

TEEN ANXIETY CHEAT SHEET

Look at the Family System

- What type of stressors are happening in the home?
- How does the family deal with these stressors?
- What is the role the child plays in the family?
- How can the family share responsibility in improving health and peace in the home, starting with the parents?

Look at family history

- Does anxiety run in the family?
- How has anxiety been handled through the generations?
- What conversations have been had throughout the family about anxiety?
- Share personal and familial patterns of anxiety with your teen to help normalize it.

Address previous solutions

- How does your teen try to resolve or deal with their anxiety?
- What ways have you tried to help?
- Which things have been effective and which haven't?

Address all symptoms

- What does your child experience mentally and physically?
- How severe do these symptoms feel?
- How do these symptoms impact day to day functioning?

Integrate a new approach

- Spend time understanding your teen and what their anxiety feels like. Imagine being in their shoes to experience empathy. Don't make any assumptions, talk it through.
- Be calm and peaceful, slow to speak but quick to hear. Don't rush in with thoughts or opinions, give your teen the floor to share.
- Voice empathy to them by recalling back what you heard them say and what that must feel like.
- Help your teen self-soothe by asking them what they need. This will help them feel a sense of control in what they're experiencing and how to change it.
- If they don't know what will help, brainstorm together but make sure they input most of the ideas. Otherwise, they'll assume you're trying to fix it again.
- Ask them what role they would like you to play in helping their anxiety. How can you help? Listen and respect their answer.
- If the attempted solutions don't work, if they don't like the role you played or how you handled it, sit back down again and talk about it. Remind them that it's not failure, it's feedback. Collaborate again on a new plan.
- Don't feel like you have to do it alone, incorporate a doctor or therapist for help.