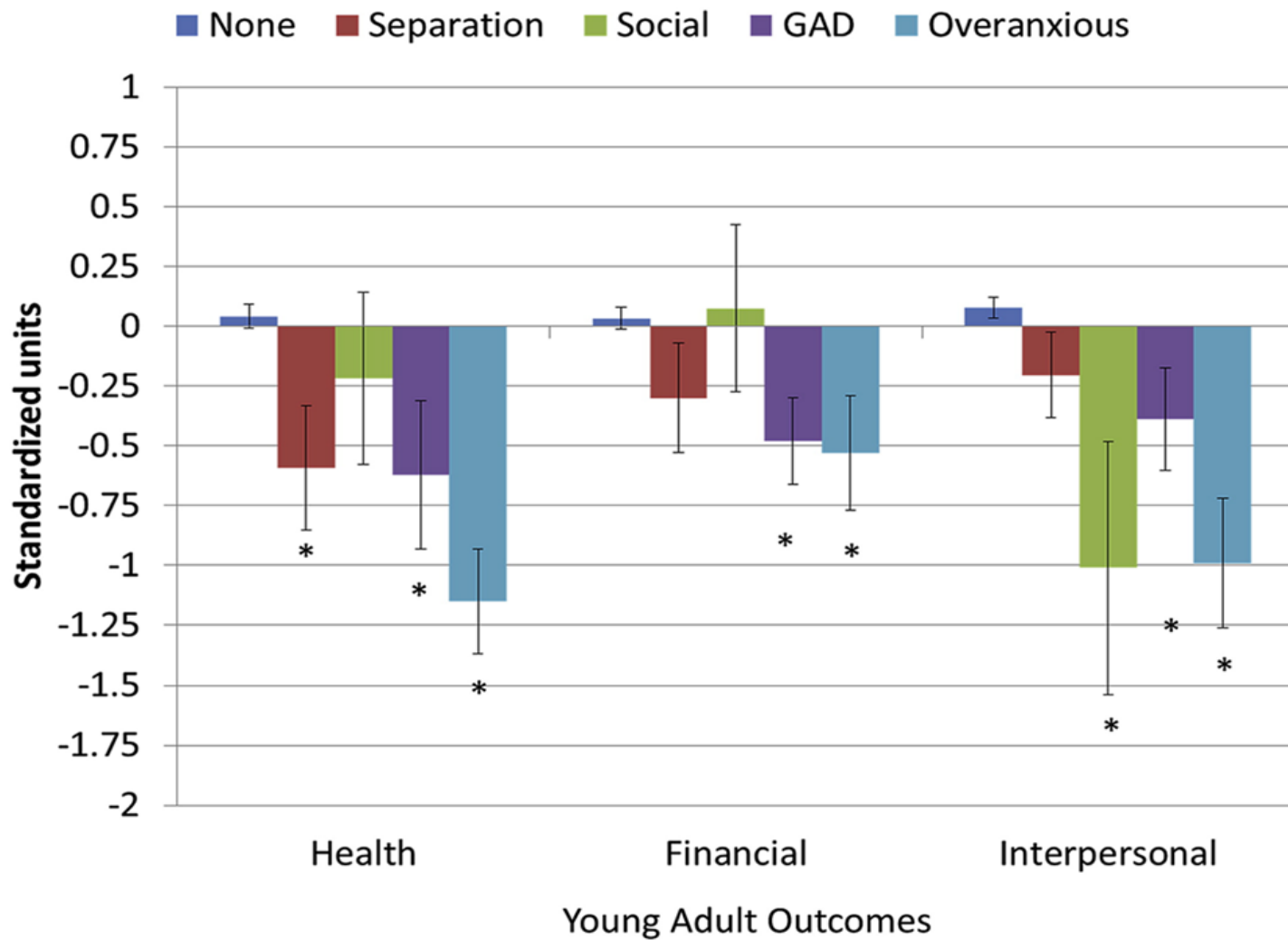


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Anxiety in Adolescents



Introduction

- Anxiety is The Feeling of Worry, Apprehension, Fear and/or Panic in Response to Situations Which Seem Overwhelming, Threatening, Unsafe or Uncomfortable
- It is Common in All Children And a Normal Part of Development
- Anxiety Can Become Problematic if it Does Not Subside With Time or Begins to Interfere with the Child's Functioning
- Adolescents Typically Worry About School Performance, Social Competence, Independence and Health/Body Image Issues

Types of Anxiety Disorders

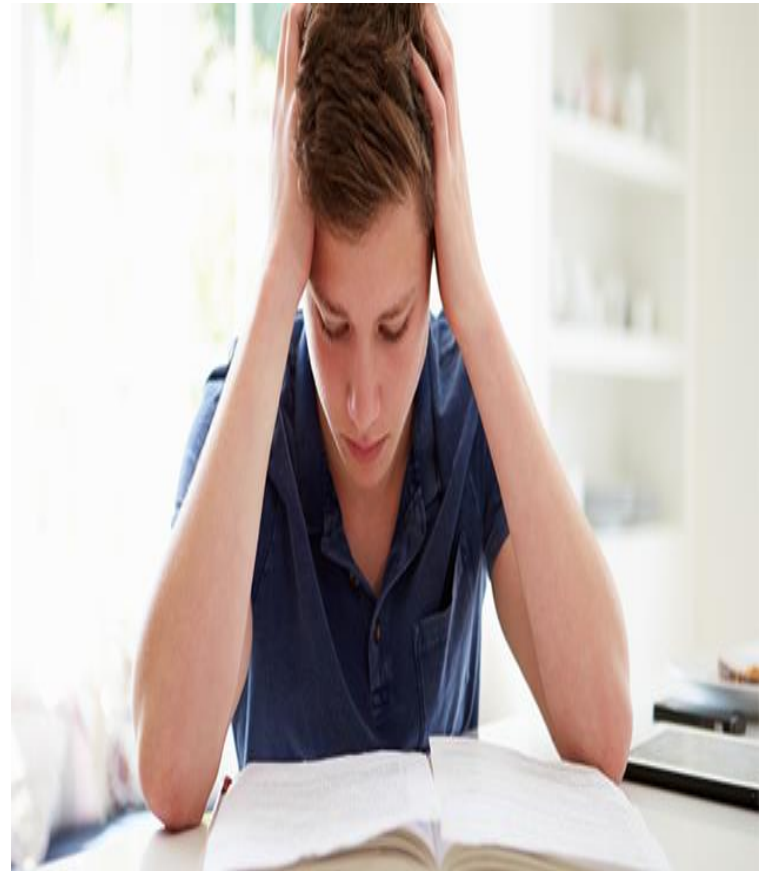
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder*
- Social Phobia*
- Panic Disorder*
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Specific Phobia
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Separation Anxiety Disorder

Epidemiology

- Anxiety is One of the Most Common Forms of Psychopathology Among Children and Adolescents
- Life Time Prevalence Rate of **25%** for Children 13-18 years old (~6% with Severe Disease)
- Slightly More Common in Females
- Highly Comorbid with **Depression**, ADHD, **Substance Abuse**, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Learning and Language Disorders

Risk Factors

- Genetics
- Child's Temperament
- Child's Attachment Style
- Parenting Techniques



Signs of Anxiety

- Adolescents Will Typically Express a Worry or Fear, Which They Often Do Not Realize Is Excessive or Unreasonable
- May Report Feelings of Inner Restlessness
- May Exhibit a Tendency to Be Excessively Wary and Vigilant
- **Physical Symptoms, Such as Headache or Stomach Ache, Are Common**
- May Appear Extremely Shy, Avoid New Activities or Experiences
- May Engage in Risky Behavior, Drug Experimentation or Impulsive Sexual Behavior

Signs of Anxiety

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - Characterized by Excessive Worry in a Number of Areas
 - Trouble Controlling Their Worries
- Social Phobia
 - Characterized by Feeling Scared or Uncomfortable in Social Settings or Performance Settings
 - Associated With Fear of Social Scrutiny or Doing Something Embarrassing
- Panic Disorder
 - Characterized by Recurrent Episodes of Intense Fear That Occur Unexpectedly (AKA Panic Attack)

When To Refer for Treatment

- Marked Decline in School Performance
- Changes in Sleep/Eating Habits
- Severe Mood Swings
- Frequent Outbursts of Anger or Aggression
- Sexually Acting Out
- Use of Drugs And/Or Alcohol
- Threats to Harm Self or Others, Self-Injurious Behavior
- Strange Thoughts or Beliefs, Unusual Behavior

Treatment

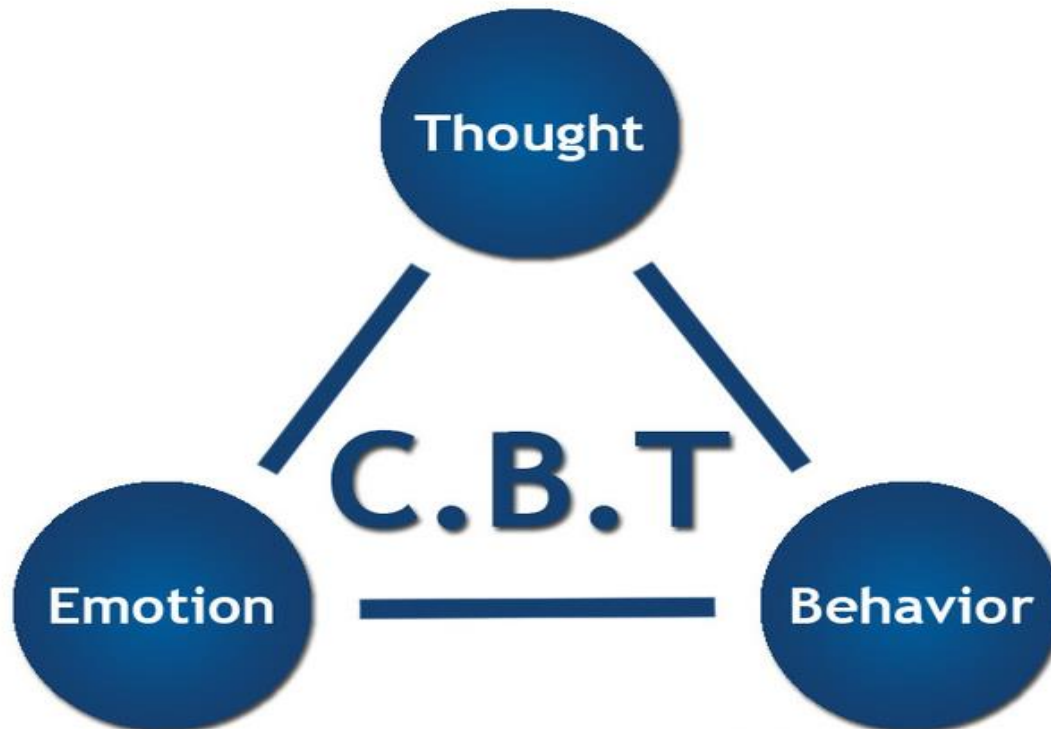
- Takes a Multimodal Approach, Involving Family, School and Mental Health Professionals
- Mild Anxiety Generally is Treated with Psychotherapy, With The Most Evidence for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Moderate to Severe Anxiety is Treated with a Combination of Psychotherapy and Medication (Generally Antidepressants)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Based on Two Central Tenants:
 - Our Thoughts Influence Our Emotions and Behaviors
 - Our Behavior Affects Our Thought Patterns and Emotions
- Goal is to Help Patient Recognize and Change Maladaptive Thoughts

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

What we *think* affects
how we act and feel.



What we *feel* affects
what we think and do.

What we *do* affects
how we think and feel.

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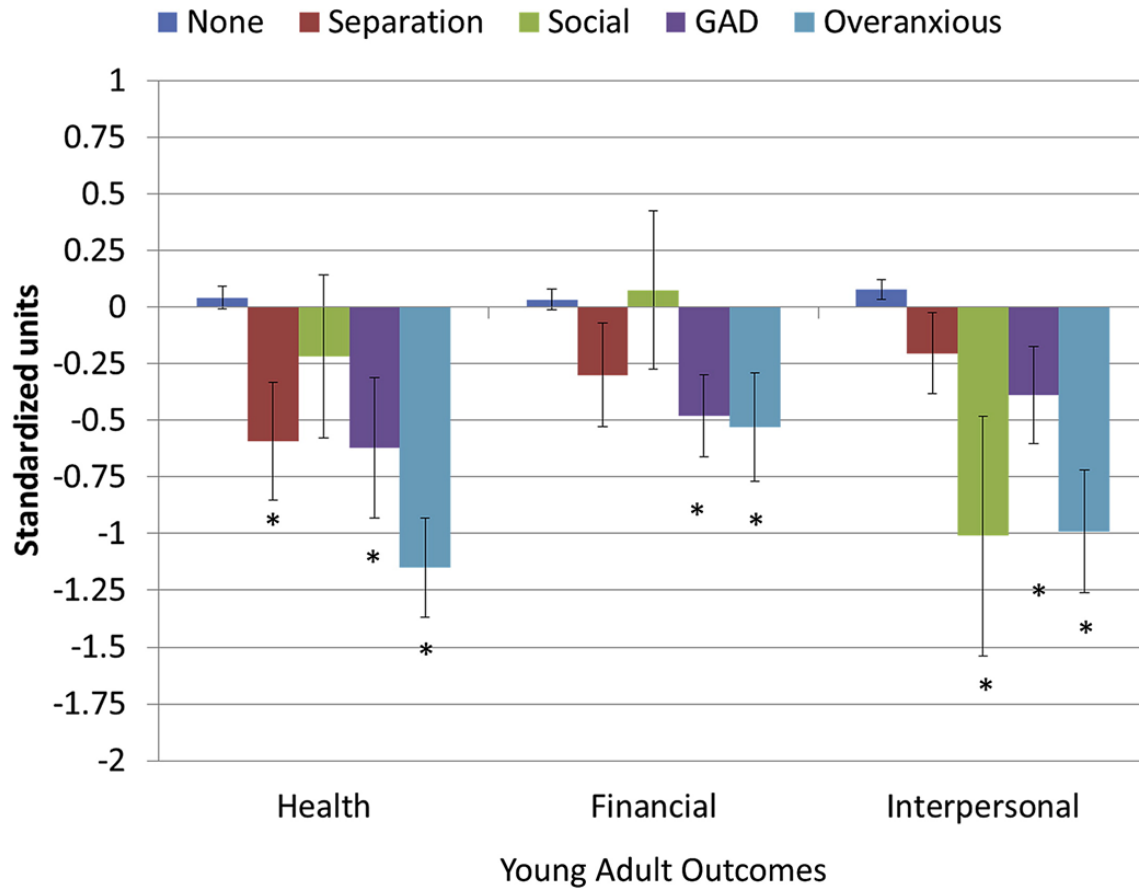
What Can You Do to Help?

- Be Empathetic and Understanding
- Avoid Critical and Shaming Statements
- Do Not Minimize the Severity of Anxiety Symptoms
- Encourage Coping Strategies That Do Not Rely on Avoidance
- Advocate for Treatment of Anxiety
- **Make Referrals to Guidance Counselors and Other Mental Health Professionals**

Recommendations You Can Give To Students With Anxiety

- Encourage Daily Physical Activity, Well-Balanced Diet and Adequate Sleep
- Advocate for Abstinence From Drugs and Alcohol and Limited Use of Caffeine
- Help Students Develop Realistic, Attainable Goals And Focus On Positive Aspects of Their Life
- Encourage Students to Discuss Concerns With Family or Adult They Feel Comfortable With

Why Early Detection is Important



Why Early Detection is Important

- Anxiety Disorders Can Disrupt Normal Psychosocial Development
- Can Lead to Impairment in Social, Family and Academic Functioning
- Adolescents with Anxiety Disorders are at Risk of Developing New Anxiety Disorders, Depression and Substance Abuse
- Adolescents with Anxiety or Depression Predicted a Two-to-Threefold Increased Risk of Anxiety or Depressive Disorders in Adulthood

Why Early Detection is Important

- Educational Implications:
 - Difficulty or Inability to Complete Work
 - Fear and Avoidance of Participating in Class
 - School Disruption
 - School Avoidance
 - Disruption of Normal Peer Socialization

Summary

- Anxiety in Children and Adolescents is Common
- It Generally Responds Well to Treatment
- Treatment is Multimodal and Can Involve Psychotherapy And/Or Medications
- Untreated Anxiety Can Lead to Other Psychiatric Diagnoses and Poorer Outcomes as Adults

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