

Daily Digest Conversation Cards
Section: Mental Health
Focus: Anxiety

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Focus Mission: The focus of this section is to help teens differentiate between stress and the different types of anxiety, understand and identify the symptoms of anxiety/stress, and find healthy ways to cope with these symptoms.

Focus Delivery Method

Target Audience: Middle and High school students

Course length: 5-10 minutes

Course setting: Classroom, after school during snack time

Focus Learning Objectives

After engaging in the conversation prompts about anxiety, students will be able to:

1. Realize the physical effects that stress/anxiety has on the body
2. Compare and contrast the differences between stress and generalized anxiety disorder
3. Think critically about why it's important to differentiate between stress and anxiety
4. Understand the effects that social anxiety has on individuals.
5. Think critically about how they approach social situations in their own lives
6. Recognize the symptoms of a panic attack and learn grounding techniques to alleviate symptoms of stress
7. Understand healthy ways to cope with symptoms of stress and anxiety

Focus Prompt Outline

1. Physical Symptoms of Stress
2. Stress vs. Generalized Anxiety Disorder
3. Social Anxiety
4. Panic Attacks
5. Coping with Anxiety

Prompt 1. Physical Symptoms of Stress

Prompt Description: This prompt will inform students of the physical symptoms that stress and anxiety have on the body.

Prompt Learning Objectives:

1. Realize the physical effects that stress/anxiety has on the body

Source:

- [Stress Management](#)
- [Stress and Your Health](#)

Facts in Quiz Format:

- **Title:** Stress Gets Physical
- **Instruction:**
- **Question/Answers:** What are some of the physical symptoms of stress and anxiety?
 - Heart disease
 - High blood pressure
 - Obesity
 - Acne
 - **All of the above**
- **Explanation:** Though anxiety and stress both take a huge toll on your mental health, there are also many serious physical symptoms to consider as well.

Follow-up Conversation Starters: Do you think teens today are more or less stressed out than teens 50 years ago? What are some of the biggest stressors in your life? Why?

Prompt 2. Stress vs. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Prompt Description: This prompt educates students on how to differentiate between everyday stress and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This will allow them to recognize the difference between normal stressors and a potential mental health concern.

Prompt Learning Objectives:

1. Compare and contrast the differences between stress and Generalized Anxiety Disorder
2. Think critically about why it's important to differentiate between stress and anxiety

Source:

- [What's the difference between stress and anxiety?](#)
- [Prevalence of any anxiety disorder among adolescents](#)

Facts in Quiz Format:

- **Title:** Is it anxiety or am I just stressed?
- **Instruction:** Which of the following is a description of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)? Which is a description of stress?
- **Question/Answers:**
 - Persistent, excessive worries that don't go away even in the absence of something stressful. **(GAD)**
 - Feeling overwhelmed or worried, typically caused by an outside source. **(stress)**
- **Explanation:** It is estimated that almost 32% of teens live with an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders like GAD can have persistent, negative effects on your mental and physical wellbeing.

Follow-up Conversation Starters: Do you think most people understand the difference between stress and anxiety? Is there a problem with people saying they have anxiety just because it's trendy? Why or why not?

Prompt 3. Social Anxiety

Prompt Description: This prompt will inform students about how prevalent social anxiety is in adolescents and how it affects those who have it.

Prompt Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the effects that social anxiety has on individuals.
2. Think critically about how they approach social situations in their own lives.

Source:

- [Social Phobia \(for Teens\)](#)
- [8 Things People with Social Anxiety Crave](#)
- [Social Anxiety Disorder](#)

Facts in Quiz Format:

- **Title:** Shy or Social Anxiety
- **Instruction:** Which of the following statements is false?
- **Question/Answers:**
 - **People who are quiet and introverted will likely develop social anxiety.**
 - Social anxiety usually begins in young teenagers.
 - People with social anxiety want friendships.
 - Around 9% of teens have social anxiety.
- **Explanation:** Most people who are shy as kids don't develop social anxiety, though shyness is an indicator. People with social anxiety want friends and relationships just like everyone else, but their anxiety can deter them from making connections.

Follow-up Conversation Starters: Do you think technology and social media have had an influence on how teens view social situations? Why or why not?

Prompt 4. Panic Attacks

Prompt Description: This prompt will inform children of what a panic attack looks and feels like and give them the tools to overcome a panic attack and other stressful situations.

Prompt Learning Objectives:

1. Recognize the symptoms of a panic attack and learn grounding techniques to alleviate symptoms of stress

Source:

- [Panic Attacks and Panic Disorder](#)
- [Coping technique for Anxiety](#)

Facts in Quiz Format:

- **Title:** What a Panic Attack Feels Like
- **Instruction:** Which of the following are symptoms of a panic attack?
- **Question/Answers:**
 - **Racing heart**
 - **Sense of terror or doom**
 - Feeling happy or excited
 - **Breathing difficulties**
 - Losing your sense of smell
 - **Tingling or numbness**
- **Explanation:** Many people use grounding techniques to help with panic attacks. To do this, find one thing around you that you can see, touch, hear, smell, and taste. Keep doing this until you feel calm.

Follow-up Conversation Starters: Practice grounding tech

Prompt 5. Coping with Anxiety

Prompt Description: This prompt will inform students of the best and healthiest ways they can alleviate some of their stress/anxiety.

Prompt Learning Objectives:

1. Understand healthy ways to cope with symptoms of stress and anxiety

Source:

- [5 Ways to Deal with Anxiety](#)

Facts in Quiz Format:

- **Title:** Have Hope That You Can Cope
- **Instruction:** Coping mechanisms are things that people use to alleviate negative mental health symptoms Which of the following is not a healthy coping mechanism for anxiety?
- **Question/Answers:**
 - **Get enough sleep, food, and exercise**
 - **Spend some time in nature**
 - **Practice grounding techniques when you're stressed**
 - Use drugs, tobacco, or alcohol.
- **Explanation:** Using different substances may feel calming at the moment but it's a temporary fix that will have a negative impact on other areas of your life.

Follow-up Conversation Starters: Which technique do you think will be most useful in your life? Why? How could using substances create additional problems in your life?