

ANXIETY IN THE CLASSROOM

How to Manage Personal & Professional Anxiety

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Sometimes teachers experience their own anxiety when working with a student who is struggling. In these cases, it becomes important that teachers have **strategies** for coping and self-care.



OVERVIEW

Ten tips on how to manage personal and professional anxiety.

- 1** Learn about anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive disorder (OCD)
- 2** Create a Positive Relationship With The Student
- 3** Get Information From Past Teachers
- 4** Avoid Power Struggles
- 9** Frequent Communication with Home and counselor
- 5** Educate Yourself about What Resources the School Offers
- 6** Be Positive and Reward Small Success and Effort
- 7** Be Aware of Your Own Response to Stress
- 8** Debrief After Difficult Situations
- 10** Case consultation

HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Learn about anxiety/ OCD.

- As an educator, you are most likely curious and value learning about new things.
- If you have a student struggling with anxiety or OCD, familiarize yourself with these conditions – what they are, how they manifest, and their impact on functioning – in order to better understand what your student is experiencing and to dispel the idea that they are not real.

HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Create a positive relationship with the student.

- Sometimes it is difficult to establish rapport with a student who is struggling with anxiety, especially if anxiety is expressed as defiance or angry outbursts.
- However, a positive relationship is an extremely effective tool when influencing change in your student; thus, it is worth the effort to find a way “in”.



HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



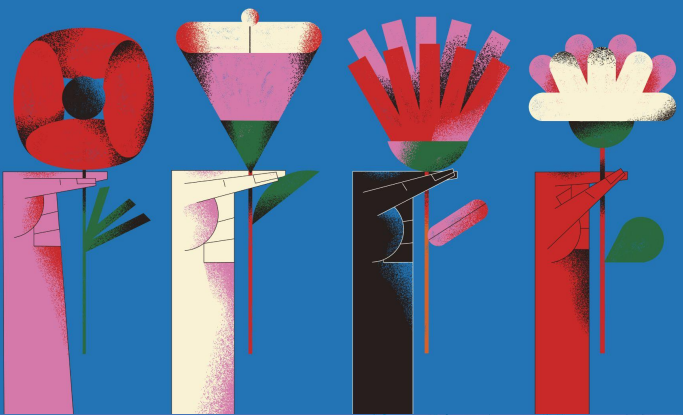
Create a positive relationship with the student.

Teachers might do this by creating opportunities for the student to exercise their strengths, recognizing and reinforcing when students are "doing well," setting up individual meetings to get to know each other better, collaborating on a project, and avoiding using fear, punishment, and shame as management techniques.

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Educate yourself on what resources the school offers.

- Schools sometimes have resources to help students who are struggling, including Lunch Buddies group, Social Skills group, homework help, and counseling.
- It is important for teachers to learn what their school has to offer so that they can direct their students to that help. Doing so provides relief to the teachers who aren't "going it alone".



HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Be positive and reward small success and efforts.

- Behavior change is often slow-moving and hard, making it difficult to maintain a student's motivation to keep trying and belief that things will get better.
- When a teacher recognizes and rewards small changes and effort, it can inspire the student to keep working hard and reminds the teacher of how much has been accomplished.

HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Get information from past teachers.

- Why reinvent the wheel? Connecting with a former educator may take some effort, but it often yields valuable information about what works with the student and what doesn't, family dynamics, and teacher coping strategies.
- In addition, do next year's teacher a favor and send him/her the information that you garnered during your tenure with the student, so they can start off the year ahead of the game.

HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Avoid power struggles.

- Power struggles don't work and often erode the relationship between student and teacher. It is important for teachers to remember that it is not their job to get their student to do anything.
- Their job is to support their student to face their fears and follow the plan as outlined. Empathy and validation are effective ways of side-stepping a power struggle.

HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Be aware of your own response to stress.

- With the focus on their student's anxiety, teachers sometimes fail to pay attention to what they are experiencing themselves. They may forget that their own response to stress influences the dynamics in the classroom and that they can positively impact the situation by adjusting their own coping strategies.
- Doing so also models effective stress and anxiety management strategies for their students, which is a very powerful form of teaching.

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DEBRIEF AFTER A DIFFICULT SITUATION TO LEARN HOW TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE

- Not all interventions work or go as planned. Instead of avoiding mistakes or mishaps, use them to identify weak areas in the plan and make improvements.
- Consider meeting with your student and others on the team to review the interaction and brainstorm ways to be more effective next time. This strategy also models a growth mindset for the student.



HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY

Frequent communication with home and counselor.

- The information feedback loop between school and home is crucial to any student's success but is especially important when a student is struggling.
- It is key that all members of the team are up to date on how a student is doing in class, at home, and with the plan. In addition, good communication between team members provides support that may prevent burnout and frustration.



HOW TO MANAGE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ANXIETY



Case Consultation.

- If a teacher is feeling stuck, getting consultation from a mentor or mental health specialist might be helpful.
- Teachers may present the case in a meeting or invite someone in to observe the class and offer feedback.

Working in the school system can be a difficult and often stressful job. It is important to remember to **take care of ourselves** as we continue to take care of our students.



REMEMBER TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF



Get information from past teachers.

- A great, free resource for all school personnel is Headspace <https://www.headspace.com/educators> . Headspace is a mindfulness app that can be helpful to you and your colleagues in your self-care journey, in addition to giving you ideas for helping your students.
- A longer list of self-care suggestions, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, can be found at iocdf.org/covid19/self-care-during-covid-19/

THANK YOU.

QUESTIONS ?

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