

# MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR NEWSLETTER

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THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: ANXIETY

Occasional anxiety is an expected part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or before making an important decision. But anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. The symptoms can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, schoolwork, and relationships. There are several types of anxiety disorders, including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and various phobia-related disorders.

## Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Feeling restless, wound-up, or on edge
- Being easily fatigued
- Having difficulty concentrating; mind going blank
- Being irritable
- Having muscle tension
- Difficulty controlling feelings of worry
- Having sleep problems, such as difficulty falling or staying asleep, restlessness, or unsatisfying sleep

## Panic Attacks

- Heart palpitations, a pounding heartbeat, or an accelerated heart rate
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Sensations of shortness of breath, smothering or choking
- Feelings of impending doom
- Feelings of being out of control

## Phobias

- May have an irrational or excessive worry about encountering the feared object or situation
- Take active steps to avoid the feared object or situation
- Experience immediate intense anxiety upon encountering the feared object or situation
- Endure unavoidable objects and situations with intense anxiety

## COVID : Pandemics can be stressful

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can sometimes cause the following:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones, your financial situation or job, or loss of support services you rely on
- \*Changes in sleep or eating patterns.\*Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- \*Worsening of chronic health problems.\*\*worsening of mental health conditions.\*Increased use of [tobacco](#) and/or [alcohol and other substances](#)



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Nearly  
**1 in 3**  
of ALL  
adolescents ages  
**13 to 18**  
will experience an  
**ANXIETY  
DISORDER.**

**ANXIETY in the DIGITAL CLASSROOM****DIFFICULTY TAKING IN INFORMATION**

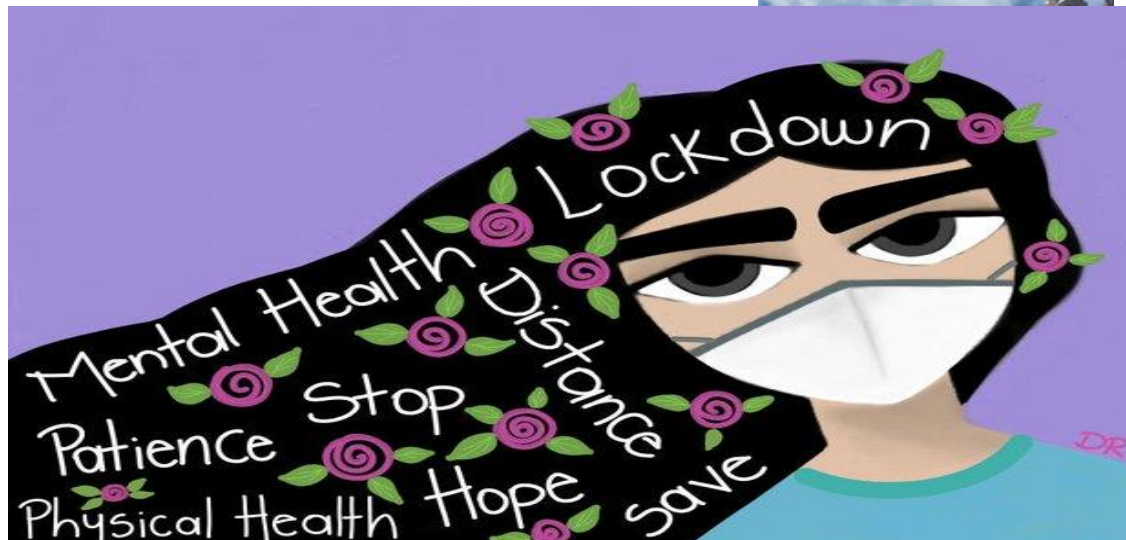
Students with excessive anxiety may have difficulty paying attention to what needs to be learned. The student's worries take up a lot of space in his or her mind, and this interferes with his or her ability to concentrate on other things, follow multi-step instructions, and switch attention from task to task in a flexible and efficient way. This can be of particular concern when remote learning. Keeping up with assignments, live sessions and learning platforms in addition to regular learning, can create high levels of negative anxiety.

**INFORMATION IS NOT PROCESSED PROPERLY** Even if anxious students can pay attention in class, it is often on a surface level because their cognitive abilities have been over-taxed by anxiety. They do not use previously learned information as they take in new facts; therefore, earlier learning isn't expanded upon or developed in an enriching way. In addition, because attention and concentration are intermittent, students often have incomplete knowledge in a given area.

**INFORMATION IS NOT STORED OR CONSOLIDATED IN LONG TERM MEMORY** If new information isn't being expanded upon, it will not be stored properly. As a result, students may have trouble accessing information from long-term memory. If a student is unable to recall previously learned information, then he or she may not do well on exams, even if he or she studied and knew the information the night before. Students may develop "test anxiety" as a result, which further impairs their ability to access knowledge. Difficulty with benchmarks or other assessments will likely be high.

**BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS** Anxiety and OCD can have various behavioral and social impacts. Anxiety may look like school refusal, disrupted sleep, , avoidance of social situations or live streaming lessons, slow work pace, missing assignments and overall executive-functioning deficits.

[anxietyintheclassroom.org](http://anxietyintheclassroom.org)



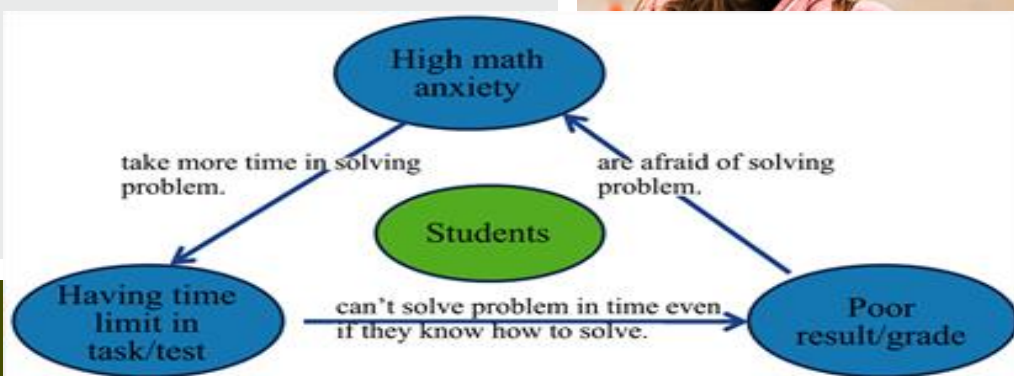


## USE YOUR RESOURCES

CONSULT : **Colleagues**, **School Counselor**, **School Administration**,

**SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER**, **School Nurse**,

Mental Health Coordinator



EXAMPLE OF ANXIETY CYCLE

## SOURCES and RESOURCES

### TEACHERS

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/praise-anxiety-effective-student-feedback/>

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/resilience-through-routines/>

<https://resilienteducator.com/lifestyle/quick-meditation-apps/>

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/trauma-informed-strategies/>

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/mindfulness-students-teachers-decisions/>

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/take-a-course/find-a-course/>

<https://blog.edmentum.com/how-teachers-can-help-students-cope-general-anxiety-classroom>

### SUPPORT STAFF

School Social Work Network: <https://schoolsocialwork.net/ssw-research-brief-combating-student-anxiety-in-schools/>

<https://anxietyocd.com/effective-evidence-based-interventions-for-anxiety-in-high-school-students/>

<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/>

