



## Tips for Parents of Students with Anxiety

Listed below are some signs and tips on how to assist our students with anxiety. Before discussing these signs and tips, it is important to understand that anxiety is an automatic physiological response to fear and danger, both real and perceived. This response can and will be different for each of our students and the triggers that cause this will be as well. With this in mind, please read over the common signs and then tips on how to assist our students if you observe these signs.

### Common Signs of Anxiety

- Excessive questioning
- Constant need for reassurance
- Physical complaints
  - Trembling or shaking
  - Sweating
  - Nausea
- Avoidance of activities
- Perfectionism
- Easily distressed
  - Crying for unknown reason
- Inability to focus
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Behavior issues (for some, stress and anxiety can look like anger and frustration)

### Parent Tips

- **Set small goals so they can start seeing success.** Sometimes a project or assignment can be overwhelming. Break it up into smaller steps so it becomes easier to manage.
- **Work on organizational strategies.** Being disorganized can bring on stress. Work together with your child to organize their work and assignments. Creating systems can often alleviate stress.
- **Identify what is making them anxious.** Help your child identify what they are specifically worried about. For example: Is it the multiplication that is hard for him, or is filling in the bubbles on the test sheet really the difficult part? Sometimes just saying out loud what the issue is can bring some relief. Understanding what the concerns are and giving them to God can help both of you come up with strategies to reduce stress (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- **Teach them Deep Breathing.** When someone is anxious they tend to take quick, shallow breaths causing “overbreathing”. Deep breathing helps you slow down your breath and starts to lower your stress levels. With this breath we can praise the Lord together! (Psalm 150:6).
- **Teach them to get present.** Ask, “What is happening right now?” Anxiety only happens while thinking about the past or future, but never in the present.

(Matthew 6:34)

- **Sometimes we need to change the subject - Move a muscle, change a thought.** We can always come back to it once we are calm. Have them do a physical task that causes them to focus on something other than the anxiety. Remember to change the focus to what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable (Philippians 4:8).
- **Pray together.** Let go and give it to the Lord. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Philippians 4:6, NIV).
  - You can substitute “anything” for each anxiety provoking stressor that your student identified. “Do not be anxious about \_\_\_\_\_, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”
- **Be an encouragement.** Many students with anxiety have self-defeating dialogue. Build up positive inner thoughts so that students will feel confident and at peace with themselves (1 Thessalonians 5:11).
- **Have them say some affirmations.** This will change their mindset and calm fear. There is not a better place to start affirming truths than the Bible. Bible truths strengthen everything about us, for the Word of God is alive and powerful. “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12 ESV). Below are some possible affirmations.



SCS Student Life Committee