



PARENT + TEEN TOOLKIT

When Anxiety Shows Up:
How-To Teen Support

How to Use This Guide

This isn't something you need to read all at once.

Come back to it:

- **Before** difficult moments (to prepare)
- **During** moments of anxiety (for grounding + scripts)
- **After** (to reflect and adjust)

You don't need to do this perfectly.

Your presence matters more than getting it “right.”

A Quick Reframe (Start Here)

Anxiety isn't just “in your teen's head.”
It's happening in their **nervous system**.

When your teen feels anxious, their body is reacting as if something isn't safe, even if there's no clear danger.

That can look like:

- Irritability
- Shutdown
- Avoidance
- Emotional overwhelm
- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)

In these moments:

Regulation comes before reasoning.

Which means:

- Logic won't land
- Problem-solving can wait

- Connection comes first

You can't talk a teen out of anxiety when their body feels unsafe.

1. Spot The Signs (Know Your Teen's Pattern)

When my teen is anxious, I notice:

- Shuts down or withdraws
- Gets irritable or reactive
- Avoids school or social situations
- Seeks constant reassurance
- Complains of headaches or stomachaches
- Has trouble sleeping
- Other: _____

What seems to trigger their anxiety:

Notes:

2. What To Say In The Moment

When anxiety spikes, words matter, but tone matters more.

Instead of saying:

- "You're overreacting"
- "Just calm down"
- "There's nothing to worry about"

Try:

- "I can see this feels like a lot"
- "I'm here with you"
- "You don't have to go through this alone"
- "We'll figure this out together"

Validation reduces anxiety. Dismissing it increases it.

Find Your Own Words

Phrases that feel natural for me:

Notes:

3. Co-Regulation (Your Calm Helps Them Calm)

Your nervous system is the anchor.

Even if your teen doesn't show it, they are *borrowing* from your regulation.

In the moment:

Sit nearby (without forcing conversation)

Soften your tone

Slow your breathing

Reduce questions

Stay present without trying to fix

Connection is regulation.

4. Body-Based Reset Options

Anxiety lives in the body, so we work with the body.

Explore what helps your teen settle:

- Listening to music
- Going for a walk
- Taking a shower or bath
- Stretching or movement
- Quiet time alone
- Talking it through
- Deep breathing
- Other: _____

Personalize It

“What usually helps me feel better is...” (ask your teen when calm)

Notes:

We calm anxiety through the body, not around it.

5. After The Moment (When Things Feel Calm)

This is where growth happens; not in the middle of the storm.

Reflect together:

What helped?

What made it harder?

What might we try next time?

Keep this collaborative, not corrective.

6. Parent Reflection (The Missing Piece)

Your response matters, but so does your internal experience.

When my teen is anxious, I tend to:

- Try to fix it immediately
- Feel overwhelmed or anxious myself
- Get frustrated
- Shut down
- Over-explain or over-talk
- Other: _____

What helps *me* stay grounded:

Notes:

Supporting your teen starts with supporting your own nervous system.

7. Build Predictability + Safety (Daily Rhythms)

Anxious systems need consistency.

Small things matter more than big interventions:

- Consistent sleep routines
- Regular meals
- Movement
- Screen boundaries
- Moments of connection (even brief ones)

Safety isn't just created in crisis: it's built daily.

When To Seek Extra Support

Consider professional support if your teen:

- Avoids school or daily activities
- Experiences frequent physical symptoms
- Has persistent sleep issues
- Seems constantly on edge
- Withdraws from relationships
- Feels overwhelmed most of the time

Early support can make a meaningful difference.

Final Thoughts

You don't have to eliminate your teen's anxiety.

You just have to help them feel less alone in it.

Your presence is powerful.

Your calm matters.

Your relationship is the foundation.

Quick Reference

In the moment:

1. Stay calm
2. Validate
3. Reduce talking
4. Support the body
5. Stay present

Regulate → Connect → Then problem-solve

Next Steps

If you're navigating anxiety with your teen and want additional support, you don't have to do it alone.

Book an [initial session](#) to get started.



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