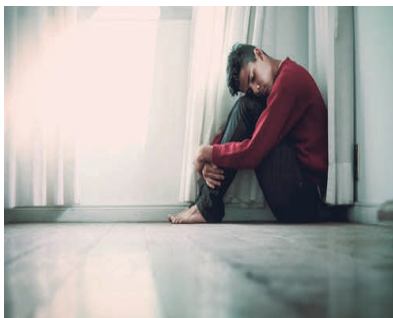
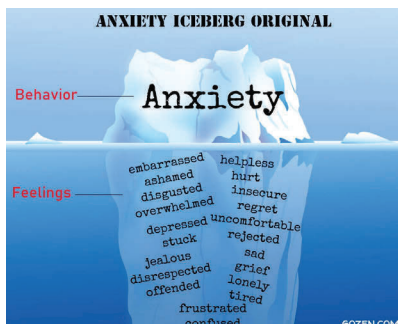




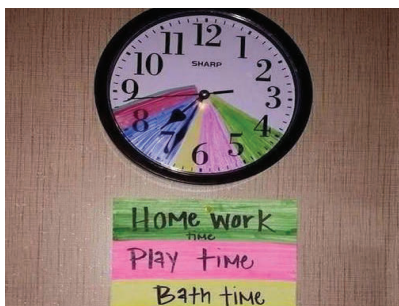
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Tips and Resources for Teachers to recognize:

- Anxiety in children
- Anxiety in teens
- Elementary classroom challenges
- Teenage classroom challenges
- Depression in children
- Depression in teens
- Understanding depression for teens
- Physically Distance/Social Connect
- Substance use
- Online learning tips for elementary students



C&A's clinical staff created the content for each flyer. Contributors include Prevention Program Manager Sarah Hough and Prevention Specialist Marissa Cooney, Early and Middle School Childhood Program Manager Larissa Haring, Trauma Program Manager Mary Kreitz, Gemini Program Manager Dr. Karita Nussbaum and Chief Clinical Officer Georgene Voros.



Understanding Anxiety in Children

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety happens because your brain thinks it has detected danger. The important word there is *thinks* - it doesn't matter whether there actually is any danger, just that your brain thinks there is. Brains are smart but sometimes they get things wrong. Brains are also protective. So when they think we are in danger our brains automatically start doing things that are meant to help keep us safe and alive, like making our hearts beat faster and making us breathe harder. The thing about anxiety is that it always happens *in anticipation* of something bad happening, meaning the bad thing hasn't happened yet (maybe it never will), our brains just *think* it will or could happen. These thoughts often come in the form of worrying about "what if . . . ?"

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY:



- Worrying - a lot
- Clinginess - staying close to trusted adults.
- Irritability - becoming easily upset over small things
- Dread - as though something awful is about to happen
- Regression - acting babyish or immature for their age
- Inability to relax or feelings of restlessness
- Racing thoughts or thoughts that just won't turn off
- Sleep problems including difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, or waking up during the night and having difficulty getting back to sleep
- Nightmares or dreams that are disturbing or distressing
- Avoidance of feared situations
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Physical complaints such as headaches, stomachaches, racing heart, sweating, shaking, nausea, diarrhea, shortness of breath or dizziness
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Triggering of fight (arguing, physical fighting), flight (wanting to run away, hide or disappear) or freeze (mind going blank, difficulty speaking) impulses

ANXIETY CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU!

Anxiety's main job is protection. It can stop children from running up to and running off with strangers. It can make a child think twice about trying something that is too dangerous. As they get older, anxiety can help to motivate children to study harder before a test or put extra effort into learning a skill so that they can impress adults and keep up with their peers.



"When we talk about our feelings they become less overwhelming, less upsetting and less scary."

- Fred Rogers



CRISIS HELP

Sometimes anxiety can be so intense and overwhelming that it feels like life is no longer worth living. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, help is available. It can get better. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), the Crisis Center 330-452-6000 or send a text to 741 741.

HOW TO HELP YOUR ANXIOUS CHILD:



The goal is not to eliminate anxiety but to **manage** it. We want children to be able to do what they need to do without losing any of the benefits anxiety can provide.



Breathe - Taking slow deep breaths helps to clear the mind and settle the body.



Patience - Be supportive, understanding, and patient. Allow time to warm up to new situations and people. Don't try to rush things.



Listen - You don't have to have all the answers or know how to fix every problem. Just listen and empathize with the struggle.



Encourage - Don't let your teen avoid doing the things that need to be done. The longer they try to avoid it, the bigger the fear becomes and the harder it will be to overcome that fear.



Distraction - Drawing, coloring pictures, watching a movie or TV show, listening to music, playing a game, doing a craft. Repetitive, rhythmic movement can have a calming effect.



Perspective - Help to clarify what can be controlled and what cannot and what is a realistic threat and what is not.



Mindfulness - By teaching your brain to come back to the present you increase your ability to take control over your brain and stop it from worrying when it doesn't need to.



Accept - It's never helpful to tell someone who is anxious "stop worrying." It never helps to say they're just overreacting. Let them know you understand how real the fear is to them.

COMMON TYPES OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN:

Generalized Anxiety - worrying more all the time and/or more than appropriate about a lot of things

Separation Anxiety - excessive fear about being away from parents or other primary caregivers, usually the fear is that something bad will happen while they are separated or that the parents will not return.

Selective Mutism - refusal to speak in social situations even though they may be very talkative at home or in situations where they feel comfortable.

Performance Anxiety - fear of doing something in front of other people.

Social Anxiety - intense fear of being watched and judged by others in social situations.

Phobias - intense fear or dread experienced in response to a specific object or situation.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) - Obsessions are unwanted, intrusive thoughts, images, or urges that trigger intensely distressing feelings. Compulsions are behaviors or rituals done to get rid of the obsessions and/or decrease the distress.



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Understanding Depression in Children

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Everyone feels sad sometimes. Sadness is a part of life. It is the appropriate response to the sad things that happen in life. "Normal" sadness lasts for a short time, and then goes away without leaving long-lasting effects. Depression is a change in mood that persists over time. It doesn't go away on its own. It interferes with a person's ability to enjoy life, even when good things are happening. It drains all your energy and stops you from taking part in activities you used to do easily. It makes everything seem pointless. Depression causes lasting changes in thinking, relationships, and way of life.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION:

- Irritable, agitated, easily annoyed or upset
- Sad, crying easily and difficult to soothe
- Constantly bored and unable to find anything enjoyable to do.
- Low energy and difficulty getting motivated
- Overly sensitive to criticism, rejection or failure
- Saying negative things about themselves
- Sulking, withdrawing from social situations, not wanting to spend time with friends
- Whining and complaining - focusing on what's wrong and inability to see what's right in situations
- Sleep problems including difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, waking up during the night and having difficulty getting back to sleep, or sleeping all the time
- Nightmares or dreams that are disturbing or distressing
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Physical complaints such as headaches or stomachaches
- Changes in eating habits - eating too much or not at all
- Being very difficult to please
- Getting into fights or trouble at school
- Not wanting to go to school and/or not wanting to participate in other activities



MISUNDERSTOOD SIGNS OF DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN

Although depression is typically associated with sadness, in children it is more likely to be expressed as irritability (easily upset over small things), anger, annoyance, or boredom rather than through overt signs of sadness like crying. This is often mistaken for a behavior problem rather than recognized as an emotional problem.

"It makes such a difference," said Pooh, "to have someone who believes in you."

- A.A. Milne, *Winnie the Pooh*



CRISIS HELP

It is a myth that young children can't be suicidal. If a child talks about wanting to be dead or wanting to take their own life, take it seriously. Even if it is a dramatic way of expressing distress and not genuine suicidal intention, support is urgently needed. For help on how to respond, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), the Crisis Center 330-452-6000 or send a text to 741 741.

HOW TO HELP A CHILD WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH DEPRESSION:



Talk with the child about what they're feeling. Let them know it is safe to express their feelings to you, even the ones that are not so comfortable for you to hear.



Express - If the child has a hard time expressing their feelings through words, help them find another form of expression, such as drawing.



Build Emotional Vocabulary - Help the child learn to recognize and name a wide variety of emotions. Things are less overwhelming when we know that they have a name.



Listen - You don't have to have all the answers or know how to fix every problem. Just listen and empathize with the struggle.



Counter the child's negative views of self by telling what you like or admire most about them. Try to focus on internal character traits (e.g. kindness or creativity) rather than surface features such as appearance (e.g. pretty).



Help the child look for and recognize examples of what is good in the world and in humanity.



Plan - Plan something enjoyable for every day. Plan something to look forward to in the near future and in the longer term. Display these plans on a calendar so the child has a visual reminder.



Get active - Exercise, dance, do a craft, go for a walk, actively engage with life.



Accept - It's never helpful to make light of a child's depression by saying they're feeling sorry for themselves. Depression doesn't feel good. If they could cheer up, they would.

3 TYPES OF THOUGHTS THAT SUSTAIN DEPRESSION



- **Negative view of self** - I'm not good enough, I am a bad person, I never get anything right, nobody likes me.
- **Negative view of the world and others** - The world is a cold, cruel place and people are awful and uncaring.
- **Negative expectations for the future** - My life is miserable and it's not going to get any better.

Depression is a disorder, not a choice. You don't get over it just by deciding to be positive or cheer up.

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS



Children often find it difficult to explain how they're feeling. They may not be able to tell you that they're depressed. Instead they are likely to talk and complain about what they can understand - pain, aches and other bodily discomforts. The author C.S. Lewis explained it well, "It is easier to say 'my tooth is aching' than to say 'my heart is broken.'"



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Classroom Challenges Inside and out

CHALLENGES TO THE NEW YEAR

School is back in session! This year will look a bit different than years we are used to. For teachers and parents, we want to acknowledge some of the challenges that you may find with your children both inside and outside of the classroom this year. We want you to feel prepared to help your kids manage the changes that they too are experiencing this year. Below are a few helpful tips and resources for you to read and share with your children throughout this year.

EFFECTS - STAYING IN ONE ROOM ALL DAY:



Mental

- Complete daily or weekly mental health check-ins in the classroom.
- Check-ins may be a simple conversation or utilizing visuals.
- Students need to feel heard and have their feelings validated.



Physical

- For younger children, seeing everyone in a mask might be scary at first. To overcome this fear, have each parent send a picture to place on their desk.
- A picture will help kids feel more comfortable around new friends and a new teacher. Pictures will help the classroom seem more comfortable and inviting
- If staying in the same classroom all day, here are some tools:
 - Have fidgets available for each kid
 - Have large stretch rubber bands over the feet of each chair for kids to move legs throughout the day
 - Incorporate movement in classroom when possible
- - Lead students in yoga and progressive muscle relaxation

FIDGETING IS an act of moving about restlessly in a way that is not socially recognized as essential to ongoing tasks or events.

FIDGETING IS making small movements with your body, usually your hands and feet. It's associated with not paying attention.

Guardians - an increase in stress and anxiety is normal. Changes lead to stress, both in positive and difficult ways. It is not your job to eliminate this stress, but help your child manage it in healthy, appropriate ways.

For Guardians

- Before school starts, remind your child that school is exciting.
 - School is full of opportunities to learn and make new friends
 - Focus on parts of school your child likes - lunch, art, reading, etc. And stay positive
- Complete daily or weekly mental health check-ins at home. Start a conversation or you use visuals to represent feelings. Validate your child's feelings.
- If your child is transitioning to a new school, they be experiencing a higher level of worry or anxiety not knowing what to expect - new school, teacher and friends.
 - It is helpful to talk to your children before school starts about the changes they can expect and positive stories that you remember from school.
 - Pick out a new outfit, write a positive note; and exciting things the next day with bring.
- Keep consistent communication with your child's teachers
 - This will help successes and challenges your child is experiencing
 - It also provides conversation topics



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Time Management Tips for Online Learning

Time Management:

Time management is a life skill and one that can be practiced and taught. Some simple tips for teaching time management to younger children are listed below.

Time Management

is the ability to use one's time efficiently or productively, especially to accomplish work or school goals.

Tips for elementary aged students:

- Predictable routine - Establishing a daily routine will help ease everyone's stress level by knowing what to expect. Keep it simple. Write it down and display it where everyone can see. Pictures are helpful for younger students so they can read the routine too. This does take practice and does not happen overnight. It will take approximately two weeks of following the routine before everyone becomes more relaxed in it.
- Break up the day - When developing the routine, consider building in frequent "brain breaks." Walk around the block, get a snack, eat lunch, call a friend, dance or sing a song. Children are unable to sit for long periods of time. Every 30 minutes allow for a stretch break. Create a list of acceptable break time activities that take less than 3-to 5-minutes for your child to choose from.
- Make a checklist - create a "to do list" of daily assignments that must be completed. Checking off the items completed is a reward for most and teaches organizational skills. For younger students, make a "bingo sticker chart," listing Monday through Friday across the top, with all subject names down the side. List assignments if needed in the chart, then allow them to put a sticker or smiley face in the box when completed. When the daily column is bingo, then the school day is complete. When they reach a "full bingo card," the school week is over. Celebrate!
- First/then and When/then statements - Not all subjects are our favorite. When there is a challenging subject or task, place that task before a desirable activity. This helps keep them motivated. If you make it right before the lunch break you can say, "*First* you work on math, *then* it will be lunch time" or "*when* math is finished, *then* we will eat lunch."
- Remove distractions - Creating a space where your child is not distracted can be challenging. Do your best. Screens are very distracting, especially one's that aren't displaying school work. Limit the extra noise around your student like the television, phones or other conversations.
- Be flexible - This is a challenging time for many of us, children included. When children become overwhelmed, just like grown-ups, empathy and understanding are needed. You can adjust your routine to fit you and your children's needs.
- Model asking for help - If the work becomes challenging or you are unsure what is expected, please ask for help. Teachers are available to support your child.



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Understanding Anxiety in Teens

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety happens because your brain thinks it has detected danger. The important word there is *thinks* - it doesn't matter whether there actually is any danger, just that your brain thinks there is. Brains are smart but sometimes they get things wrong. Brains are also protective. So when they think we are in danger our brains automatically start doing things that are meant to help keep us safe and alive, like making our hearts beat faster and making us breathe harder. The thing about anxiety is that it always happens *in anticipation* of something bad happening, meaning the bad thing hasn't happened yet (maybe it never will), our brains just *think* it will or could happen. These thoughts often come in the form of worrying about "what if . . . ?"

SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

- Worrying - a lot
- Thoughts that others are judging
- Dread - as though something awful is about to happen
- Panic - sudden intense fear that comes out of nowhere
- Inability to relax or feelings of restlessness
- Racing thoughts or thoughts that just won't turn off
- Sleep problems including difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep or waking up during the night and having difficulty getting back to sleep
- Nightmares or dreams that are disturbing or distressing
- Avoidance of feared situations
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Physical complaints such as headaches, stomachaches, racing heart, sweating, shaking, nausea, diarrhea, shortness of breath or dizziness
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Irritability - becoming easily upset over small things
- Triggering of fight (arguing, physical fighting), flight (wanting to run away, hide or disappear) or freeze (mind going blank, difficulty speaking) impulses



ANXIETY CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU!

In moderate amounts, anxiety can help us to be more alert, more aware of our surroundings, and more careful - so that we can stay safe and avoid real dangers. It can motivate us to prepare. For example, you might have felt some anxiety before a big test. If that anxiety motivated you to study more, it might have helped you to prepare better and get a better grade.



"Living with anxiety is like being followed by a voice. It knows all your insecurities and uses them against you. It gets to the point when it's the loudest voice in the room, no matter how much you try to get rid of it, it's just there."

- Hayley Greenwood
*What It Feels Like to Have Anxiety,
Because It Isn't Us 'Being Crazy'*

CRISIS HELP

Sometimes anxiety can be so intense and overwhelming that it feels like life is no longer worth living. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, help is available. It can get better. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), the Crisis Center 330-452-6000, or send a text to 741 741.

HOW TO HELP YOUR ANXIOUS TEEN:



The goal is not to eliminate anxiety but to **manage** it. You want your child to learn how to safely and confidently deal with life's challenges.



Breathe - Taking slow deep breaths helps to clear the mind and settle the body.



Patience - Be supportive, understanding, and patient. Chances are your teen is already being tough enough on him- or herself.



Mindfulness - By teaching your brain to come back to the present you increase your ability to take control over your brain and stop it from worrying when it doesn't need to.



Listen - You don't have to have all the answers or know how to fix every problem. Just listen and empathize with the struggle.



Distraction - Drawing, coloring pictures, watching a movie or TV show, listening to music, playing a game, doing a craft. Repetitive, rhythmic movement can have a calming effect.



Perspective - Help to clarify what can be controlled and what cannot, and what is a realistic threat and what is not.



Encourage - Don't let your teen avoid doing the things that need to be done. The longer they try to avoid it, the bigger the fear becomes and the harder it will be to overcome that fear.



Accept - It's never helpful to tell someone who is anxious "stop worrying." It never helps to say they're just overreacting. Let them know you understand how real the fear is to them.

COMMON TYPES OF ANXIETY IN TEENS:

Generalized Anxiety - worrying more all the time and/or more than appropriate about a lot of things

Panic Attack - experiencing intense fear when the fight/flight/freeze response kicks in even though there is no real danger or *apparent* cause.

Test Anxiety - extreme distress or fear experienced before or during tests; the anxiety is so intense that it causes the mind to go blank and interferes with ability to perform well on the test.

Performance Anxiety - fear of doing something in front of other people.

Social Anxiety - intense fear of being watched and judged by others in social situations.

Phobias - intense fear or dread experienced in response to a specific object or situation.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) - Obsessions are unwanted, intrusive thoughts, images, or urges that trigger intensely distressing feelings. Compulsions are behaviors or rituals done to get rid of the obsessions and/or decrease the distress.



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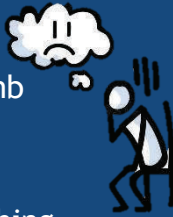
Understanding Depression in Teens

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Everyone feels sad sometimes. Sadness is a part of life. It is the appropriate response to the sad things that happen in life. "Normal" sadness lasts for a short time, and then goes away without leaving long-lasting effects. Depression is a change in mood that persists over time. It doesn't go away on its own. It interferes with a person's ability to enjoy life, even when good things are happening. It drains all your energy and stops you from taking part in activities you used to do easily. It makes everything seem pointless. Depression causes lasting changes in thinking, relationships, and way of life.

WHAT DEPRESSION IS LIKE:

- Irritable, agitated, easily annoyed or numb
- Sad, crying easily and difficult to soothe
- Overly self-critical
- Constantly bored and unable to find anything enjoyable to do.
- Low energy and difficulty getting motivated
- Overly sensitive to criticism, rejection or failure
- Sulking, withdrawing from social situations, not wanting to spend time with friends
- Whining and complaining - focusing on what's wrong and inability to see what's right in situations
- Sleep problems including difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, waking up during the night and having difficulty getting back to sleep, or sleeping all the time
- Nightmares or dreams that are disturbing or distressing
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Physical complaints such as headaches or stomachaches
- Changes in eating habits - eating too much or not at all
- Being very difficult to please
- Getting into fights or trouble at school
- Not wanting to go to school and/or not wanting to participate in other activities



"People think depression is sadness. People think depression is crying. People think depression is dressing in black. But people are wrong. Depression is the constant feeling of being numb. Being numb to emotions, being numb to life. You wake up in the morning just to go to bed again."

- Larry Walthour
Suffering in Silence

CRISIS HELP

Never ignore comments about suicide. It's a myth that talking about suicide could plant the idea in someone's mind. If they're talking about it, or hinting about it, chances are they're already thinking about it. You can make a difference by listening and by helping to connect that person with professional care. For help on how to respond, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), the Crisis Center 330-452-6000 or send a text to 741 741.

HOW TO HELP A TEEN WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH DEPRESSION:



Talk about what they're experiencing. Let them know it is safe to express their thoughts and feelings, even the ones that are not so comfortable for you to hear.



Express - It can be hard to put feelings into words. There are lots of ways to express yourself - art, music, dance, photography, etc.



Listen - You don't have to have all the answers or know how to fix every problem. Just listen without judging and empathize with the struggle.



Gratitude - Every day identify 3 things to be grateful for, 3 things that were achieved or 3 good things that happened. This helps to remind the teen that not everything in life is bad.



Counter negative views of self by saying how proud you are of them. Notice the positive things they do and let them know they are doing a good job. Describe what you like about them.



Help to look for and recognize examples of what is good in the world and in humanity.



Plan - Plan something enjoyable for every day. Plan something to look forward to in the near future and in the longer term. Display these plans on a calendar to create a visual reminder.



Routine - Make sure they get out of bed and get dressed every day. Set regular bed and wake times. Eat regular meals. Plan tasks to do.



Accept - It's never helpful to make light of a teen's depression by saying they're being dramatic or feeling sorry for themselves. Depression doesn't feel good. If they could cheer up, they would.



3 TYPES OF THOUGHTS THAT SUSTAIN DEPRESSION

- **Negative view of self** - I'm not good enough, I am a bad person, I never get anything right, nobody likes me.
- **Negative view of the world and others** - The world is a cold, cruel place and people are awful and uncaring.
- **Negative expectations for the future** - My life is miserable and it's not going to get any better.

Depression is a disorder, not a choice. You don't get over it just by deciding to be positive or cheer up.

IS IT DEPRESSION OR JUST BEING A TEEN?

If you aren't sure whether the behavior you're seeing is depression or just normal teenage moodiness, look into how long it has been going on, and how different the teen is acting compared to their usual self. Hormones and stress can explain the occasional bout of teenage angst - but not continuous and unrelenting unhappiness, lethargy or irritability.



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Understanding Depression for Teens

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"People think depression is sadness. People think depression is crying. People think depression is dressing in black. But people are wrong. Depression is the constant feeling of being numb. Being numb to emotions, being numb to life. You wake up in the morning just to go to bed again."

- Larry Walthour
Suffering in Silence

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- Low energy and no motivation to do anything
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CRISIS HELP

Sometimes depression can be so strong and overwhelming that it feels like it will never get better and life is no longer worth living. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, help is available. It can get better. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255), the Crisis Center 330-452-6000 or send a text to 741 741.

WHAT HELPS WITH DEPRESSION:



You are not alone. Lots of people, including people your age, struggle with depression.



Talk - Tell someone you trust about your depression and how it is affecting you.



Express - It can be hard to put feelings into words. There are lots of ways to express yourself - art, music, dance, photography, etc.



Gratitude - Start a gratitude journal. Every day identify 3 things to be grateful for, 3 things that were achieved or 3 good things that happened. On days when it is hard to think of anything good look back through past entries.



Self-compassion - We are often our own worst bullies. Remember you don't have to be perfect. What would you say to a friend who is thinking and feeling the way you do?



Patience - Be supportive, understanding, encouraging and patient with yourself.



Plan - Plan something enjoyable for every day. Plan something to look forward to in the near future and in the longer term. Put reminders in your phone or post them where you'll see them.



Routine - Get out of bed and get dressed every day. Set regular bed and wake times. Eat regular meals. Plan tasks to do to fill your day.



Get active - Exercise, dance, do a craft, go for a walk, actively engage with life.



Live Your Life - Do not **avoid** doing the things you need to do. The longer you avoid them, the harder it will be to get started.

3 TYPES OF THOUGHTS THAT SUSTAIN DEPRESSION



- **Negative view of self** - I'm not good enough, I am a bad person, I never get anything right, nobody likes me.
- **Negative view of the world and others** - The world is a cold, cruel place and people are awful and uncaring.
- **Negative expectations for the future** - My life is miserable and it's not going to get any better.

"There is hope even when your brain says there isn't." - John Green

ABOUT PARENTS . . .

It may seem like there is no way your parents will understand or be able to help, especially if they're always nagging you about your behavior. The truth is, parents hate to see their kids hurting. They may feel frustrated because they don't understand what is going on with you or know how to help. Many parents don't know enough about depression to recognize it in their own kids, so it may be up to you to help educate them. Letting your parents know that you are feeling depressed will probably motivate them to get you the help you need.



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Tips to Spot Substance Use

Kids are cautious in using drugs at school

Kids can be pretty stealthy when it comes to bringing drugs to school, using drugs in school or being under the influence at school. Here are some signs and symptoms of possible adolescent use.

Early signs predicting substance use:



Behaviors

- The earliest signs predicting substance use are a change in behaviors and mannerisms.
- First sign is a change in friends. The change may be gradual or sudden.
- Teens may withdraw from social bonding opportunities and activities.
- They prefer to be left alone and may stop doing what they are passionate about.
- Watch for teens who may choose to be alienated, especially if social; listen to how they talk about relationships with family and friends and if they refer to deteriorating relationships.

Additional signs

- Decline of academic performance
- Chronically late to school, skip class, fall asleep in class or appear distracted
- Marijuana tends to affect GPA more than alcohol. Marijuana may be consumed during the week where alcohol is consumed on weekends
- Teens make up unsatisfactory excuses or are angry when confronted
- Teens using substances often interpret correction as disrespectful and violation of rights
- Opposing authority is a purpose to keep using
- Some teens are savvy enough to invent situations to effectively mask their problems
- Mood swings are common with adolescent use. Some may become moody either becoming angry and argumentative or burst into tears.

Obvious signs:

- Bloodshot eyes, pinpricks on the arms or possessing drug paraphernalia
- Bloodshot eyes are sign of marijuana use
- Pin-point pupils could indicate heroin use
- Dilated pupils may indicate use of cocaine, hallucinogens or amphetamines
- Students that suddenly possess money might be selling items to earn money for drugs or are selling drugs.
- Watch for things missing or reports of stolen items

Hiding substances at school

- Kids have been found with homemade bongs from soda cans and apples
- Be on the lookout for pop cans with small pinpricks that might be used as a bong
- Watch for display of typical items such as foil wrappers, square folded envelopes, balloons, ziplock bags or mirrors that seem innocent enough for multiple purposes
- Drugs can be hidden in Crayola markers, tampon cases, travel-sized lotion bottles, hairbrushes, electronic battery compartments, under shoe pads in tennis shoes and even tennis balls.
- Virtual students have a bit more freedom to move off camera and hit a vape. The more interactive the teacher is with student, the less the student can use.

Helpful Resources for educators that want to address substance use in classroom:

- <https://www.operationprevention.com/classroom>
- <https://teens.drugabuse.gov/teachers>

Advice: If you come into contact with a teen that is using a substance talk with them openly. Avoid accusation, judgment and ridicule. Many can be convinced to stop when they feel the support of a caring adult.



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Classroom Challenges Inside and out

CHALLENGES TO THE NEW YEAR

School is back in session! This year will look a bit different than years we are used to. For teachers and parents, we want to acknowledge some of the challenges that you may find with your teenager both inside and outside of the classroom this year. We want you to feel prepared to help your teens manage the changes that they too are experiencing this year. Below are a few helpful tips and resources for you to read and share with your children throughout this year.

EFFECTS - STAYING IN ONE ROOM ALL DAY:



Mental

- Complete daily or weekly mental health check-ins in the classroom.
- With a teen, this can be a simple conversation, check-in questions. This helps the teen feel validated and heard.



Physical

- Movement options for kids staying in one classroom all day
 - Have a fidget available for each child
 - A large stretch rubber band over the feet of each chair for students to move their legs during the day
 - Walk around the room, stretch breaks, leading yoga or progressive muscle relaxation
 - This prevents everyone from being overwhelmed
- Create an open environment for students to share what is working and what is not
 - This will motivate students to be active in recognizing their needs as well as provide ideas for increased motivation, participation and discussion
- Create a suggestion box can promote similar feedback
- Remind students that you have final say in classroom changes

CHALLENGES invoke feelings. Realize it is okay to feel pain, let yourself be sad, angry or other emotion.

FIDGETING IS making small movements with your body, usually your hands and feet. It's associated with not paying attention.

Guardians - an increase in stress and anxiety is normal. Changes leads to stress, both in positive and difficult ways. It is not your job to eliminate this stress, but help your child manage it in healthy, appropriate ways.

For Guardians

- Do your best to stay positive. Teens are influenced by the things you as guardians say and do. If are positive, your teen will likely approach this year positively
- Complete a daily or weekly check-in at home. A simple conversation on the way to school or dinner can help a teen feel validated and heard.
- Teens transitioning from one school to a new school may experience higher levels of worry or anxiety as they are unaware of what to expect at the new buildings with new expectations.
- Talk to your teen before the school year starts regarding changes they can expect and share positive stories you remember from school.
- Ask you teen what they need to feel comfortable and confident at school this year.
- Keep consistent communication with your teens teachers. This will keep you update on successes and challenges your teen is experiencing. It also provides a topic of conversation check-in after school.
- Just be present and positive. Let your teen know they can reach out to you with any success or challenge they experience this year.



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Time Management Tips for Online Learning

Time Management:

Time management is a life skill that can be taught and practiced. These skills are needed as individuals enter the workforce or attend college. These skills are also important when attending school online.

Time Management

is the ability to use one's time efficiently or productively, especially to accomplish work or school goals.

Tips for Intermediate, junior and high school age students:

- **Organize your space** - keeping your space clean and clutter free will help reduce anxiety and lessen distractions. Have everything you might need for school work in one space; pencils, paper, computer, charger, etc.
- **Schedule** - keep a schedule or a calendar listing after school activities, exams or when reports or projects are due.
- **To-do lists** - daily and/or weekly lists are helpful to keep you on track. Prioritize items that need your attention sooner rather than later.
- **Avoid procrastination** - break larger tasks into smaller ones on your daily lists to prevent becoming overwhelmed and allow for your best work.
- **Focus on one task at a time** - multitasking can make your tasks take longer, this includes multitasking with your phone. Put the phone away or on "do not disturb" while working on tasks that require your attention.
- **Avoid distraction** - Again, the phone is one. Music is a personal choice; some find it helpful while others find it more distracting. Instrumental music or a fan can help drown out other noise distractions in your space but not interfere with your focus.
- **Take breaks** - when you find yourself struggling to focus, take a break. You can also reward yourself for completing a task with a break. These are small five minute breaks; walk around the block, stretch, get a snack, drink some water and if you have to - check your phone. *Helpful hint* - set a timer on your phone for five minutes, before you magically get sucked into an hour of TikTok's.
- **Self care** - remember to get an adequate amount of sleep, exercise and nutrition. These things impact your brain power and ability to focus.
- **Ask for help** - remember that if you are struggling with your school work, your teachers are available and want to help you.



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Physically Distanced, Socially connected

HUMAN BEINGS ARE SOCIAL CREATURES

We need to interact with others and build relationships. When our need for social connection is not met, it takes a toll on us mentally and physically. Lately a lot of people have been feeling isolated and disconnected. For children, playing with friends isn't just about having fun. It is also a way to learn social skills, to cultivate a sense of morality and to develop a sense of who you are as an individual. For adolescents, spending time with friends and feeling supported by friends are some of the strongest protective factors against anxiety and depression. Now we have to find new ways to connect so that we can maintain relationships, bounce ideas off each other, and gain exposure to different perspectives.

EFFECTS OF LONELINESS:



Mental

- Higher levels of perceived stress in comparison to non-lonely people exposed to the same stressors.
- Difficulty regulating emotions, which can lead to depression and/or anxiety.
- Diminished concentration and difficulty processing information, which can lead to struggles with decision making and impaired memory.



Physical

- Increased levels of stress hormones which lead to increased heart and blood pressure (which in turn can lead to increased risk of heart disease, vascular problems and inflammation), digestive problems (including heartburn and gastric reflux), weight gain, and headaches
- Diminished quality and efficiency of sleep so that you may be spending more time in bed but feeling less rested and restored.
- Compromised immune functioning, making it more likely that you'll get sick and making it harder for your body to recover from illness and injury.

LONELINESS IS felt when the social relationships you have don't measure up to what you want.

LONELINESS IS NOT about being alone. You can be surrounded by people and still feel lonely.

It's not the number but the QUALITY of social connections you have that matters.



WHAT LONELINESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Sadness
- Unsure of self
- Excessive talking
- Seeking attention through misbehavior, silliness, interrupting or constantly needing validation
- Restlessness
- Difficulty making decisions
- Clinginess
- Low self-esteem (e.g. assuming no one wants to interact with you)
- Overly emotional
- Reclusiveness
- Saying things like "I'm lonely," "I don't have any friends" or "Nobody likes me."

STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING SATISFYING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS FROM A SAFE PHYSICAL DISTANCE:



Watch a movie or TV show together and discuss.



Start a virtual book club. Choose a book to read and discuss together as a group.



Learn something new together. Watch an instructional video, then set up video chats to discuss planning, progress, struggles and outcomes.



Build teamwork skills by working with a partner or group to do a project. Use a cloud-based platform to share documents or slides.



Make a craft, draw a picture, or write a letter and drop it off in a friend's mailbox.



Create a scavenger hunt. Make a list of items to be found. Challenge friends to take pictures of themselves with the items as they find them and send the pictures back to you.



Create a challenge. Challenge your friends to do something like creating a dance to a specific song or writing a song or poem about a topic. Share the results.



Do something kind. Acts of kindness boost levels of oxytocin and dopamine in the body, which are associated with increasing positive feelings.



Increase comfort with being alone. You are your own constant companion. It isn't always necessary to have someone else with you to have fun.



Change unhelpful thoughts. Watch out for these thought ruts: should (e.g. "I should be out playing with friends"), personalization (e.g. "No one wants to talk to me"), or self-defeating (e.g. "I'm not very interesting").

CO-REGULATION

Co-regulation refers to warm, and responsive interactions between adults and young people that provide the young people with the support, coaching and modeling that they need to be able to learn how to understand and appropriately express their thoughts, feelings and behaviors.* Children are very observant. They notice and imitate what they see adults around them doing. They also pick up on more subtle indicators of the adults' stress levels and emotional states. One of the best things parents can do for their children is to take good care of themselves.



EVERYONE FEELS LONELY AT TIMES

Loneliness is a normal feeling that almost everyone will experience at some point in their life. It is the natural response to many situations. People have a basic need to feel connected to and understood by others. They need someone with whom they can share things and interests. Everyone needs someone whose attention matters to them, someone who would notice if they weren't around and would miss them.

*Murray, D. W., Rosanbalm, K., Christopoulos, C., & Hamoudi, A. (2015). Self-regulation and toxic stress: Foundations for understanding self-regulation from an applied developmental perspective (OPRE Report 2015-21). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



May is National Health Mental Health Awareness Month

**Stark County Schools Mental Health Awareness
Week is the first week of May**



**Look for more information online and on social media:
www.childandadolescent.org**



**Today is not your tomorrow....
C&A provides Health, Hope and Happiness**



**C&A has additional resources available for teachers
Contact Melissa Coultas
mcoultas@childandadolescent.org
330-454-7917, ext. 117**