

Information to Parents

From Dana Saunders and Daniel Norman (Counselors)

Dana and Daniel started off encouraging parents with this statement: “Your performance as a parent has nothing to do with your value as a person.” They overviewed anxiety from their perspective as clinicians:

- 1. Anxiety is a *normal* and *healthy* emotion. It keeps us out of danger and warns us to pay attention.**
- 2. Anxiety becomes a problem when the emotional response to a situation is *out of proportion* with the situation and is *interfering* with belief and coping strategies.**
- 3. Anxiety looks different in each child, but some common signs and symptoms include:**
 - a. Emotional changes
 - b. Social changes (isolated from friends, changing friend groups)
 - c. Physical changes (headaches, nausea, fatigue, and stomach pain)
 - d. Sleep disturbances (no screen time at least 30 mins before bed)
 - e. Decreased school performance
- 4. Anxiety has certain triggers like all emotions do:**
 - a. Lack of control
 - b. Sense that things are unpredictable
 - c. Family life
 - d. School performance
 - e. Friends
- 5. Some common ways anxiety is manifested in kids includes:**
 - a. Perfectionism: always having to be perfect so they overwork themselves or are paralyzed with the amount of work they have to do
 - b. Globalized thinking: Applying one event to everything. (ex. I failed a test, so I’m a failure at everything. Or I lost one friend, so no one will ever like me again)
- 6. Anxiety can present itself differently between girls and boys:**
 - a. Boys: Fear of failing and not having respect or being worthy of respect
 - b. Girls: need for approval and feeling loved

Action step for parents: Make sure that your students are not hearing different expectations than you have for them when it comes to the things that could make them anxious. Have a conversation about what your kids hear when you are speaking to them, and get everyone on the same page.