



WHAT'S UP?

A PAGE FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

The newsletter designed to help you better understand and relate to today's youth culture and your church's teenagers— including your own.

SPRING 2019

CULTURE WATCH



More teens than ever admit that they often feel very overwhelmed with the pressures and stresses of life that are causing major anxiety. Many people make the assumption that today's teens are simply less resilient and cannot handle the normal difficulties of life, while many others would submit that today's teenager is more overwhelmed with pressure than ever.



It is entirely possible that today's teenager has a significantly lower threshold for what they may consider anxiety, however the changes in our culture at neck-breaking speeds may have a great deal to do with the issue of anxiety in adolescence. It could be that the very things our culture assumes every teen needs are major contributors to their anxiousness: doting parents, super-advanced technological devices, "limitless" opportunities.

Arguably one of the greatest factors to the epidemic of anxiety is

the 24/7 connection to the social media world. Young people (and older people for that matter) only post pictures and videos of their greatest moments. No one posts pictures of when they are cleaning their bedroom or doing the laundry. No young people record and share the moments they look their worst or appear less than ideal. This mentality with social media has unintentionally created a major problem for the younger generations: their self-esteem is now suffering from the constant comparisons to their peers and favorite celebrities.

Another major contributor (though maybe less popular) to the increased anxieties is related to mom's and dad's expectations. The pursuit to raise the "super-kid" is an expectation that many young people simply cannot handle, much less attain. The increased percentage of young people worrying about college entry essays at a way-too-young age is unhealthy. Helping teenagers process the pressures of life is essential, but piling on expectations that may be far out of reach is crippling them.

The articles in *Forward* and *Velocity* magazines provide great discussion starters for you and your teen. Also, devotions for teens cover the same topics as the adult devotions in *FUSION* and *FUSION*Next, creating opportunities for family Bible study. Read them, discuss them, and use them as a tool for discipleship in the home.

HEADS UP!



Spring is the perfect time to do some cleaning with your family—go through old clothes or toys and donate the things you no longer use. It's also a great time to do some outdoor work together—plant some flowers or a garden, go for a walk, or sit outside and read books, play a game, or draw something together. Whatever you choose to do, have fun and make the most of this warmer season with your family.

PARENTING TEENS

So, what do we as parents do to help our teenagers process pressure and stresses of life? How can we curb our own expectations in a way that helps our teens still aim for their goals, yet without letting the fear of failure stifle them? Here are a couple of ideas that may help:

1. Be an example to them of how to process pressure.

That may seem like an obvious statement, but is more difficult to actually accomplish. Help them understand that anxiety in life is a normal part of dealing with stress and pressure, but show them it is possible to push through it without it crippling them. Let them see you struggle, but also let them see you rest when you need to. Let them see you succeed, but also let them see you process failure. Lean on the Lord in front of them whenever life is pressuring you.

2. Teach them to be more thankful, and pray with them. Philippians 4:6-7 says to not be anxious about anything, but to take our prayer requests to God with thanksgiving. God's peace will guard our hearts when we do so. Teach your teen

to be thankful so that when they begin to feel anxious, they can always see the silver lining and trust the Lord with the outcome. Always look for opportunities to pray together, even over small details of their day.

3. Talk about the differences between real life and a filtered life.

It is no secret that most people only post the best pictures of themselves or the best stories of their life experiences, but your teen needs to constantly be reminded of that. The most polished image of a celebrity doesn't tell the story of real life. Everyone has bad days and everyone has struggles in real life. Remind your teen of the words of Jesus, *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

4. Seek help whenever it is necessary. Connect with other parents who have dealt with anxiety in their teenagers. Ask good questions, and learn from them. And, if there is ever a time that medical help is necessary, get it. There is no shame in seeking medical advice if that is the next step.

ON the CALENDAR

- Mar 1** Peanut Butter Lovers Day
- Mar 8** Popcorn Lovers Day
- Mar 12** Plant a Flower Day
- Mar 26** Make Up Your Own Holiday Day
- Apr 2** Children's Book Day
- Apr 8** Draw a Picture of a Bird Day
- Apr 10** National Siblings Day
- Apr 21** Easter Sunday
- May 4** Star Wars Day
- May 7** National Teachers Day
- May 11** Eat What You Want Day
- May 12** Mother's Day

CELEBRATE!

POSITIVE NEWS ABOUT TEENS

Recently, at a grocery store in Louisiana, a young employee noticed another young man watching him stock shelves. The employee kindly offered to show the other young man—who has autism—how to restock the shelves. The employee allowed the young man to help him for thirty minutes, guiding him the entire time. Instead of ignoring this young man, the young employee chose to show him kindness.

Do you like *What's Up?* Let us know your thoughts and suggestions for improvement. Contact us at fusion@d6family.com or call 800-877-7030.



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1-7
page 2