

10 IDEAS TO HELP YOUR TEENAGER NAVIGATE & COPE WITH ANXIETY

1 OFFER EMPATHY: When your teenager is anxious, start by **EXPRESSING EMPATHY** which lets them know they are **SAFE** and **SECURE** in your love. Consistently leading with empathy will also help your teenager see a representation of the Lord's love for them through you.

2 VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS: It's important for our teenagers to **FEEL HEARD** and **UNDERSTOOD**. Your teen's emotions (as all over the place as they may be) are very real to them. Tell him or her that what they're feeling is okay. You don't have to like or agree with their feelings to validate them feeling these feelings.

3 PRAY: Pray **FOR** and **WITH** your teen regularly. Show them that talking with the Lord about our anxieties and expecting Him to answer is very important. Teach him or her to know how to pray by providing simple words to ask for the Lord's help. **"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you."** – 1 Peter 5:6-7

4 MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE: God's Word is our source of **HELP** and **HEALING**. Find Bible verses about the Lord's peace, love, and protection, like Philippians 4:7 or Psalm 36:7. Memorize the verses with your teenager, text them these verses as a reminder, or encourage them to write these verses in a place where they will see them often and be reminded of God's truth and love.

5 JOURNALING: For some teens, drawing or writing about their feelings can be therapeutic. Provide your teenager with a special journal for them to use any time they want to express their **THOUGHTS** and **EMOTIONS** when they are anxious, worried, or fearful.

6 GIVE THEM WORDS: Teenagers often need help in developing a vocabulary to talk about or describe their anxiety. Talk about words they can use and what they mean, and help them use these words as they describe what they are feeling.

7 PHYSICAL HEALTH: Teenage bodies can become depleted when experiencing high levels of anxiety. This is especially true when mixed with the normal fluctuation of hormones and lack of sleep that are normal during this particular stage of development. Be sure to continue or adopt a **HEALTHY DIET** to provide the nutrients they need. Encourage physical activity by joining them.

8 BREATHE: In high-anxiety situations, shallow breathing often occurs. Help your teenager learn to calm themselves by teaching them **DEEP BREATHING**. Have them put a hand on their chest and one on their belly to feel them fill up with air, and then exhale slowly until they are calmer.

9 USE THE SENSES: Engaging one of your teen's five senses can also have a calming effect. **SEEING, FEELING, HEARING, TASTING,** and **TOUCHING** are ways to help them break out of the worry cycle by focusing on something else. Some find fidget toys very helpful. The more senses engaged, the better.

10 SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP: If your teen's daily life is negatively affected and you are concerned that the anxiety is more than just typical adolescent experiences, don't hesitate to reach out for **PROFESSIONAL HELP**. Get a medical examination for physical symptoms and find a trusted Christian therapist by asking church and school leaders for recommendations. There is no shame for the teenager or the parent in **ASKING FOR** and **SEEKING HELP**.