

Supporting Your Anxious Teen

Remember: teen anxiety often looks like irritability, shutting down, or avoiding, not obvious worry. Your teen doesn't need you to fix it. They need to feel heard, and to know you believe they can handle hard things.

What it can look like in teens

- ☐ Irritability, snapping, or anger
- ☐ Avoiding school, practice, or friends
- ☐ Endless scrolling or staying in their room
- ☐ Stomachaches or headaches before school
- ☐ Trouble sleeping or sleeping all day
- ☐ Perfectionism or meltdowns over grades

What helps

- 1 **Listen more than you talk.** Car rides and late-night talks often work better than face-to-face.
- 2 **Validate, then encourage.** "This feels really hard, and I know you can do hard things."
- 3 **Don't remove every challenge.** Avoidance shrinks their world. Help them take small steps instead.
- 4 **Protect the basics.** Sleep, food, movement, and phones out of the bedroom at night.
- 5 **Manage your own worry.** Teens borrow our calm, or our panic.

Try saying

- "Do you want advice, or do you just need me to listen?"
- "What's the hardest part right now?"

Instead of

- "You have nothing to be stressed about."
- Lecturing, or fixing it for them

Get help right away if your teen

- Talks about not wanting to live, or about hurting themselves
- Gives away belongings or suddenly withdraws from everyone

Call or text **988**, or call 911 in an emergency. Take every comment seriously.

When to reach out: if anxiety is keeping your teen from school, friends, or sleep for more than a couple of weeks, a counselor can help, and teen anxiety responds very well to treatment.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God."

ISAIAH 41:10