

Information on Anxiety Disorder for Professionals:

What Schools Can Do To Support Socially Anxious Students:

- **Provide Education and Training** for school personnel that would increase awareness of anxiety disorders, identify specific criteria to determine need for intervention, recognize anxiety as a legitimate disorder rather than willful misbehavior, teach appropriate skills to manage anxiety in school and educate parents of children with anxiety about the problem.
- **Establish Helping Partnerships** between parents and school personnel. It is critical that both be involved so that progress made in one place is not undone in the other. A school counselor can organize all involved individuals.
- **Maintain a Physically and Emotionally Supportive Environment** for anxious teenagers at school by:
 1. being inclusive in class activities and ensuring opportunities for shy children to participate,
 2. using structured classroom activities or assigning partners so that shy children are not left out,
 3. assigning a classroom buddy who provides support and assistance,
 4. providing structured social activities and assisting the initiation of social interactions, and
 5. rewarding efforts to initiate social interaction.
- **Define Specific Problem-Focused Interventions** that help address specific goals and increase confidence. For example, a student might be encouraged to ask two questions in class, ask two kids what they did over the weekend or start a conversation in the cafeteria about the food.
- **Make Appropriate and Timely Referrals to Mental Health Professionals.**

Useful Websites:

National Alliance on Mental Health. (2010). *National Alliance on Mental Health*. Retrieved from <http://www.nami.org>

The *National Alliance for Mental Illness* is a grassroots organization devoted to the sharing Information about mental health with people with mental illness, their families, their friends, and the general public, and their website contains a number of sections focused on Anxiety Disorders. Of particular interest to teachers seeking information on Anxiety Disorders in children is a section on "[Anxiety Disorders in Youth and Adolescents](#)" which identifies the behaviors associated with common types of anxiety disorders, and provides a brief overview of current research on possible causes and treatments. Also of interest to teachers is a useful handbook entitled [IEP and Inclusion Tips for Parents and Teachers](#). Although this guidebook is designed for an American context, the chapters on "Preparing for IEP Meetings," "Tracking Progress," "Forming Effective Partnerships Between Families and Schools," and "Handling Disagreements" all provide useful tips for Canadian teachers participating in IPP planning teams.

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http://www.childhealthpolicy.sfu.ca/research_quarterly_08/rq-pdf/RQ-2-12-Spring.pdf

The Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada - a not for profit charitable organisation to promote the prevention, treatment and management of anxiety disorders.
www.anxietycanada.ca/