

RealQuestions RealSolutions

ChristianFamilySolutions.org

We asked teens to submit their most pressing questions about mental health and wellness.

The serious submissions we received reveal the serious state of youth mental health.

The U.S. Surgeon General has sounded the alarm with a [mental health alert](#):

We need to rally around our young people.

We can start by listening to their questions.

Q: What if homework and grades are causing anxiety?

Shem Biebert, LPC-IT, SAC-IT, School Based Therapist and Student Support Coordinator, Christian Family Solutions

Great question and one that's very common for many students. I also realize that anxiety is not fun to deal with.

First off, I'd like to look at this from a strengths-based perspective, borrowing a technique from Dr. David Burns and his book *Feeling Great* (Burns, 2020). Let's ask the question, *What does this anxiety tell us about the student that is awesome and says some cool things about them?*

Well, anxiety about homework and grades tells me this student cares about their work and how they do, which tells me they have high expectations and standards. The anxiety also seems to show us that the student is driven, dedicated, and wants to do well. Seeing these strengths may help take some of the edge off by showing that not all anxiety is bad. In fact, mild amounts of stress and anxiety can often motivate us and get us ready to perform a needed task.

I would then suggest looking at barriers to success. Are there any additional factors are getting in the way of completing homework as needed? Does the student need additional support in some way? Tutoring, connecting with teachers, or other support may help a student complete more difficult assignments as needed. We could also look at study habits and see if any changes could be made there to maximize study time.

If a student is getting unrealistic or unhealthy expectations from themselves or others, he or she may need to **reframe the situation**. In other words, view the situation differently. Perhaps the expectations are not realistic. Perhaps you might realize that you are giving your best effort and can feel content and at peace that you are using all of your God-given ability. After all, God's opinion on this is much more important than the opinions of our families, friends or even ourselves (reference Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 2:4b).

In that light, some healthy coping skills can usually be helpful to manage the higher stress levels that school can bring.

COPING SKILLS FOR STRESS:

- Be sure you are framing the situation correctly.
- Learn and practice deep breathing techniques.
- Get outside for a break or exercise.
- Talk with peers or trusted friends.
- Review your sleep and nutrition patterns.

Finally, I love this suggestion by Paul in Philippians 4 to not worry about things but instead talk to God and let him know what you need while sharing what you're grateful for (v 6-7). When we do that, Paul says, "God's peace" will guard our thoughts and emotions. What an incredible promise!

Christian Family Solutions has a team of professional counselors deployed to schools, partnering with school staff to offer clinical level services to youth.

- **Clinical assessment to uncover the source of the hurt and create a treatment plan**
- **Sessions with an experienced clinician on site or through telehealth**
- **Access to higher levels of care if needed to address more serious concerns**
- **The unconditional love of Christ to build trust and offer hope beyond healing**

ChristianFamilySolutions.org | 800-438-1772