Educator Guide: Common Mental Health Concerns Lesson

Recommended for Grades:

7th grade

Time:

13 minutes

National Health Education Standards:

This lesson aligns with the following National Health Education Standards:

- Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

For more information about the National Health Education Standards, visit the SHAPE America website: shapeamerica.org.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this lesson students will be able to:

1. Recognize the signs that someone may have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
2. Recognize the signs and symptoms of anxiety.
3. Recognize the signs and symptoms of ADHD.
4. Recognize the signs and symptoms of depression.

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Lesson Description:

In this lesson students will learn about some common mental health conditions that teens can struggle with: anxiety, depression, ADHD and PTSD. They will learn what can cause these conditions and what signs and symptoms to watch for. Therapy and medication will be discussed as treatment options, with an emphasis on talking with a trusted adult and a healthcare provider to find the best treatment option for each individual. There is a worksheet included in this guide that students can complete as they work through the lesson. It can also be accessed online below the lesson.

** This lesson may bring up sensitive topics for some students. Please be aware that everyone has had different experiences and may react differently when learning about mental health. Please allow students to take breaks as needed.

Pre and Post-Test Questions:

Use the following questions with your students in any way that you see fit (on paper, using a survey tool, etc.) You may choose to combine questions from various lessons and activities that your students participate in. Correct answer choices are bolded.

1. A friend has been having flashbacks and bad dreams. She's also been feeling very sensitive and jumpy. What could these be signs of?
    A. ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
    B. Depression
    C. PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder)

2. You have been having trouble focusing in school lately. You are easily distracted and organization has never been your strength. What could these be symptoms of?
    A. Anxiety
    B. ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
    C. Depression

3. You worry a lot. If often feels like your worries are taking over your life. You can't concentrate and your stomach always hurts. What could these be symptoms of?
    A. Anxiety
    B. Depression
    C. ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)

4. Your brother has been feeling really down lately. He barely comes out of his room and doesn't even want to hang out with his friends anymore. What could these be signs of?
    A. ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)
    B. Anxiety
    C. Depression

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Vocabulary:

Use the following list of vocabulary as a reference for yourself and your students as you complete the Common Mental Health Concerns Lesson. You may choose to use this list in any way that fits your needs. Students will also see some of these vocabulary words underlined right in the lesson. They can click on the underlined word and a definition will appear.

- Abuse – an action that intentionally causes harm to a person physically, socially, emotionally or mentally
- Attention – the act of directing the mind to listen, see, understand and notice something
- Brain chemistry – all the chemical messaging that takes place in the brain, which allows it to carry out its daily functions such as generating movement, speaking, listening, thinking, etc.
- Environment – the surroundings and conditions where a person lives, works and plays
- Flashbacks – sudden, clear memories of a past event, or time, usually one that was unpleasant
- Genetics – the study of genes and how traits are passed from one generation to the next
- Guilt – a feeling of regret or responsibility for something that has happened
- Hopelessness – a feeling of despair, or having no hope
- Hormones – chemical substances in the body that act as messengers
- Hyperactivity – having a lot of energy, becoming excited easily and being unable to be still
- Impulsiveness – behaving, or acting, suddenly without planning or considering the effects of their behavior
- Impulsivity – the tendency to act without thinking first
- Inattention – the inability to pay attention to something
- Mental health disorders – a wide range of conditions that affect mood, thinking and behavior
- Natural disaster – a natural event such as a hurricane, tornado, flood or fire that can cause great damage and loss of life
- Premature birth – a baby born before the 37th week of pregnancy
- Restless – the inability to relax and be calm
- Shame – a feeling of humiliation and regret
- Substance use - the use of substances, such as alcohol, tobacco, inhalants and other substances that can be consumed, inhaled, injected or absorbed into the body with possible dependence and other negative effects
- Symptoms – physical or mental signs that signal a condition or illness is present

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- Therapy – the treatment of mental health conditions and disorders by verbal communication and interaction between the patient/client and a therapist/counselor
- Trauma – a deeply disturbing event or series of events

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Common Mental Health Concerns Lesson Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this worksheet as you move through the Common Mental Health Concerns Lesson. You will need to either save the worksheet to your computer or print it out and write in your answers. If you open the worksheet and forget to save it before typing, you will lose all of your work.

1. List four signs or symptoms of depression.
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____

2. List four possible causes of depression.
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____

3. List three signs or symptoms of anxiety.
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____

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4. List two possible causes of anxiety.

    a. _____

    b. _____

5. Signs and symptoms of ADHD fall into these three categories. List the category and give one example of a sign or symptom for each category.

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

6. List three possible causes of ADHD.

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

7. List two possible treatments for anxiety, depression and ADHD.

    a. _____

    b. _____

8. List three signs or symptoms of PTSD.

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

9. Write down one way therapy can help a person with PTSD.

    _____

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Common Mental Health Concerns Lesson Worksheet Answer Key

1. List four signs or symptoms of depression.
    a. Feeling sad, hopeless, irritable, or angry
    b. Feeling tired and lacking energy
    c. Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
    d. Not wanting to spend time with family or friends
    e. Changes in sleep patterns
    f. Changes in appetite
    g. Poor performance in school
    h. Frequent headaches or stomachaches

2. List four possible causes of depression.
    a. Genetics
    b. Brain chemistry
    c. Hormones
    d. Stressful childhood events

3. List three signs or symptoms of anxiety.
    a. Difficulty controlling feelings of worry
    b. Feeling restless
    c. Difficulty concentrating
    d. Sleep problems
    e. Headaches, stomachaches or other unexplained pains

4. List two possible causes of anxiety.
    a. Genetics
    b. Previous stressful or negative life events

5. Signs and symptoms of ADHD fall into these three categories. List the category and give one example of a sign or symptom for each category.
    a. Inattention - having trouble focusing in school or on homework, being easily distracted, losing or forgetting things or having trouble organizing tasks or projects
    b. Hyperactivity - fidgeting, having a hard time sitting for long periods of time, constantly moving or feeling restless
    c. Impulsivity - interrupting others, talking out of turn in class or having difficulty waiting

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6. List three possible causes of ADHD.

    a. Genetics
    b. Environment
    c. Premature birth

7. List two possible treatments for anxiety, depression and ADHD.

    a. Therapy
    b. Medication

8. List three signs or symptoms of PTSD.

    a. Bad memories (flashbacks)
    b. Bad dreams
    c. Trouble sleeping
    d. Avoiding things that remind them of the trauma
    e. Changes in mood
    f. Not enjoying things like before
    g. Feeling more easily scared, anxious, jumpy, sensitive or startled

9. Write down one way therapy can help a person with PTSD.

    Answers may vary, but could include any of the following:

    - Therapy helps a person understand how trauma affects their thoughts, feelings and actions.
    - Therapy teaches ways to adjust difficult thoughts.
    - Therapy teaches how to let go of guilt or shame.
    - Therapy teaches how to face things a person used to avoid.
    - Therapy can help a person gain courage and confidence.
    - Therapy can help a person use their strengths to cope and move forward.

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Supplemental Activity: Ask the Expert

Objectives:

After completing this activity students will be able to:

- Find answers to their questions regarding mental health and mental health concerns.
- Identify signs and symptoms of one mental health concern, or mental illness, that was not covered in the Common Mental Health Concerns Lesson.

Materials Needed:

- Chalkboard or whiteboard for brainstorming

Time required:

60 minutes

Instructions:

Many students may have questions about mental health concerns, or mental illnesses, that weren't answered in this lesson. This would be a great time to invite the experts in to talk with your students. If your school has a school counselor or school psychologist, start with them. Do they have time in their schedule to speak with your class? Also, check with your local NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) affiliate as they often have programs and speakers that will come to your school and speak with your students.

If you are unable to find an expert who is able to talk with your class, students could spend some time researching signs and symptoms of a mental health concern that they would like to learn more about. There is a list of mental health resources included in this guide that provides several websites and organizations that provide valid and reliable information. If time allows, discuss students' findings in class.

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Handouts

Included on the following pages are additional resources that you and your students' families may find useful.

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Anxiety Disorders in Teens

What Are Anxiety Disorders?

A small amount of anxiety is normal for teens. Teens with anxiety disorders have too much fear and worry that lasts a long time. They may have problems at school or socially because of it.

Some teens:

- Have aches and pains, like headaches or stomachaches
- Feel restless, tired or tense
- Have trouble focusing or sleeping
- Do not feel confident and are easily upset

What Causes Anxiety Disorders?

There are many reasons why a teen may have anxiety. It can run in families and start at birth. It can also start after exposure to stressful events and problems in school or with friends.

What Are the Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders?

A teen with anxiety may:

- Worry a lot about many things, and not be able to control the worry
- Be afraid of making mistakes and being embarrassed
- Avoid places or activities that make them nervous, like being in crowds or speaking in school
- Have a hard time doing schoolwork and be slow to finish work
- Have unwanted thoughts often
- Repeat specific behaviors in response to having worries
- Feel very scared of specific things like animals, heights, being in an airplane or seeing blood

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How Are Anxiety Disorders Treated?

Anxiety will not get better without help. There are two ways to treat anxiety: psychotherapy and medicine.

Treatment for mild anxiety starts with psychotherapy**.** In psychotherapy a health care provider helps your child understand how they think and feel about things.

Teens will learn to:

- Replace their anxious thoughts with helpful ones
- Control their anxious feelings with coping skills

Your teen will need to practice what they learn outside of sessions. This is an important part of therapy. Psychotherapy is usually done by psychologists, mental health counselors and clinical social workers.

Medicine may be prescribed to help your child's anxiety. Medicine can help decrease feelings of anxiety. For moderate to severe anxiety, treatment that uses psychotherapy and medicine together may be most helpful.

How Can I Help My Teen's Anxiety?

- Encourage relaxation activities such as deep breathing, meditation and yoga. These should be practiced regularly.
- Help your teen notice physical feelings with their anxiety (stomachaches, headaches, feelings of restlessness). Make sure they use their relaxation strategies at those times.
- Help your teen get enough sleep and exercise and eat a nutritious diet.
- Listen carefully and respectfully when your teen is willing to talk about their anxiety. Do not tell them not to worry. Your teen's worries are very real to them.
- Encourage your teen to practice positive self-talk. Help them turn negative thoughts about themselves into positive ones.
- Talk with your teen's school to let teachers know how they can help your teen practice using their coping skills. If anxiety causes problems for your teen at school a special plan called a 504 Plan or IEP may be needed. These plans can offer accommodations like extra time on tests, reduced workload, help with organization and adjustments to presentations.

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Recognizing Depression in Teens

What Is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way you think and feel. The most common symptom is a feeling of deep sadness. Teens who are depressed may also:

- Feel hopeless
- Feel that life isn't worth living
- Feel angry, irritable or frustrated
- Have thoughts of suicide or death

Depression in Teens

Your teen's behavior will change if they are depressed. Here are some changes in behavior to watch for. Your teen may:

- Eat more or less than normal
- Sleep more or less than usual
- Pay less attention to their hygiene or appearance
- Think or speak about suicide or death
- Self-harm
- Act in an aggressive way
- Use alcohol or other drugs
- Be agitated or restless
- Complain of stomachaches, headaches or other pains that can't be explained
- Miss a lot of school or struggle in school
- Isolate from friends and family

What Can You Do?

If your teen is struggling, here are some ways you can help:

- Talk with your teen's healthcare provider about medicine and psychotherapy. Both can help.
- Look for mental health resources at your teen's school, local mental health center, social service agency or hospital.
- Let your teen know that they will not feel this way forever.
- Offer your love and support.
- If your teen talks about death or suicide, seek help right away.

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Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Handout

What Is ADHD?

Children with ADHD have problems with controlling their attention, impulses, and activity level. Having ADHD makes it hard for children to stay on task. ADHD is one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood.

What Causes ADHD?

Doctors are often unable to tell what caused a child to have ADHD. A child is more likely to have ADHD if they:

- Were born prematurely
- Were exposed to alcohol before they were born
- Have a close relative with ADHD

What Are the Symptoms of ADHD?

Not all children with ADHD have the same symptoms. Their symptoms fall into three groups: mainly inattentive, mainly hyperactive and impulsive or a combination of both groups.

Mainly Inattentive Children Often:

- Are easily distracted
- Daydream
- Seem to not listen
- Make careless mistakes
- Lose things
- Are disorganized

Mainly Hyperactive and Impulsive Children Often:

- Talk a lot
- Have trouble playing quietly
- Act without thinking
- Constantly move
- Interrupt others
- Have trouble taking turns
- Have a hard time waiting for things
- Fidget a lot

How Can ADHD Affect My Child?

- They often struggle to pay attention and focus long enough to take in information. This makes it hard to finish a task.
- They may not do as well as they could in school and fall behind.
- They may also have mood swings because of problems handling their emotions. Their reactions may seem more intense than those of other children.

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How Can I Help My Child?

Ideal treatment usually includes psychotherapy, parent training and medicine.

Psychotherapy

There are different types of therapy for a child with ADHD. Therapy can address feelings around ADHD. It can also help educate about ADHD. And it can help teach ways to manage the symptoms and make daily tasks easier.

Parent Training

Parent training teaches parents how to deal with common struggles children with ADHD have at home and school. Training is often done by a psychologist, social worker or mental health counselor.

At home:

- Look for good behavior and praise your child right away. Be specific. Note the exact behavior you were pleased with.
- Give your child rules that are clear and brief.
- Keep a consistent morning and evening routine. Have a regular time for meals, homework, going to bed and TV.
- Make sure your child understands the rules and consequences for breaking rules. Be consistent.
- Give only one direction at a time. Give directions as statements, not questions or requests.

At school:
Talk with your child's school about a 504 plan based on their diagnosis. Some things your child may need in the plan:

Students should be allowed to:

- Sit in the front of the classroom.
- Move around and take extra breaks during the school day.
- Take tests in a quiet area.

Teachers should:

- Keep assignments brief or break them into smaller chunks.
- Vary the format and presentation of material to help keep interest.
- Minimize distractions in the classroom.

Medicine

It may take time to find the right medicine and dose for your child. You can work with your child's pediatrician or child psychiatrist to figure out which medicine is best for your child.

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Child Traumatic Stress Handout

What Is Child Traumatic Stress?

Child traumatic stress can happen when a child has had something scary or upsetting happen to them. Children react to stress in many ways. Some stress is normal. However, symptoms of traumatic stress may last for a long time. They may cause problems in daily life. Lots of stress can also make health problems worse. As an adult in the child's life, you can play an important part in preventing stress from becoming traumatic.

What Causes Child Traumatic Stress?

Children with child traumatic stress have had one or more scary or upsetting events happen during their life. This can be an accident, violence, life changes like a divorce or loss of a loved one or seeing something bad. Even being in the hospital can be traumatic for a child.

What Are the Symptoms?

A child's reaction to trauma depends on a number of things, including age and personality. Having support people in their lives also affects a child's response. After a traumatic event, a child may react the first time they go to the same place or do the same thing again. After a car crash, the first time a child rides in a car again may be very stressful. Their heart may race and they may start to sweat or cry. This is a very normal first reaction to dealing with their fears and feelings. Some fears and feelings of distress stay for a longer time. A child may:

- Feel very sad or numb, anxious or crabby
- Have strong, long-lasting emotional upset
- Have problems playing or talking with others
- Have a hard time paying attention
- "Space out" or fidget
- Have learning and school problems
- Be afraid to go to sleep
- Have a hard time sleeping or sleep more than usual
- Have nightmares or night terrors
- Have stomachaches, headaches or other pain

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Common Signs at Different Ages

Preschool	School-Age	Teens
Feeling helpless and fearful about many things	Feeling overwhelmed with sadness or fear	Feelings of fear, feeling unsafe and fear of being different from friends
Fear of being away from parents or falling asleep at night alone	Worries about their safety or family and friends' safety	Risky, aggressive or self-destructive behaviors and may be more accident-prone or clumsy
Having a hard time talking about their feelings	Telling the story of the trauma over and over again	Embarrassed about their emotions and reactions
Loss of toileting, speech, feeding or other skills they used to have	Feelings of guilt or shame about what they did or didn't do during the trauma	Feelings of shame and guilt and possible thoughts of revenge
Play may be about the trauma happening again and may be less creative	School or sleep problems, anger or fighting	May pull back from family and friends

How Can I Help My Child?

Focus on your child's current safety and recovery. Talk about the safe people in your child's life and how they will help. Listen if they want to talk. Stay positive. Return to normal routine and activities. This should include school, chores, sleep schedule and play. It is important to talk with your child's doctor about how to support your child after a traumatic event. A school counselor, social worker, psychologist, clergy or pastor may also be helpful. Getting help early may limit long-lasting problems with school, personal, social or family life.

Is This Different Than Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

Some children with traumatic stress may go on to develop PTSD, which occurs when the symptoms last more than one month. With PTSD, the child re-lives the event in their mind with intense fear and may also have problems with memory. They may become very upset and anxious. A mental health professional is needed to treat PTSD.

ALERT: Call your child's healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns, and if you are afraid about your child's safety, call 9-1-1.

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Mental and Emotional Health Resources

- 988 Lifeline, 988lifeline.org, call or text 988
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America, adaa.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/
- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, chadd.org
- Children's Wisconsin, childrenswi.org/find-care/mental-behavioral-health
- KidsHealth, kidshealth.org
- Mental Health America, mhanational.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), nami.org
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), nimh.nih.gov
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Student Services/Prevention and Wellness), dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health

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Transcript

Slide 1 (video)
Sanaiah: Everyone has bad days, and everyone struggles with their mental health sometimes. We all feel stressed, worried, angry or sad at times. These feelings are a regular part of life.

Dalton: That's right, and sometimes these feelings become too strong, or happen too often, and they become hard to deal with.

Sanaiah: We're going to learn about a few mental health concerns that teens your age may have. We'll look at what signs to watch for, possible treatments and how to get help for yourself, or for a friend.

Dalton: This lesson contains information that may be difficult for you. Please find a trusted adult to talk to if you need support. This could be your teacher, school counselor, parent, other family member or any other adult you trust.

Sanaiah: And, if you need to take a break, please take one. You need to do what's best for you.

Slide 2
The most common mental health disorders that teens struggle with are:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- And ADHD

Slide 3
It's normal to feel sad, or down, sometimes. But when a person has depression, they may feel that way for weeks, months or even longer. Depression is a strong feeling of sadness or hopelessness that makes it hard for a person to function normally and do their usual activities. They may also have trouble focusing and have no motivation or energy. Depression can make a person feel like it is hard to enjoy life or even get through the day.

Click the signs and symptoms, causes and treatments buttons to learn more about depression.

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Signs and symptoms - Depression can affect all areas of a person's life. Besides feelings of sadness and hopelessness, they may also feel irritable or angry. They often feel tired and lack energy, to the point where they may not even have enough energy to brush their teeth or shower. They may find that they don't have any interest in doing the things that they used to enjoy. Or, they don't want to spend time with friends and family the way they used to. They may notice that they are sleeping more than usual, or they're suddenly having trouble sleeping. Their appetite may change, and they may gain or lose weight quickly. They may miss school and their grades may go down. Depression can even contribute to physical symptoms, like headaches and stomachaches.

Causes - People with depression sometimes blame themselves for how they feel. But depression is not a person's fault. It's not known exactly what causes depression, but scientists have found several things that can play a role in it.

One of them is genetics. Depression can run in families. That doesn't mean that if someone in your family has depression that you for sure will too. But, it may make you more likely to have depression at some point in your life, so it's important to watch for signs and symptoms and find out if it runs in your family.

Brain chemistry can also play a role. Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring brain chemicals that carry signals to the brain and other parts of the body. Sometimes those chemicals aren't working correctly, which leads to depression.

Changes in the body's balance of hormones may also contribute to depression.

Lastly, very stressful or traumatic events experienced earlier in life can cause changes in the brain. These changes may increase the risk of depression.

Treatments - There are effective treatments for depression. The two most common treatments are medication and therapy.

Medications are prescribed by a doctor, and anyone taking them should see their doctor regularly to determine the correct dosage and manage any side effects. Everyone's different, so finding the right medication or dose may take some trial and error. Most medications need several weeks or longer to take full effect, and for side effects to lessen as the body adjusts. All of this requires patience. It's important to be open and honest with a trusted adult about how you're feeling while taking medication.

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Therapy is another treatment option that involves a person talking with a psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor or other mental health provider. They can help you understand and manage your moods, thoughts and feelings. You may need to meet with more than one mental health professional to find the person that you feel most comfortable with.

The best treatment depends on a person's type and severity of symptoms. And it may take some time to find the right treatment. It's important to find a trusted adult who can help find the resources that are available in your community. Think about resources available at your school. There may be a counselor, school psychologist or social worker there that you can talk with.

Slide 4

It's normal to feel worried or nervous at times, like before giving a presentation in class or before opening night of the musical you're in. For most people, that nervousness fades away once the situation is over. However, anxiety is when a person worries a lot, or they're worrying about things that they don't even want to be worrying about. Those worries are difficult to control and interfere with day-to-day activities.

Click the signs and symptoms, causes and treatments buttons to learn more about anxiety.

Signs and symptoms - Symptoms of anxiety can vary, but often include several of the following.

A person with anxiety often has a hard time controlling their feelings of worry. They may feel like their worries are taking over their life.

They may feel restless and have difficulty concentrating.

Having sleep problems, such as trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, can be a symptom too.

Anxiety can also cause physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches or other unexplained pains.

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Causes - It's hard to say exactly what causes anxiety. Researchers are finding that both genetics and previous stressful or negative life events contribute to the risk of developing anxiety.

Anxiety can run in families. That doesn't mean if someone in your family has anxiety that you for sure will too. But, it may make you more likely to, so it's important to watch for signs and symptoms, and find out if anxiety runs in your family.

Previous stressful or negative life events could include things like living through a pandemic, moving to a new state during elementary school or dealing with parents divorcing. Long-lasting stress can actually change the chemical balance in your brain which can cause anxiety.

Treatments - There is treatment available for anxiety. The two main treatments are therapy and medication. Treatment usually depends on how much a person's anxiety is affecting their daily life.

Therapy involves talking with a trained mental health provider, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or counselor to learn more about your moods, thoughts, feelings and behaviors. It often focuses on teaching a person specific skills to directly manage their worries and help them return to the activities they've avoided because of anxiety.

Medication can also be used to ease the symptoms of anxiety. There are several different types that doctors can prescribe. Each may have their own benefits, risks and side effects. Everyone is different and medications can work differently for everyone. It's important to work closely with your health care provider to determine what medication and dose is best for you.

Some people find that just therapy helps them, while others find that they need therapy and medication, or just medication. Everyone's different. Your health care provider can help you and your trusted adult make these types of decisions. You can also talk with a trusted adult at school to help you find resources both at school and in your community.

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Slide 5

ADHD stands for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. It's a condition that causes differences in brain development and brain activity which affects attention, the ability to sit still, and impulsiveness. Everyone struggles at times to pay attention, listen, follow directions, sit still or wait their turn. But for those with ADHD, the struggles are harder and happen more often.

Click the signs and symptoms, causes and treatments buttons to learn more about ADHD.

Signs and symptoms - Signs and symptoms fall into one of three categories: inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Someone with ADHD doesn't need to have symptoms in each category, but they'll definitely have symptoms in at least one.

Symptoms of inattention include: having trouble focusing in school or on homework, being easily distracted, losing or forgetting things and having trouble organizing tasks or projects.

Symptoms of hyperactivity include: fidgeting, having a hard time sitting for long periods of time, constantly moving or feeling restless.

Symptoms of impulsivity include: interrupting others, talking out of turn in class or having difficulty waiting.

Doctors used to diagnose those without hyperactivity symptoms with ADD, or Attention Deficit Disorder, but ADD is no longer a diagnosis. Now, a person without hyperactivity symptoms would be diagnosed with ADHD, but would only have symptoms of inattention and/or impulsivity.

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Causes - The cause of ADHD is unclear, but researchers have found a few factors that contribute to its development.

ADHD may run in families, which means genetics may be involved. That doesn't mean if someone in your family has ADHD that you'll automatically have it too, but it may increase your chances of having it.

Certain environmental factors, like being around lead found in paint and pipes in older buildings, can increase a person's chance of developing ADHD.

Being born prematurely or issues with the central nervous system at key moments in development may each play a role in developing ADHD.

Treatments - There are two different ways to treat the symptoms of ADHD: medication and therapy.

Doctors can prescribe medication that helps the brain's ability to pay attention, slow down and focus. Sometimes a few different medications or doses are tried before finding the one that works best. Anyone taking medication should follow up with their healthcare provider on a regular basis.

There are different types of therapy for a person with ADHD. Therapy can address feelings around ADHD. It can also help educate about ADHD. And it can help teach ways to manage the symptoms and make daily tasks easier.

Many people with ADHD find a lot of success from both medication and therapy, especially after first being diagnosed.

If you feel like you might be experiencing some of the symptoms that were mentioned, start by talking with a trusted adult at home or at school. Many schools have a school psychologist, social worker or counselor that can help you find the support that you need.

Slide 6

Something else that can affect your mental health is trauma. Trauma is a stressful experience that makes a person fear for their, or someone else's, life or safety.

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Slide 7

Some examples of traumatic events will be discussed here. Click the reveal buttons to see the examples one at a time. This information may be upsetting or stressful for some people. If you find it to be upsetting or stressful in any way, you may skip to the next slide.

- Violence in the home or neighborhood
- Substance use in the home
- Being bullied
- A divorce in the family
- The death of a family member, friend or other loved one
- A family member being arrested
- A car accident
- A natural disaster
- Abuse

Slide 8

Trauma can sometimes lead to post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. Someone with PTSD has symptoms that last long after the traumatic event has ended. Those symptoms can include:

- Bad memories, called flashbacks, that make it seem like the trauma is still happening
- Bad dreams or trouble sleeping
- Avoiding things that remind them of the trauma
- Changes in mood, such as feeling sad, moody, angry or detached
- Not enjoying things like they once did
- And feeling more easily scared, anxious, jumpy, sensitive or startled

Slide 9

It's completely natural to react to a traumatic event, and most people will feel the effects, but not everyone ends up with PTSD. PTSD develops when the stress of trauma keeps the brain's threat sensors too active for too long. And that makes it hard for the person to feel safe.

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Slide 10
PTSD will not go away on its own, but therapy can help. In fact, therapy can be helpful for anyone dealing with trauma, even if they don't have PTSD. It helps a person understand how trauma can affect their thoughts, feelings, and actions. They learn ways to adjust some of the difficult thoughts about the trauma, including how to let go of any guilt or shame about what happened.

Slowly, people can learn to face things they used to avoid. Therapy helps them gain courage and confidence. They use their strengths to cope and move forward.

To find a therapist who specializes in trauma, talk with a trusted adult at home or school, or check with your health care provider.

Slide 11 (video)
Dalton: Wow! That was a lot of important information. It's good to know that there are treatments for all of these mental health challenges. I know that sometimes when people are struggling, they think they'll never feel better. But there's definitely help out there.

Sanaiah: You're right. So if you or a friend are struggling with anything, please reach out to a trusted adult. They can be great listeners, and can find you the help you may need.

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