PERFECTIONISM AND ANXIETY IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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YOU WILL LEAVE HERE TODAY:

• With a better understanding of the mechanisms of anxiety

• Knowing how to tell if anxiety might be a problem

• With strategies to support anxious/perfectionistic students at home

• With information on various supports that may help at school.
WHAT IS ANXIETY?

- Normal reaction to stressful situations
- Thinking
- Behavior
- Physical
- Can be very motivating!
ISSUES UNIQUE TO ADOLESCENCE

• **Developing identity**
• More autonomy
• Able to think more logically
  • Self-conscious
  • Imaginary audience
  • Sensitive to criticism
• Hormonal changes
• Frontal Lobe
  • Intensifies reactions
WHEN ANXIETY IS A PROBLEM

- Anxiety disorders can be present in 3-20% of children and adolescents

- Girls are 2-3 times more likely than boys to have a disorder

- Separation anxiety, generalized anxiety, PTSD, social phobia

- Causes:
  - Genetic
  - Temperament
  - Family
WHEN ANXIETY IS A PROBLEM

• Excessive for age/developmental level
• Inappropriate or excessive for the situation on a frequent basis
• Has persisted for several weeks or months

• **This does not mean your child has a diagnosis of anxiety!**
WHEN ANXIETY IS A PROBLEM

- Affects social functioning
- Affects academic functioning
WHAT CAN PARENTS DO AT HOME?
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• **Growth Mindset** / Internal Locus of Control vs. Fixed Mindset / External locus of control
• “Not yet”
• Setbacks are part of the learning process
WHAT CAN PARENTS DO AT HOME?

• Process vs. Product Praise
  • Builds stronger neural connections
  • Learn the challenge
  • More perseverance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWv1VdDeoRY
WHAT CAN PARENTS DO AT HOME?

• Be consistent

• Maintain reasonable goals

• Accept mistakes as part of growing up

• Talk and listen to your child

• Don’t assume your child is being difficult

• Relaxation/calming techniques
WHAT CAN WE DO AT SCHOOL?

• Support a growth mindset within the classroom

• Deemphasize test scores, emphasize growth

• Communicate well with parents about concerns

• Counselors, social worker, and school psychologist

• Universal screenings for internalizing problems
MORE RESOURCES

- http://edut.to/2lvNQyW
- https://mindsetonline.com/abouttheauthor/