



## Weekly Newsletter

# Helping your child manage anxiety returning to school

–Stephanie Brekstad, LCMHCA



During what has already been a very stressful year full of changes, disappointments, and many unknowns, the beginning of this school year may present its own challenges. Many routines will change as schools begin to take precautions. The stress in preparation of these unknown circumstances can increase parent and children anxieties.

For children who depend on structure and routine, the ability to cope with the uncertainty is necessary and parent's ability to support their child's mental health is crucial during this time.

Some signs that your child may be feeling anxious about school are:

- Increased defiance or irritability
- Sleep disturbances
- Physical symptoms such as nausea, headache
- Refusal to go to school particularly when going was not a major issue before
- Sadness or crying

It's very important to have open and honest conversations about their feelings. Acknowledge the situation in an age-appropriate way and offer support. How to help your child transition back to school depends on the level and type of anxiety your child may be experiencing.

For children under 12, it is likely they may experience some separation anxiety. They may need more reassurance about being away from you after spending so much time together due to the pandemic. Older children, may be unsure about how the changes may affect their social lives, extracurricular activities and may be frustrated or disappointed about some of these changes.

Some things to help your child cope are:

- Check in and validate emotions, let them know their concerns are understandable
- Help your child focus on what they can control when it comes to the changes and disappointments that come up
- Ensure your child is getting enough sleep, being physically active and eating regularly
- Encourage and support your child to do more of the things they enjoy
- Help your child mentally prepare for what their classroom or school year may look like based on what you do know
- If your child is participating virtually, do what you can to set them up for success academically, physically, and emotionally
- Ease your child back into a structured daily routine and sleep schedule
- Discuss safety and health precautions at school and with others
- Set up ways your child can socialize safely with their friends, especially if they are learning remotely
- Teach your child breathing exercises

Despite the potential worries that may come up because of this unprecedented time, children are resilient and it is important to pay attention to signs. If your child is prone to anxiety and has significant difficulties, seek professional help and support.

For parents, children are aware of when their parents are stressed. Talk about your feelings and explain how you cope. Modeling these behaviors is one of the best ways to support your child during this time.

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## **Now Enrolling Groups!**



# DEPRESSION & ANXIETY GROUP (9-11)

VIRTUALLY TUESDAY 5-6PM

## FOR THOSE EXPERIENCING:

SADNESS, OR A LOW MOOD THAT DOES NOT GO AWAY  
NOT BEING INTERESTED IN THINGS THEY USED TO ENJOY  
FEEL EMPTY OR UNABLE TO FEEL EMOTIONS (NUMB)  
PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS, SUCH AS HEADACHES AND STOMACH  
ACHES.

BEING VERY AFRAID OF SCHOOL AND OTHER PLACES  
WHERE THERE ARE PEOPLE  
BEING VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE AND ABOUT BAD  
THINGS HAPPENING

## THIS GROUP CAN HELP BY:

OFFERING SUPPORT AND A SAFE SPACE  
AMONG OTHERS GOING THROUGH SIMILAR  
EXPERIENCES

LEARNING VALUABLE SKILLS TO COPE  
BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND POSITIVITY  
BUILDING UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THEY  
ARE EXPERIENCING

\$200 DEPOSIT

\$50 PER GROUP

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# Personal Empowerment & Growth Group

Common difficulties teens who need empowerment experience:

- Negative self talk
- Low motivation
- Decline in previous activities
- Lack of hope in relation to the future
- Difficulty making and maintaining new friends
- Frequent comparison to peers
- Difficulty taking compliments

In group your teen will learn:

Self-acceptance and gratitude  
Improve self esteem and self confidence  
Identify internal strengths  
Distinguish between internal and outer beauty  
Understand cultural influences on beauty expectations  
Develop healthy social media consumption habits  
Increased ease in answering the question, "who am I?"



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