OVERVIEW

1. 4:00-5:10pm - Teen Mass
2. 5:10-5:20pm - Hospitality in the Narthex
3. 5:25-5:50pm - Large Group/attendance in Church
   ➢ Video presentation (please view this video before coming to class)
     OCD & Anxiety Disorders: Crash Course Psychology
     www.youtube.com/watch?v=aX7jnVXXG5o
   ➢ Q and A with Dr. Peg
4. 5:55-7:00pm Small Group Lesson Plan

OBJECTIVES

- Help teens distinguish between Worry, Stress and Clinical Anxiety
- Provide teens with practical tools to deal with worry, stress, and anxiety
- Help teens recognize if they or a friend is struggling with anxiety and introduce them to effective coping strategies
- Help teens understand how they can realistically and safely assist friends or family members cope with stress and anxiety?
- Assure teens that God is present and active in their lives regardless of the situation(s) they find themselves in
- Underline that since all people are created in the image of God, their dignity and worth cannot be diminished by any condition including mental illness
- Assert that the Church, as the Body of Christ, through its healing ministries should inspire a particularly attentive attitude toward those who suffer from mental illness
- Make teens aware of the pastoral care Holy Family can offer to teens and families

LESSON COMPONENTS

A. Community Building (10-15 min)
   1. Risky-Safe - materials and instructions will be provided by the Teen Faith Office if requested

B. Shared experiences by adults and teens (30-35 minutes)
   1. Processing the Large Group Session – (5-7 min)
      Direct the teens to TH1 and ask them to fill in the Video Review box.
      After 2-3 minutes invite the teens to share
      • I thought the video did a good job of . . .
      • Personally the thing I found most helpful in the video was . . .

CATECHIST NOTES

Why are we talking about this topic?
Many Holy Family Teens are suffering with the effects of high levels of stress and anxiety
Parents of HF teens are increasingly frustrated in their attempts to get help for their teens with anxiety disorders
Anxiety disorders are the most common of all mental illnesses and affect 25 percent of all teens and 30 percent of all teen girls.
Research shows that untreated those with anxiety disorders are at higher risk to perform poorly in school, miss out on important social experiences, and engage in substance abuse.
Anxiety disorders often co-occur with depression as well as eating disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and others.

Adult Education, Pastoral Care and Teen Faith are collaborating to offer
- Parent Education on Teen Anxiety
- A vetted list of clinical resources for families coping with Teen Anxiety
- Support groups for teens and the parents of teens coping with anxiety if needed

This may be a topic teens may find difficult to address. For that reason you might want to share first and break the ice.
2. **Presentation** – you may want to divide up this section between you and the Peers. Teens can follow along and make notes on their TH

- Let’s go over some of the differences between stress and anxiety – turn to TH2 (7-10 min)

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**Stress**

Stress is the way our bodies and minds react to something which upsets our normal balance in life. Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor or stressor.

Feelings of stress are rooted in frustration, nervousness, anger, worry.

Stress can be positive (‘eustress’ is the name of good stress). It can help us to achieve difficult goals, to stretch our limits in beneficial ways.

Stress is accompanied by physical symptoms including faster heart beat, rapid breathing, muscle tension and fatigue.

With stress, you can deal with things and master them.

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**Anxiety**

Anxiety is a reaction to the stress. Anxiety is stress that continues after that stressor is gone.

In anxiety fear overcomes all emotions and is often accompanied by worry apprehension and an impending sense of doom. The source of this uneasiness is not always known or recognized.

Anxiety is **NEVER** positive; it is always debilitating.

Anxiety shares many of the physical symptoms of stress but anxiety brings about more severe versions of the symptoms, including chills, headaches, hot flashes and chest pains.

Anxiety brings a deep sense of helplessness.

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**CATECHIST NOTES**

**Background Resources**

**Short Articles/blogs**

- The Difference Between Stress And Anxiety - Huffington Post
- How Stress Becomes Fear and Anxiety - SwanWaters
- How to Help Teens Reduce Stress in High-Anxiety Times and Always
- Anxiety and Teens - WebMD
- Teen Anxiety, Stress and life can feel overwhelming for many teen
- Teens and Stress: How to Keep Stress in Check

**22 Things People With Mental Illness Wish Their Parents Knew**

**Ted Talks**

- Surviving anxiety: Solome Tibebu at TEDxTC - YouTube (7.27)
- Breaking the anxiety cycle through kindness | Steven Zanella | www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgU3i-g8ZRY

Solome Tibebu founded Anxiety In Teens, a mental health help site for youth, as an anxious 16-year-old in 2006.

Video

- OCD & Anxiety Disorders: Crash Course Psychology www.youtube.com/watch?v=aX7jnVXXG5o
Stop at this point and engage your teens in a short discussion

- What makes you worried or stressed out? How do you deal with that stress?
- Do you ever feel anxious? Why?

- Let’s focus a bit on anxiety. (5 min)
  - First, it is important to remember
    - Anxiety is not a sign of weakness!
    - Anxiety disorders are the most common of all mental illnesses affecting teens (25 percent of all teens and 30 percent of all teen girls).
    - As Dr. Peg said in large group, though hard to live with anxiety responds very well to treatment and we are learning more and more about anxiety disorders all the time which means even more effective treatments will become available.
  - Second, anxiety is a complicated reality. There are several different anxiety disorders so it important to get an accurate diagnosis so you know what you are dealing with and which treatment options will be the most effective.

This would be a great time for one or both of your Peers to break in and say something like:

I (we) just want to say, if you think you are suffering from anxiety it is really important to find an adult you trust and let them know what is going on. Anxiety, even excessive stress and worry, can really mess you up. I (we) know it’s hard to talk about but you deserve to get the support you need. You can talk to Fr. Terry, Dr. Peg, Amy, Mel, your parents, maybe a counselor at school.

- Let’s look at the signs we should pay attention to that might indicate we are dealing with anxiety (TH2). (5 min)

Make sure the teens understand the signs – i.e. what is ‘perfectionism’, what do we mean by ‘what if’ questions, have them come up with some examples of avoidance...

- Okay, so we know what stress is, how anxiety is different, what signs to look for, now let talk about how we can deal with/cope with stress and anxiety. (10 min)

Everyone turn to TH3. Take a few minutes to look over the suggestions. Look for ones you’ve tried that work and look for one that you haven’t tried but would like to.

- What are some tools or strategies you use to dispel the stress or worry?
- What new stress busting strategy listed on the previous page would you consider trying?
- Let’s list some people you feel you could talk to about stress or anxiety.

**CATECHIST NOTES**

This section is best led by the catechist(s). We want the teens to know that as adults we know anxiety is serious and difficult to deal with and we have their back. We want them to feel comfortable confiding in an adult who will be able to get them the help they need.

Teens are often frightened of how people are going to react if they disclose feeling anxious, depressed… Having one or both of your Peers reinforce the message that help is available, but they have to tell someone they need help is important and effective.

This would be a good section to let the Peers lead.

**KEY IDEAS THIS WEEK:**

- Stress and anxiety are NOT the same
- Recognize the signs of anxiety
- Anxiety is complicated but very treatable
- Bulk up on stress busting strategies
- Learn how you can realistically and safely
A. Scripture & Prayer (10 min)

1. Beginner’s Breathing Meditation
   Facilitator’s Script

One of the most effective ways to relax is to breathe. We don’t always think about breathing as a way of praying but it can be.

During this breathing meditation, you will focus on your breath. This will calm your mind and relax your body.

There is no right or wrong way to meditate. Whatever you experience during this breathing meditation is right for you. Don’t try to make anything happen, just observe.

Begin by finding a comfortable position, but one in which you will not fall asleep.

Sitting on the floor with your legs crossed is a good position to try.

[Pause here and wait till everyone finds a position and the space is quiet]

Close your eyes or focus on one spot in the room.

Roll your shoulders slowly forward and then slowly back.

Lean your head from side to side, lowering your left ear toward your left shoulder, and then your right ear toward your right shoulder.

Relax your muscles.

Your body will continue to relax as you meditate.

[Pause here for 10-15 seconds]

Observe your breathing. Notice how your breath flows in and out. Make no effort to change your breathing in any way, simply notice how your body breathes. Your body knows how much air it needs.

Sit quietly, seeing in your mind’s eye your breath flowing gently in and out of your body.

[Pause here for 15-20 seconds allowing the teens to breathe deeply a few times]

When your attention wanders, and it will, just focus back again on your breathing.

[Pause here for 20-30 seconds allowing the teens to breathe deeply a few times]

CATECHIST NOTES

- assist friends or family members cope with stress and anxiety
- God is always present and active in our lives no matter what situation we find ourselves in
- Your God given dignity and worth cannot be diminished by any condition including mental illness
- If you are worried, stressed or anxious tell someone – help, hope and healing are available

Holy Family is here for you!

See if one of your peers is willing to lead the meditation.

Whoever on your team is going to lead the meditation needs to practice reading the script several times before your class. Read slowly, loud enough so everyone can hear.

[Do not read the instructions marked in red]
Notice the stages of a complete breath... from the in breath... to the pause that follows... the exhale... and the pause before taking another breath...

See the slight breaks between each breath.

**[Pause here for 15-20 seconds allowing the teens to breathe deeply a few times]**

Feel the air entering through your nose... picture the breath flowing through the cavities in your sinuses and then down to your lungs...

**[Pause here for 15-20 seconds allowing the teens to breathe deeply a few times]**

2. **Scripture Reading** – while the teens are still focusing on their breathing read the following scripture passage.

“The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
“I will teach you about the power of God;
the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal.
Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,
that He may exalt you at the proper time cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

**[Pause here for 15-20 seconds allowing the teens to breathe deeply a few times]**

3. **The facilitator continues with the ending of the script**

Take a few more deep breaths and when you are ready open your eyes and raise your hand when you are ready to move on.

4. When all the hands are raised take a few minutes to process the experience.
   - Can I see a show of hands of how many people did feel themselves relax?
   - Raise your hand if you found it hard to focus on your breathing?
   - How many of you would like to try this meditation again at another class?
   - I am going to go around and ask each person to say one word that describes how they are feeling right now – start with one of the peers or if the peer led the meditation have the catechist be the first to share and then choose the person to their right or left.

Between the pauses and reading slowly this script should take 5-6 minutes.

Pause for 20-30 seconds and then read the Scripture text. It would be good to have a different voice read the scripture passage.

**Putting Faith Into Action**

After the meditation direct the teens to spend 2-3 minutes and fill in their I LEARNED statements in the TH.
**LESSON PREPARATION NOTES:**

Is there something I want to pick up or go over from last week’s class?

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My community building activity this week will be
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What parts of the lesson will the Peer Ministers lead/facilitate?
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Do I need anything from the Faith Office prior to class?
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Other ________________________________________________________________
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**CATECHIST NOTES**

Things I will need for class this week:
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The Key Ideas/Objectives for this week are
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Things I need to consult Teen Faith about
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Other ________________________________________________________________
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