**Mental Health in Childhood**

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are associated with children’s physical and mental health. Mental health disorders such as ADHD and anxiety are the most commonly diagnosed in children, which commonly occurs together. Anxiety are feelings of worry, apprehension or dread that something bad is going to happen. Children diagnosed with ADHD may have trouble paying attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, or be overly active. Early diagnosis and appropriate services for children and their families can make a difference in the lives of children with mental health disorders.

Anxiety related triggers are lonely and frightening emotional responses related to situations, persons, places or objects. Today’s sources of stress for our students include: increased coursework and graduation requirements, extracurricular activities, household responsibilities, and social media. Social media has been a great way to increase connection and communication, but for our young people it contributes to shorter attention spans and information overload. Signs of anxiety include appearing worried, irritable or nervous, restlessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, along with physical symptoms such as sleeping problems, headaches, and stomach aches. It is understandable for a parent to be worried because figuring out what to do is hard. Here are five simple ways to respond to teens with anxiety: 

1. Recognize warning signs.
2. Guide your child to take a few deep breaths to slow things down.
3. Make sure your child understands you are available if they need to talk.
4. Acknowledge your child’s feelings and avoid downplaying situations or issues.
5. Help them come up with ways to deal with the situation next time.

For general questions about the FCPS [Substance Abuse Prevention Program](https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drug-programs), please contact the Office of Student Safety & Wellness at: 571.423.4270.

**Sources & Resources:**

* [The Anxiety Toolkit for Teens](https://www.amazon.com/Anxiety-Toolkit-Teens-Practical-Teenagers/dp/1914986091)
* [Talk, They Hear You](https://www.samhsa.gov/talk-they-hear-you)
* [Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu0VyoidxPU&t=55s)

**For Further Information & Support:**

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