



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



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Coping Skills for an Anxious Teen

At some point all of us will experience anxiety. Symptoms of anxiety can look different for each person and it's sometimes hard to recognize where they come from and how long they'll stick around. Anxiety in teens specifically can look very different from adults; their capacity for tolerating and managing stress is much smaller based on their age, experience and biology. Parents often suggest coping skills that they might use but teens might not find them helpful or are unable to put them into practice in their own situations. Below are some tried and true coping skills teens can try when they're feeling anxious.

Lead a Healthy Life from the Start

Implementing healthy practices like exercising or moving intentionally, eating a balanced diet most of the time, getting an ample amount of sleep and steering clear of mood-altering substances like alcohol or nicotine are a good start to reduce the amount of anxiety before it happens. Likewise if you find your teen feeling increasingly anxious, running through this list and making sure these areas are covered can be the best place to start. The CDC recommends 8-10 hours of sleep per 24 hour period for teens aged 13-18 (Paruthi S, Brooks LJ, D'Ambrosio C, et al., 2016) A healthy diet is suggested to include 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of veggies, 5.5 ounces of protein and 35% or less of the total calories eaten can be fats (Nutrition for teens, n.d.)

Coping Skills Involving the Senses

Sometimes anxiety increases to the level of a possible panic attack, including hyperventilating, inability to focus, feeling like passing out and impending doom. When this level of anxiety occurs it's ideal to attempt a coping skills that provides a distraction mentally and connects the brain to the body. *5-4-3-2-1 Grounding* is an example of this by bringing the mind to recognize the physical surroundings and senses and incorporating this with bodily sensations. In this exercise, ask your teen to name out loud 5 things they can see, 4 things they can feel, 3 things that can hear, 2 things they can smell and 1 thing they can taste. This allows them to switch their focus from whatever is prompting the anxiety symptoms to being present and interrupt unhealthy thought patterns (Mayo Clinic Health System, 2020).

4-7-8 Breathing is another option that involves a specific way of breathing that taps into the nervous system. This breathing technique triggers a slowing of the nervous system which in turn helps reduce physical symptoms of anxiety like rapid heart rate, sweating and hyperventilating (Ankrom, 2022). In this coping skill, guide your teen to place the tip of their tongue behind their top front teeth, similar to making an "L" sound. Have them exhale completely, then close the mouth and breathe into the nose for 4 counts. Hold the breath for 7 counts and exhale in the same manner as before for 8 counts. Repeat this as many times as necessary to start feeling the nervous system de-escalate.

Legs up the Wall is another option for teens who enjoy yoga or intentional movement with the body. This yoga pose, also called Viparita Karani, involves laying on the back with both legs straightened and feet pointing upward towards the sky. This pose reduces anxiety and stress, lowers your heart rate, and reduces back tension, swelling, or foot pain (Duncan, 2019). Encourage your teen to focus on their breath and feel their chest rising and falling. Next time you find your teen feeling anxious, guide them through these coping skills and allow them to regain control over their mind and body.

Ankrom, S., 2022. *Deep Breathing Exercises to Reduce Anxiety*. [online] Verywell Mind. Available at: <<https://www.verywellmind.com/abdominal-breathing-2584115>> [Accessed 22 March 2022].

Duncan, A., 2019. *Yoga for Anxiety: Benefits of Legs Up the Wall • Fashion & Wellness Blog*. [online] Audrey Duncan Lifestyle Blog. Available at: <<http://theaudreyreel.com/yoga-for-anxiety-benefits-of-legs-up-the-wall/>> [Accessed 22 March 2022].

Johnmuirhealth.com. n.d. *Nutrition for Teens*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.johnmuirhealth.com/health-education/health-wellness/childrens-health/nutrition-teens.html#:~:text=The%20best%20way%20your%20teen,the%20right%20balance%20of%20nutrients.>> [Accessed 22 March 2022].

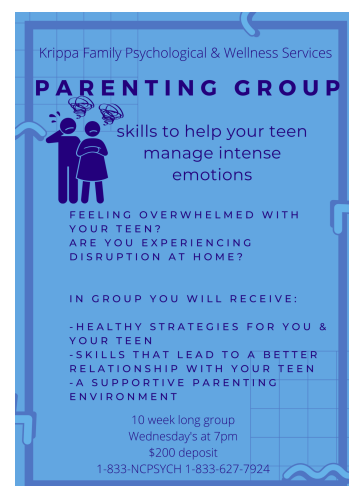
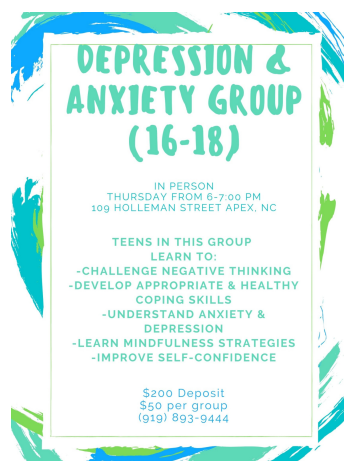
Paruthi S, Brooks LJ, D'Ambrosio C, et al. Consensus statement of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine on the recommended amount of sleep for healthy children: methodology and discussion. J Clin Sleep Med 2016;12:1549–61.

Speaking of Health. 2020. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1: Countdown to make anxiety blast off. [online] Available at:

<<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/5-4-3-2-1-countdown-to-make-anxiety-blast-off>> [Accessed 22 March 2022].

GROUP THERAPY:

- We are currently offering numerous Groups for children, teens, and adults, including:
- Anxiety & Depression Group for tweens (11–13)
- Teen Anxiety & Depression Group (14–15)
- Teen Anxiety & Depression Group (16–18)
- Teen Social Club
- Parenting Teens Support Group
- College Life 101
- Intensive Outpatient Group for Teens (11–18)



To learn more about any of our Groups and to enroll please call us at 919-893-8444 or email us at info@ncpsychologist.com. Visit us at www.ncpsychologist.com and our Facebook and Instagram pages: Krippa Family Psychological & Wellness Services.

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