



## ANXIETY & COPING

Anxiety is a normal feeling of worry or nervousness that everyone experiences at some point. Learning to identify and manage anxiety can help us become better equipped and prepared to handle life's ups and downs. Children, teenagers, and adults can all experience anxiety, but their concerns often differ. Younger children may worry about external things like animals, the dark, or something bad happening to their parents. Teenagers, on the other hand, are more likely to worry about their performance in school or sports, social situations, and how they are perceived by others. At each stage of development, there are different worries and vulnerabilities.

It's important to recognize that anxiety can sometimes be helpful, too! For example, anxiety can help with motivation: Anxiety about an upcoming test, game, or presentation can motivate teens to study, practice, or prepare. Anxiety can also help with routines: Anxiety about getting to school on time can encourage teens to set an alarm and wake up consistently.

However, anxiety becomes problematic when it interferes with daily life. High levels of anxiety can make it hard for teens to stay calm, focus, or think clearly, leading to frequent worries about unknowns or worst-case scenarios.



### ACTIVITIES:

Build and create your own coping skills toolbox! Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Strong4Life has put together a variety of coping skills. See what works best for you and your environment!

For more coping skills ideas, such as journaling prompts, deep breathing exercises, stretch poses, and more – visit [strong4life.com/coping](https://strong4life.com/coping)

If you need urgent support, please call or text 988.

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## RESOURCES

Learn how to recognize signs of anxiety and what you can do to help manage and cope with them. Here are some behaviors that might indicate anxiety:

- **Recurring fears and worries about routine parts of everyday life**
- **Irritability**
- **Trouble concentrating**
- **Extreme self-consciousness or sensitivity to criticism**
- **Withdrawal from social activity**
- **Avoidance of difficult or new situations**
- **Chronic complaints about stomachaches or headaches**
- **Drop in grades or school refusal**
- **Repeated reassurance-seeking**
- **Sleep problems**

Just like we need to learn to identify and express feelings, we need to learn how to manage (or cope) with them. Coping skills are strategies we use to manage feelings and handle stress. Coping strategies can be used at any time and can help prevent stress from occurring in the first place. It's never too early or too late to start developing healthy coping skills.

## 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique

Decrease anxiety by **sitting** somewhere comfortable; **breathing in** deep breaths; and using senses to **find**:

**5** THINGS YOU CAN SEE 

**4** THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH 

**3** THINGS YOU CAN HEAR 

**2** THINGS YOU CAN SMELL 

**1** THING YOU CAN TASTE 