

# Reducing Anxiety in the Classroom

Tools and Strategies for  
Families and Educators

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# Scenario



# What is anxiety?

What comes to mind?

What do you feel?

What do you do?



# Inside Out

What causes Anxiety ?

- [https://youtu.be/tNsTy-j\\_sQs](https://youtu.be/tNsTy-j_sQs)



# What might happen with anxiety?

- Respond to certain objects with fear and dread
- Have physical reactions
- Inappropriate response to situation
- Cannot control the response
- Has an altered way of life due to the anxiety /Interferes with school/work and relationships



# Different Types of Anxiety

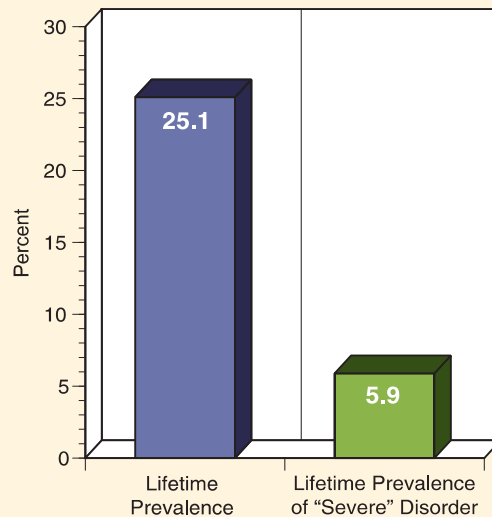
- Separation Anxiety
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Phobias and Panic Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

# Anxiety in 13-18 yo

## Any Anxiety Disorder

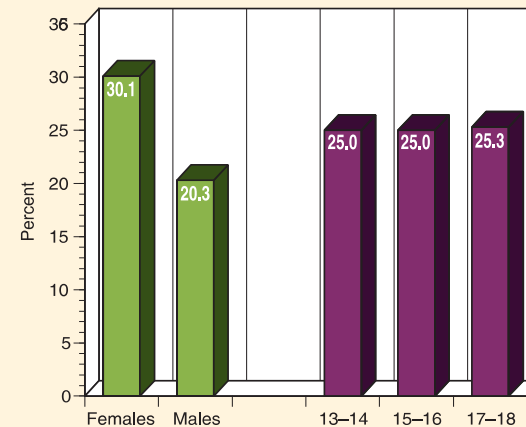
### Lifetime Prevalence of 13 to 18 year olds

- **Lifetime Prevalence:** 25.1% of 13 to 18 year olds
- **Lifetime Prevalence of “Severe” Disorder:** 5.9% of 13 to 18 year olds have “severe” anxiety disorder



### Demographics (for lifetime prevalence)

- **Sex:** Statistically different
- **Age:** Not statistically different



- **Race:** Statistically significant differences were found between non-Hispanic whites and other races

<sup>1</sup>Merikangas KR, He J, Burstein M, Swanson SA, Avenevoli S, Cui L, Benjet C, Georgiades K, Swendsen J. *Lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in U.S. Adolescents*. Under review.

# Most Common Anxiety

- Children – Separation Anxiety Disorder  
Social/Performance Anxiety
- Teens - Panic Disorder
  - Phobias
  - School Refusal  
Social/Performance Anxiety





# Does my child/student have anxiety?

- Emotional symptoms
  - Feelings of dread
  - Trouble concentrating
  - Irritability
  - Thinking the worst



# Physical Symptoms

- Heart racing/pounding
- Headaches
- Stomach upset
- Dizziness
- Shaking



# How Parents Can Help

- Have a conversation with your child's teacher
- Teach positive self-talk
- Collaborate in problem solving
- LISTEN, LISTEN, and LISTEN
- Prepare for transitions
- Teach and practice relaxation techniques



# Parents cont'd.

- Be aware of heightened parenting emotions
- Is it real or this just misbehaving or attention seeking?
- Empower the child- support with acknowledgement and acceptance of the anxiety
- Express confidence in child's ability to cope



# How Teachers Can Help

- Consider smaller- group activities
- Give student more time on tests or preview the work before
- Provide calming activities in the class
- Give a “chill out” pass
- Play videos in between classes



# Creating a Conducive Environment at School

- Create a support system for the student
  - Lunch bunch buddy
  - Identify an administrator/staff that child has a good relationship
  - Use calming music in class



# Relaxation Techniques



# Anxiety Provoking Situations

- In the mornings
- Test taking time
- Transition from classes
- Presentations
- Large groups





# What NOT TO DO

- Parents –
  - DON'T
  - Change routines or do things to avoid the child's anxiety Ex. Speaking for the child
  - Accommodate the anxiety disorder
  - Constantly Reassure (you're going to be fine)
- Teachers – [https://youtu.be/jf404\\_H0r8Q](https://youtu.be/jf404_H0r8Q)  
Don't – take personally



# Further Action at School

- Section 504 – Federal civil rights law that protects the right of students with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal and financial assistance from U.S Dept of Education
- Student is evaluated and it has been determined that an impairment limits a major activity



# Cont.

- IEP – falls under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (requires specific document)
- Provides significant remediation and is needed when student needs more than a level playing field.





# Anxious Kids Video

- Helping Anxious Kids: Practical Tips video
- <https://youtu.be/ri1CKtfyEuE>



# Further Help

- Individual Therapy
  - Types of treatments
    - Exposure and Response Therapy
    - Cognitive Behavior Therapy



# Other Resources

- Treating Childhood and Adolescent Anxiety  
A guide for Caregivers by Elie Lebowitz and Haim Omer
- Freeing Your Child from Anxiety: Powerful Practical Solutions to Overcome Your Child's Fears, Worries and Phobias – by Tamar Chansky, Phd.
- Apps that help with Anxiety
  - Mindfulness for children
  - Relax Melodies
  - Calm
  - Positive Penguins



# Dear Teacher

- [https://youtu.be/ITMLzXzgB\\_s](https://youtu.be/ITMLzXzgB_s)



# QUESTIONS





# THANK YOU!

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