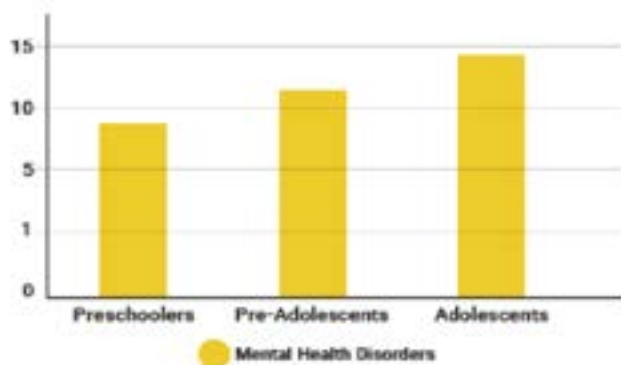




Depression & Anxiety

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.

Staff & Family:

- Do you have a family history of mental health challenges?
- What are your success stories with managing depression and/or anxiety in you and/or your family?
- What are the red flags that your child/student may be struggling with depression or anxiety? What are your child's/students' coping skills to manage depressive and anxious thoughts?
- What would be your plan to support your child/student if they are experiencing depression and/or anxiety?
- How can you stay connected to your child's/students' mental health?
- How can you contribute to mental health and positive coping in your child's/students' life?