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(to Abundant Life School Parents Support Group in Madison. May 2018)

It's important to me to instill hope into the people that I work with. I want you to believe that change is possible – for anyone – and that life can be good.

Remember that overcoming mental health issues is a process. Quick-fixes don't work.

It takes education, lifestyle change, and changing our thoughts. It takes trial and error, practice, and time.

Hang on to hope. Exercise your faith.  
Stand on the promises in the Word!

**Romans 8:28 (NKJV)**

**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

**John 10:10 (NKJV)**

**The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

**QUESTION:** What tools and techniques are effective at helping a young person dealing with anxiety and/or severe panic attacks?

1. Just be there
2. Listen without judgement (be interested in their feelings and point of view and recognize them as valid)
3. Listen more than you speak (take the pressure off of yourself to have the perfect thing to say – they probably want you to listen)

4. Ask them what you can do to help (they know best what they like, what bothers them, etc)
5. Practice breathing/calming techniques (practice when things are good so it's easier when things are bad)
6. Help them move their bodies (exercise is the best way to spend that pent-up adrenalin)
7. Have them write things down (getting it out of their mind and onto paper can help calm the cycling thoughts and help them see things more clearly)
8. Help them answer the questions in their head (Ask questions like, "What would you do if that actually happened?" Look for solutions, or find evidence to support that they can handle the situation - a past success.)
9. Allow them to solve their problems (you can give them resources but it's important that they begin to believe that they have what it takes to solve their own problems)

We should address the overall health of the individual:

- Exercise – getting the heart rate up.
- Increase Vitamin and Mineral Intake: supplements, fruits, and vegetables.
- Sleep Better: right amount of sleep, at the right time of day, in a comfortable place.
- Positive Feedback and Support from Others.
- Positive Self Talk.
- Calming and Breathing Techniques.
- Prayer and Meditation.
- Journaling.
- Research: reading self-help books, blogs, articles.
- Good Social Experiences: having good friends, being a part of a group or club, etc.
- Therapy.
- Medication: have medications evaluated by a psychiatrist regularly.

**QUESTION:** How can parents care for themselves and their families when one member is struggling with depression/anxiety (managing the 'dark cloud' that can cover many family members)?

The previous list for addressing your teen's overall health will prove most beneficial to everyone in your household. When we are in a healthy balance in all other areas, we have the resources we need to address the "sick" area of our lives.

It's a good idea to take a weekly inventory of how each major area of your life is doing (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, vocational) and adjust accordingly to keep them all in balance as much as possible. Sometimes one or two areas need to go on the 'back burner' so you can pool resources to deal with a more pressing issue – this is okay if it is done with purpose and only on a short-term basis (a week or two).

I believe that God created our physical family and our Spiritual family (the Church) to be tools through which He meets our needs. I see how He designed the Spiritual family to pick up the slack for the areas that our physical family cannot fulfill. Staying connected and not being afraid to ask for help are vital to your health and the health of your family.

**QUESTION:** What techniques or perspectives help with managing the fear a parent can have related to suicidal/depressed teenagers?

- Serenity Prayer



**James 1:5 (NKJV)**

**If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**

- Stay connected to others outside of your family (it's good to have people to vent to who aren't your spouse)
- Work at your marriage (find things to do and talk about that aren't the problems with the kids)
- Give yourself permission to have fun and laugh (laughter is contagious, it might rub off on those around you)
- Practice your own resilience and positive self-talk (exercise your faith, prayer, meditation on the Word)
- Take good care of your mind, body, and spirit (mindfulness, connectedness, balance, and maintenance are the keys to success)
- Recognize that everyone is just doing the best they can (Give yourself grace to not be perfect. It's okay to start over each day)

### **Bottom Line (for you and your child)**

#### **1. Answer the questions...**

**What do I need? How can I get that need met in a healthy way?**

## *Resources*

### **Websites:**

[CalmClinic.com](http://CalmClinic.com)

Some Suggested Articles on this site:

12 Tips for Friends and Family of Those With Anxiety

Anxiety Help & Self-Help Options – The Anxiety Guide

How to Survive Anxiety and Puberty

Find Out About The Causes of Teenage Anxiety

Everything You Need to Know About Teenage Anxiety Symptoms

[NamiPAMainline.org](http://NamiPAMainline.org)

Book List for Parents of Children with Mental Health Issues

Book List for Children and Teens who have Siblings with a Mental Health Condition

### **Organizations:**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

The National Institute of Mental Health

Focus on the Family

## Psychology Today

### **Apps:**

Virtual Hope Box

Abide: Christian Guided Meditations & Daily Prayers

Reflect – Christian Mindfulness

Focus on the Family podcasts

### **Books:**

The Stranger In Your House by Gregory L. Jantz

Beyond The Blues: A Workbook to Help Teens Overcome Depression

The Anxiety Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Deal with Anxiety and Worry

### **Devices:**

TouchPoints – a wearable device. [www.thetouchpointsolution.com](http://www.thetouchpointsolution.com)

(\*Disclaimer – I have not viewed all of the content on these websites, apps, and books and cannot vouch for all of it. As with any resource, you are encouraged to use your discretion. Take the useful parts and discard the rest – A.K.A. “eat the meat and spit out the bones”. □ )