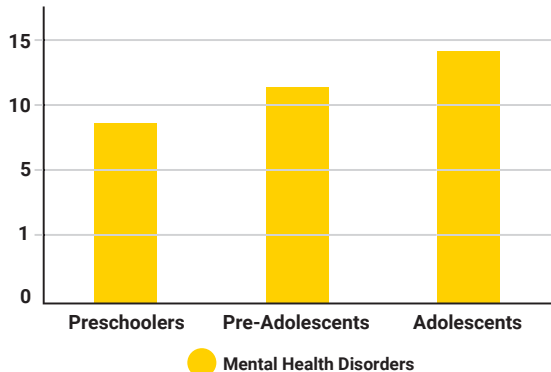




Depression & Anxiety

Definitions & Discussion Questions

Mental Health Disorders by Age Group



About 50% of anxiety disorders begin by age 6.
Average age of onset of depression is age 11.

Depression: Feeling sad, blue, or down is normal except when it lasts all day, nearly every day for 2 weeks or longer and causes the following problems:

- big changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- less interest in activities that used to bring joy
- extreme tiredness or loss of energy
- negative feelings like hopelessness, not caring, guilt, or worthlessness
- unexplained aches and pains
- and possibly, recurring thoughts of suicide or death

Many young people do not know about the wide variety of successful treatments for depression, or fear asking for help resulting in their symptoms growing worse.

Critical Thinking Section

Students:

- Everyone is different, so how do you know when you are depressed? What are your symptoms?
- What situations make you feel the most anxiety?
- What are your favorite coping mechanisms to use when you are sad or feeling down?
- Do you like high levels of anxiety? Why or why not?
- How do people in your family handle sadness, depression and anxiety? Are they good models?
- What are the pros and cons of seeing a counselor?
- If you knew a friend was feeling so sad or depressed that they felt suicidal, what would you do?

Anxiety:

Anxiety is a normal emotion, and can be thought of as low grade fear, worry or nervousness. It becomes a harmful disorder when the anxiety becomes chronic, lasting 6 months or longer and causes:

- persistent worrying out of proportion to the impact of the events being worried about
- inability to set aside or let go of a worry
- causes difficulty concentrating, extreme tiredness, trouble sleeping, muscle tension, or headaches
- chronic nervousness, nausea, sweating, or trembling

Low to moderate levels of anxiety are related to good performance. There is nothing like a deadline to get us busy! But, high anxiety can result in poor performance and health issues.

Parents & Faculty:

- What stressors do you think cause your kids or students to feel elevated levels of anxiety or depression?
- Do you speak openly in class or at home about mood issues? What are the obstacles in the way of these conversations?
- What coping skills do you model for youth? Are they active or avoidant techniques?
- How could you integrate healthy coping skills into you & your kids or students daily activities?
- Would you be willing to deep breathing, mindfulness or meditation exercises at home or in class with youth?
- How can you help a youth who needs mental health assistance?