

Anxiety in Teens: Identifying the Signs and Symptoms and How To Support Them

- ▶ **Presented by Laura
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Aldersgate

Introducing Ourselves!


Laura

Laura Shapella (she/her/hers) is the Prevention Coordinator and SAP Liaison at Aldersgate Youth Services Bureau in Willow Grove. She has been at Aldersgate since 2017, and has been the SAP Liaison at Upper Moreland Middle School since 2019. She received her M.Ed in Counseling Psychology from James Madison University and her School Counseling Certification from Eastern University. Laura has previously worked as a Behavioral Specialist Consultant and Mobile Therapist. In her free time, Laura enjoys baking, theater, music, and spending time with her husband and 15 year old twins.

Charlie

- Joined Aldersgate in 2022 after working for SAP through Caron Treatment Centers beforehand
- Graduated with a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology from Holy Family University
- Aldersgate SAP Counselor at Upper Moreland High School on Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- Born and raised in Philadelphia but now resides in Bensalem

- Anxiety is the mind and body's reaction to stressful, dangerous, or unfamiliar situations. It's the sense of uneasiness, distress, or dread you feel before a significant event. A certain level of Anxiety helps us stay alert and aware, but for those suffering from an anxiety disorder, it feels far from normal - it can be completely debilitating.
- Is there a difference between Anxiety and Worry?




What is anxiety?

Anxiety in Teens

▢ Video

Common Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety

- Constant and persistent worry
 - Edginess, nervous or jumpy
 - Reluctance or refusal to go to school or other activities
 - Agitation
 - Restlessness
 - Inattention, poor focus
 - Somatic symptoms like headaches or stomachaches
 - Avoidance
 - Tantrums
 - Crying
 - Meltdowns before school about clothing, hair, shoes, socks or after school about homework
 - Difficulties with transitions within school, and between school and an activity/sport
 - Difficulty settling down for bed
 - Having high expectations for school work, homework and sports performance
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Different types of Anxieties



PHOBIA: WHEN
FEARS ARE OUT OF
CONTROL



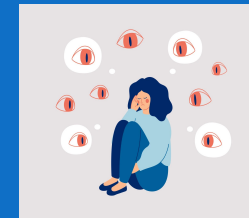
SEPARATION ANXIETY: FEAR OF
BEING AWAY FROM
FAMILY GROWN-UPS



GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER:
CONSTANT WORRYING
FOR MONTHS AT A
TIME



PANIC ATTACKS:
FEAR THAT STOPS YOU
IN YOUR TRACKS



SOCIAL ANXIETY:
INTENSE, PERSISTENT
FEAR OF BEING WATCHED
AND JUDGED BY OTHERS.
THIS FEAR CAN AFFECT
WORK, SCHOOL, AND
OTHER DAILY ACTIVITIES



POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER:
STRESS AND FEAR
FROM A TERRIBLE
MEMORY

Effects Of Social Media With Mental Health

- Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tik Tok all led to increased feelings of depression, anxiety, poor body image, and loneliness. –Royal Society for Public Health study
- Reduced ability to read and interpret social cues. Reduced empathy, self awareness.
- Reduced ability to take risks; making new friends, driving, wanting to go to college and leave the home.



Consequences of High Screen Time

- Poorer emotional regulation
- Impaired capacity of finishing tasks
- Lower curiosity
- Difficulty making friends
- Lower self control
- Higher anxiety and depression symptoms
- Poor sleep

- (Babic et al., 2017, Blumberg et al., 2008, Van der Schuur et al., 2018)

Are you noticing different patterns in behavior?

- ▣ Changes in eating/sleeping patterns.
- ▣ Withdrawing/isolating
- ▣ Reports of changed behavior by teachers, child care providers, friends and family

Is your child/teen withdrawing and not willing to talk to you?

Does your child/teen share that he or she is sad, lonely and/or worried?

Have there been significant life changes or losses (moving, friendship loss, illness or injury, divorce or separation, death of a friend or family member)

Has your child/teen been the victim of bullying?

**How Do I
Know If My
Child Needs
Help?**

Support for Anxiety For Teens

Counseling – specific approaches including Play therapy, Trust Based Intervention, and CBT

Relaxation training – Exploring Coping Skills

Medication/Supplements/Vitamins

Psychological assessment/testing for specific disorders such as ADHD

Reaching out for outside help or support (Screening Process at Aldersgate to help recommend resources for your family)

What can you do as a family?

- Have regular family meetings
- Normalize talking about feelings
- Practice family meditation or moments of mindfulness
- Encourage your child to share their feelings with you without judgment or consequence
- Try to understand their feelings rather than reacting to their behavior
- If you are concerned, PLEASE reach out for help! Don't dismiss your child's struggles as a phase or due to hormones

Recommended Resources

- ▣ What to Do When You're Scared & Worried by James J. Crist
- ▣ Freeing Your Child From Anxiety by Tamar Chansky
- ▣ You and Your Anxious Child by Anne Marie Albano
- ▣ The Anxiety Workbook for Kids by Robin Alter & Crystal Clarke
- ▣ What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety By Dawn Huebner
- ▣ Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life by Sheri Van Dijk
- ▣ What Do I Do When Teenagers are Depressed and Contemplate Suicide? By Steven Gerali

Montgomery County resources

- Access Mobile Crisis: 1-855-634-HOPE (4673)
- Teen Talk Line: Call: 866-825-5856
Text: 215-703-8411
Email: teentalkline@accessservices.org
Hours: Seven days a week from 1:00pm – 9:00pm
- NAMI Montgomery County: <https://namimontcopa.org/>
- Montgomery County Parent Programs:
<https://padlet.com/cartillio/montgomery-county-d-a-and-mh-resources-for-schools-community-qmfgftt4ywtdtwq/wish/2558468635>
- Montgomery County Youth Mental Health Guide:
<https://padlet.com/cartillio/montgomery-county-d-a-and-mh-resources-for-schools-community-qmfgftt4ywtdtwq/wish/1329515907>

How to Get Started with Services at Aldersgate

To set up an appointment call our office at:

215-657-4545

Laura.shapella@aldersgateservices.org

Charles.shovlin@aldersgateservices.org

- Visit our website for specific information about our approach, our counselors and areas of specialty www.aldersgateservices.org

Questions?

