY AREAS TO IMPROVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLAME OTHERS • GET DISCOURAGED 	SETBACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USE AS A WAKE-UP CALL TO WORK HARDER NEXT TIME

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Teen Strategies for Anxiety Management

- Take Care of Your Body**
 - ✓ Movement and exercise
 - ✓ Sleep (8-9 hours)
 - ✓ Eat healthy foods
- Manage Emotions in Healthy Ways**
 - ✓ Laugh and have fun
 - ✓ Active relaxation – find apps!
 - ✓ Breathing (Muscle Relaxation & Visualization)
- Change your thinking**
- Be KIND to yourself**
- Build your Skills**
- Talk it Out!**

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Parent Strategies for Anxiety Management

- ▲ Manage own stress and anxiety
- 👂 LISTEN to how your teen wants to be supported
- 🗨️ When your teen wants to talk be available
- ❤️ Be empathetic and compassionate
- 💡 Support your teen in problem solving
- 🔊 Notice out loud if you are concerned
- 🗨️ Be glad that they are talking (even if it's not to you)
- 👩🏫 Seek professional support and guidance

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How to support your teen during COVID-19



- Acknowledge**
 - Worry and fear
 - Disappointment
 - The uncertainty and lack of control
- Focus on the POSITIVE**
- Identify Controllable(s)**



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How to support your teen during COVID-19

- Set Schedule Goals**
- Encourage**
 - Safe-Social Activities
 - Sleep
 - Movement
 - Helping Others
- Help Find small freedoms**
- Be Planful**
 - News & updates



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How to support your teen during COVID-19

- Be Honest and Age Appropriate**
- Collaborate Don't lecture**
- Seek professional help (Tele-health)**
- Listen and Support**



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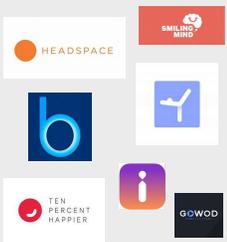
Trusted Resources

- Childmind.org**
Corona resource support resources daily (Spanish available)
- Cdc.gov-stress and coping**
- Adaa.org COVID 19 Lockdown Guide**-How to Manage Anxiety and Isolation
<https://www.stressedteens.com/stressed-teens/>
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Teens**
- NAMI.org**- How to Ease Children's Anxiety about COVID 19




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Free Apps



- Google search Free Apps during Corona:** Education, communication, exercise, meditation, e-books, games, music, creativity, entertainment, and news.
- Meditation:** Ten Percent Happier offering live guided daily meditations with experts-Corona focused. Breathe, Smiling mind, Pulse, Inscape, and CALM may also be offering free meditation services.
- Exercise:** Many studios and gyms are offering free online workouts. Apps like CoWod, Daily yoga, Peloton, etc. may also be free sessions

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