



# GUIDANCE UPDATE

Morgan Township  
Valparaiso, IN

September 2016

## Worry vs Anxiety

### Suicide Prevention Week 2016

Good Morning!

This week is an opportunity to talk about mental health. This issue is about mental health and how to take care of ourselves and others. Mental health can be something we avoid talking about because it is viewed as taboo, embarrassing, weak, or crazy. We ask a lot of our minds. We need to treat ourselves well! Just as we should take care of our bodies we **MUST** take care of our minds.

Mrs. Dobson

# TALK!

Don't be afraid to ask for what you need.

Sometimes what you need is a conversation with a friend or loved one. Part of being human is knowing that you are not alone in feeling stressed out, sad, happy, or angry.

Sometimes what you need is the help of a counselor or therapist and that is ok!

My opinion is that talking about mental health becomes scary because the listener feels that he or she is not equipped to help.

If a friend or loved one is sharing something with you that you feel needs more help than you know how to give **DO NOT BE AFRAID TO TELL THE PERSON THAT YOU CARE AND YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST THEM IN FINDING THE HELP THEY NEED.** It's ok to say, "I care about you and I am not sure how to help but I want make sure you get what you need." It's important that you share that you care and keep the lines of communication open.

Everyone has worry in life. We worry about our families, our jobs, school, and just LIFE in general. The difference between worry and anxiety is that when worry becomes a focus and affects our daily life in a negative way it is classified as anxiety.

What causes Anxiety?

- **Medical condition:** You might have an underlying medical condition that is causing your symptoms. Examples of conditions that can cause symptoms that mirror anxiety are diabetes and asthma.
- **Body Chemistry:** Your body is designed to release a hormone called adrenaline in response to stressful situations. The build-up of this hormone without appropriate coping skills to deal with the feelings can cause excessive worry.
- **Personality Type:** Some of us are just wired to worry more than others. It can be an inherited trait and/or a learned habit. Learning how to deal with worry with appropriate coping skills can help!
- **Extreme Thinking:** This type of thinking makes us generalize that any bad thing that happens in life means that everything in life is bad. Developmentally, many teenagers are wired this way but this can also be a personality trait. An example is when a student fails a test and then generalizes that he or she must be a failure in every area because of this one setback. There are coping skills to help ease this thinking!

### ***When to see a doctor***

See your doctor if:

- You feel like you're worrying too much and it's interfering with your work, relationships or other parts of your life
- Your fear, worry or anxiety is upsetting to you and difficult to control
- You feel depressed, have trouble with alcohol or drug use, or have other mental health concerns along with anxiety
- You think your anxiety could be linked to a physical health problem
- You have suicidal thoughts or behaviors — if this is the case, seek emergency treatment **immediately**

## Sadness Vs Depression

- Everyone feels sad at times. Sadness is a normal feeling to have in the face of loss or disappointment. Depression is a strong mood involving sadness, discouragement, despair, or hopelessness that lasts for weeks, months, or even longer.  
What causes depression?
- **Biological differences.** People with depression appear to have physical changes in their brains. The significance of these changes is still uncertain, but may eventually help pinpoint causes.
- **Brain chemistry.** Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring brain chemicals that likely play a role in depression. Recent research indicates that changes in the function and effect of these neurotransmitters and how they interact with neurocircuits involved in maintaining mood stability may play a significant role in depression and its treatment.
- **Hormones.** Changes in the body's balance of hormones may be involved in causing or triggering depression. Hormone changes can result with pregnancy and during the weeks or months after delivery (postpartum) and from thyroid problems, menopause or a number of other conditions.
- **Inherited traits.** Depression is more common in people whose blood relatives also have this condition. Researchers are trying to find genes that may be involved in causing depression.

### *When to see a doctor*

If you suspect you might be suffering from depression see your doctor!!! There is no reason to suffer in silence. There is help available. If you have suicidal thoughts or behaviors seek help immediately.

## Symptoms

Anxiety and depression go hand in hand. You might have:

- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, such as hobbies or sports
- Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort
- Changes in appetite — often reduced appetite and weight loss, but increased cravings for food and weight gain in some people
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or blaming yourself for things that aren't your responsibility
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Frequent or recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide
- Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches

# COPING SKILLS!

**What happens when I tell a teacher, staff member or counselor...**

Many students and parents wonder what happens if a student shares concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend. Staff members have a duty to report when students inform us of harm to self or harm to others. If a student shares that he or she might hurt himself/herself we must notify a guardian and provide a list of resources for help. If a student shares that he or she has hurt or will hurt someone else a guardian and proper authorities must be notified. If you share concerns about a peer your report will remain confidential. We cannot share who told us. This is not to discourage anyone from sharing concerns!!! This is to inform you that we will get help and support you.



My motto for the Guidance Department this year is **Progress, Not Perfection**. No one is perfect. We should not expect perfection from ourselves or anyone else. What we should expect is that any person should put forth effort and learn from any experience, good or bad. We should have goals but not beat ourselves up when the result is not exactly what we expect.

What can I do?

There are lots of skills you can start practicing to help you take care of your mental health. It takes practice to make it a part of your routine. Here are some ideas!

- Get moving! I know, I know, everyone says you need to exercise but even a ten minute walk a day can help you feel better and give you some peace to reflect and process your day or give you a chance to talk to a friend or family member. Exercising causes the body to produce endorphins, chemicals that can help a person to feel more peaceful and happy. Exercise can help some people sleep better.
- Drink water. Dehydration can cause symptoms that look a lot like anxiety. Make sure you are getting enough water daily.
- Pay attention to your diet. Food sensitivities and allergies can cause symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Get a worrystone or stress ball. Using these tools can help you physically relieve your stress. Check out <http://www.worrystone.net/> and [www.officeplayground.com](http://www.officeplayground.com)
- List your worries. Talk about how realistic they are with a friend or loved one. If you find that any of these concerns are likely to happen then talk about how you would deal with the situation if it happened. This can help you develop your problem solving skills. You can overcome trouble when it comes up!
- Low Point/High Point At the lunch table or dinner table have each person list the low point or worst part of their day and end with something positive, the “high point” of their day.
- Be creative! Express yourself by journaling, playing or creating music, or producing art! Get those feelings out in a productive way!
- Meditation can help prevent stress as well as help you deal with it when it comes. There are 5 minute meditation youtube videos and apps available.
- Natural remedies and aromatherapy I am no expert in this field but here is a website you can check out <http://mentalhealthdaily.com/2014/02/25/aromatherapy-9-best-essential-oils-for-anxiety-and-stress/>

Resources:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/>  
<http://kidshealth.org/>