

Think S...T...E...P



SUPPORT THEIR INDEPENDENCE

Attachment: connect/ touch/ help organise feelings when needed. We all need attachment

Boundaries: Predictable and fair allowing them to explore the world but feel safe and secure

Support: Utilise the key adults around your teenager who are invested in them, don't have to support alone, get a 'fresh perspective'

TIME

Time to sleep: Biological changes in circadian rhythms mean teenagers start to go to sleep later (about 11pm) and wake later- this is a natural change in their body which they have no control over. Daily life disrupts this i.e. school start time. Teenagers can become sleep deprived and need to catch up, they are not just lazy.

Time to listen: Really Listen! Stop what you are doing to hear about the latest win on their favourite computer game and that the romance is back on with their best friend and that ex- it may not be important to you but it will be hugely important to your teenager, feeling listened to and seen will help anxiety.

Time to connect: Make small moments matter in your teenagers day: the ride to school/ the family meal time/ listen to their favourite song with them/ play their favourite video game and connect and try and have fun

Time to review the basics: Check if it is all balanced; Sleep/ healthy diet/ play and leisure/ positive language and feeling in the house/ exercise/do they feel safe and secure/feel equal with no prejudice or discrimination... are we stereotyping our teenager as a 'typical teenager'

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EDUCATE

How does anxiety feel?

The need to calm the physical symptoms of anxiety first through deep breathing (the vagus nerve tells the body it is safe and the automatic response starts to calm), meditation, mindfulness and grounding techniques.

Coming out of the intense physical reaction of anxiety can take at least 45 minutes often more! Anxiety does not make you weak! It means you are pushing your boundaries/ coming out of your comfort zone. Brave and Courageous

Boss the worry back!! Anxiety is just a response an automatic one in the brain and body you can learn to manage it. Anxiety is not part of your personality it does not define yo. Your brain just loves you and wants to protect you and it sometimes get things wrong

Mindfulness and meditation is exercise for the brain the same way we exercise out body

PROBLEM SOLVE

Use the problem solving steps provided

Go at your teenagers pace through the steps- no need to rush

Your idea of what the solution is not the answer- it's about your teenager finding it

Your role is support your teenager through this process to support problem solving as this part of the brain is not fully developed until the age of 25

Teenager Brain

Rational/ decision making/ thinking brain not fully developed yet. A time of high emotional change, our teenagers currently use their emotional brain in most situations (not rational side of brain). Hormone that calms to brain during anxiety in children and adults, because of puberty it does the opposite in teenagers- so may be one reason for increased anxiety during this time.

What is there to worry about?

High expectations/ the future/ body image/ peers pressure/ fitting in socially/ family they worry about their families worries/ brain development/ academic/ hormones/ puberty/ AND MORE!!

What is you teenagers survival behaviour / response?

Fight? Flight? Freeze? Explaining this to our teenagers is the frst step towards understanding anxiety

Why do some teenagers just worry? and others develop anxiety?

Personality (i.e. perfectionist) / temperament / social learnt and influenced/ environment/ genetics

