

Coping with Anxiety

Felicia Thompson, MS. ALC
Jessica Crosby, MSC, ALC

Who Are We?

The Enrichment Center

- Mental Health Counselors partnered with Madison City, Madison County, and Lawrence County Schools
- Services are school-based to increase accessibility to all students
- Felicia Thompson, MS, ALC - Serving James Clemens High School
- Jessica Crosby, MSC, ALC - Serving Legacy, Monrovia, and Endeavor Elementary Schools and Sparkman High School

Anxiety: Signs and Symptoms

The Australian Psychology Association

- Anxiety is a natural and usually short-lived reaction to a stressful situation, associated with feelings of worry, nervousness or apprehension.
 - **Bottom Line** – Anxiety is common. It can occur as a response to a specific trigger or event, but can occur in the absence of a trigger or event.
-

Basic Statistics

- Anxiety is the most frequent psychiatric disorder in young people
 - Affects approx. 15% of adolescents
 - Disproportionately affects girls (as much as 3:1 during teen years)
 - Some spontaneous remission, but generally chronic
- Research conducted by Justin Coulson, PHD

Anxiety in Adolescents

- Teens are dealing with changes – emotionally, physically, and socially
- Brain is still developing
- Teens are struggling to be independent, becoming their own person, seeking new opportunities and challenges



Internal and External Symptoms

Internal Feelings

Afraid

Hesitant

Worried

Angry

Nervous

Troubled

Concerned

Overwhelmed

Out of Control

Fearful

Panicked

Frozen

Moody

Physical

Clenched Jaw

Breathing (Fast or Shallow)

Butterflies

Grinding of Teeth

Difficulty sleeping

Headache

Changes in appetite

Heart racing/pounding

Muscle Tension

Shaky hands / legs / jittery

Gastrointestinal issues

Dry mouth

Nausea

Clingy / Attachment issues

“To deal effectively with anxiety in our children, we have to deal effectively with anxiety in ourselves about our children.”



Anxiety: How to Cope

Identifying Triggers

- Be intentional about uncovering the cause.
 - When do you first notice it?
 - Does it occur for specific reasons (test anxiety) or in specific places (social anxiety)?
- Where do you feel it in your body?
 - Does your stomach feel sick?
 - Are you sweaty or shaky?
 - Is your chest tight?

Shift Your Mindset

- What is your anxiety trying to tell you?
- Make a plan to deal with the “Worst Case Scenario”



Be Mindful

- Try deep breathing when you feel the anxiety rising in your mind and body.
- Think about adding mindfulness and relaxation into your daily routine.
- Work on getting regular exercise.

Exercises

- 4-7-8 Breathing
- Guided Muscle Relaxation Exercises
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding
- Ask yourself a question with many answers
 - Name as many States/Cities as you can
 - Recite the alphabet backwards



Questions?