



## Stress and Anxiety

TCP Compilation Student Voice and Responses

### 1. What impact has stress and/or anxiety had on me, my friends, my family, or my schooling? (#) – number of repeat responses

Me	My Friends
<p>Self-Medicating            Makes me angry at myself and sometimes            Others            Chest Pain (7)            It makes me want to harm myself – cutting/suicide            Lowers my self-worth, thinking about all the things I fail at            It makes me shut down            Headaches (8)            Makes me stay in my room at home            Makes me isolate myself, withdrawn (3)            Upset stomach (8)            Makes it hard to process my thoughts            Fear of Impending Doom (3)            Heart Palpitations (6)            Dizziness (6)            Numbness and Tingling (8)            Makes me stay quiet            Makes me not eat            Makes me eat too much            Sleep problems (8)            Makes me want to sleep            Makes it so that I can't rest/sleep (6)            Pulsing in the ear (2)            Weakness in legs (6)            Isolation works with my anxiety and depression to make me feel at my lowest with a lot of negative thoughts            Lots of worry about the future</p>	<p>I have lost friends. My anxiety ruins my relationships and keeps me from making new friends.            Makes me not know where I stand with my friends and I need lots of reassurance.            I impact my friends' emotions negatively.            They try to help but they don't know how.            Friendship with me can negatively impact their reputation.            I feel like they are talking about me behind my back.            It has gotten to where I don't like to be bothered by anyone and if someone does I get really mad, but I would like to be more sociable.            I am a burden to my friends.            It keeps me from making friends.            I have become more isolated and withdrawn.            It limits my activities (parties, games, etc.)            I lie and struggle with being honest with my friends.            My friends get frustrated because they don't understand.            I have trust issues.            I can overwhelm and mentally drain people.            They want to help me and it makes me pull back because I don't know how they are going to react to me.</p>

<b>Me</b>	<b>My Family</b>
<p>I feel like I'm in a box that is closing in  I feel like I'm crazy.  I'm strange.  Catastrophic thinking  Over-thinking  Lack of focus, being distracted  It is hard for me trust myself or others.</p>	<p>Causes fighting with my sister  Causes me to distance myself and has impacted my bond with my sisters  They stress about me. (2)  Addiction runs in my family and abuse runs in my family and it is all connected.  My relatives have disowned me.  Has had a financial impact on my family to have to pay for my services  It used to be bad enough to where I was closed off from my family and didn't form a good bond with my younger sisters.  I worry about acceptance from my family.  I am a burden to my family.  They have disconnected from me because they don't know what is going on with me.  They think something is wrong with me.  Sometimes they don't have time for it and I feel like they don't care about me.  It limits my family interactions.  I don't trust my family.  I don't get invited to family stuff.</p>
<p>My stress and anxiety keep from doing the things I used to enjoy and now hate. People make fun of me and accuse me of faking my anxiety. My Dad worries about me and stresses. My family has pretty much disowned me because they can't handle me. My friends can't deal with me. I'm too much for them because of my anxiety.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>My Schooling</b></p> <p>Makes me miss school  Causes me to shut down and not listen  I drink at school.  Causes me to have angry outbursts that cause discipline consequences.  It causes worry which causes me to procrastinate  Makes me lose my motivation especially in the spring when it gets to testing time because stress and anxiety become overwhelming and I shut down.  Things students and teachers say to me and to each other make me lose motivation  It is affecting my learning when I am at school and when I am at home.  When I try to focus or complete my work I get distracted easily and I want to cry or sleep.  I hate school.  It affects how much I talk and how much I am involved.  Stress just seems to make it harder to focus and overall it can make most situations worse.  It has affected my grades and my eating habits at school.  I normally snap on people and shut people out and not pay attention to my schooling.  Sometimes I can't control my words and I want to be alone and calm down.</p>	

I notice my stress the most when I become angry and it makes everyone around me angry and upset.  
 I do lots of second guessing on tests.  
 It impacts my motivation and how I think about my future.  
 I can't make myself ask my teachers for help.  
 I don't finish my school work.  
 I feel like people are talking about me or looking at me.  
 I don't do anything to draw attention to me.  
 Group work and presentations make me anxious.  
 Debates and arguments that are a part of assignments relying on conflict are very stressful to me.  
 I am overly involved as a way of coping  
 I can't be in crowded spaces.  
 I am not optimistic about my future and doubt that opportunities will really happen for me.

**1. I've been known to express my feelings of stress and/or anxiety negatively.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
9%	0%	18%	27%	45%

**2. Stress and/or anxiety has affected my day-to-day life in a negative way.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
0%	0%	27%	45%	27%

**3. How likely is it that I will attend individual or small group sessions focused on stress and/or anxiety?**

Never	Not Likely	Undecided	Likely	Always	Not Answered
0%	0%	18%	45%	27%	9%

**4. How likely is it that I will recommend a friend to attend individual or small group sessions focused on stress and/or anxiety?**

Never	Not Likely	Undecided	Likely	Always	Not Answered
0	9%	18%	18%	27%	27%

**5. What change would I like to see for myself?**

More studying and homework being done.  
 I would like to be happy again.  
 Becoming a boy.  
 I have already made the change.  
 I would like to change the way I think about myself.  
 I would like to see myself being more sure in my decisions and more confident in my actions. I would

also like my paranoia and caution to go down a lot.  
I would like to not keep in all my emotions so much. I would also like to focus on my schoolwork more and keep up my grades.  
I would like to be more social.  
Not worrying about every little thing and being able to enjoy life again.  
Therapy  
Being able to appreciate myself, my wellbeing, and my parents

#### **6. Something else you might want to know about me is...**

Marching band is my happy place.  
I'm different than other boys and my family really doesn't know and I am nervous to tell them.  
I'm transgendered and after my Dad died, his family showed nothing but greed and we lost so much and it made my anxiety worse.  
I tend to get anxiety often at random times and the my response to it is also random.  
I have depression and severe social anxiety. I have struggled with both of these since 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I come from a troubled past and try to have a positive outlook on life in general.  
I've been to the mental hospital before for cutting because of all the stress that was put on me.  
I'm really shy and scared of a lot of things. I have depression, anxiety, PTSD, mood disorder, and personality disorder.  
I suffer with depression. My mom died when I was eight years old. I pass out because of anxiety. I'm getting therapy.  
I have bad panic attacks when I am yelled at.



#### **7. What do you care about or what is important to you?**

Family and friends that support you.  
My family, friends, life, and my future.  
My best friend, mom, and pets  
Doing what I love in life and taking care of my family.  
My family is the most important thing to me and I would do anything for them.  
My friends and family and music because it helps me not focus on the bad things.  
My mom, my sister and brother, my boyfriend, my dog and my best friend.

My Dad, surviving high school, God, my fandoms  
Not making someone feel endangered.  
My wellbeing, my dogs, my parents, my guitar, my friends

#### **8. What helps you come back from something difficult?**

Music  
Music or band  
Being alone and in a quiet place for a while.  
I read a lot. I also tend to bottle up my emotions and then have angry outbursts. Joking is a coping thing for me.  
Probably just listening to music and crying it out.  
Music helps a lot and so does my drawing.

Talking it out, my fandoms, music, my friends, God and my Bible, my Dad  
Time by myself, time to think and breathe.  
Singing, drawing, music, writing  
Journaling

### **9. What gives you hope?**

Marching band  
Accomplishing something or something happening that will benefit me in the future.  
My mom and my best friend are the only people that give me hope and the thought of moving forward  
after high school and starting my life as a transgendered adult  
Seeing something inspirational  
Friends help a lot  
My family does. As mixed up as we are, the happy moments are what I hang on to and live for. They  
give me hope for a better future.  
People telling me I can do this and having people help me through this.  
Really nothing gives me hope.  
Graduating high school although it makes me super anxious  
? Not sure  
My parents

### **10. If you really knew me, you would know....**

I'm very goofy.  
I love band and music in general. I enjoy sketching, dancing, and singing.  
I go through things but I don't like to complain.  
I have a hard time expressing myself and I sometimes don't understand that people are joking. I am  
very open-minded.  
I act like I'm tough but I'm very sensitive about a lot of things.  
How I stay sad and to myself when I get mad.  
I love music. I sing and play guitar.

### **11. If there was one thing you could tell others about students who are dealing with stress and/or anxiety in their lives?**

Sometimes we have a hard time expressing our thoughts and questions  
Sometimes we have a hard time asking for help  
Emotions are sometimes contagious  
Mental illness, addiction, abuse, and suicide have all run in my family but it is not my fault.  
Sometimes I NEED to disengage and the teachers keep trying to engage me right then.  
When I hurt myself, it's because I don't have a release for all of the emotion.  
Sometimes others don't know what stress and anxiety looks like. It can look like..... panic attacks, tics,  
outbursts, cutting, involuntary responses, zoning out, getting high or drunk, being on my phone in  
social settings, being confused and not being able to remember what happened or what was taught,  
passing out, stomach aches, headaches  
Guys have anxiety too but it doesn't mean I'm weak.  
I would want other students to know they are not the only ones going through the same exact  
problems.  
Don't stop believing and keep on trying. Don't let any one prevent you from being happy.

It's not a bad thing to talk about it.

BREATHE

I won't say it'll get better because for some, that's giving false hope. I would say to others struggling to do your best and to find something you like to do and do it with all you've got.

I'd tell other students you are not alone and I'm here if they need me.

When you have anxiety, you first need to fix your actions like not hitting stuff and then your words and then your thoughts.

## 12. Do you have successful strategies for coping with stress and/or anxiety?

No

Crying

Reading quotes

Yes, kinda

I take deep breaths and try to think about something else. I do something that makes me happy.

Sorta

In some ways, yes.

Nope

## 13 Is there a way the school or school staff can assist you addressing/handling stress and/or anxiety when it arises?

Mentoring

Meetings and activities with the student

Taking anxiety more seriously, and getting counselors that actually know how to deal with anxiety and depression

Nope

I mainly deal with it by myself so I don't know how it would work having another's help.

Just stick me in a room with a friend and my music and let me cry it out.

Making it ok to be let alone at school

Let me have a quiet place and some privacy

Support groups or better education on mental health and emotion

Get to know me, connect with me personally so you understand me, pay attention to me/us, be consistent, be a "kid watcher", motivate me, give me lots of reminders beyond the class time, sometimes I don't hear everything you say when there is a lot else going on in my brain.

Sometimes my brain and feelings are like an electrical storm when everything starts building up and so I need you to tell me about due dates and homework more than once.

I know your class is important but sometimes I need you to understand that it might not be the most important thing going on right now.

Allowing me to outside the class. (5)

Letting me listen to music. (2)

Breathing exercises – help with and teach how

Frequent "check-in" meetings

Helping us find a job with real-life experiences that make us cope with our anxiety

Let me breathe and cry.

Ask a friend to help me calm down if possible – if not, call my parents but NO hospital because I don't have insurance. I know the bill will be high and I will panic even more.

Help me find a place to be alone (3)

Give me a chance to express myself and LISTEN then talk to me CALMLY.  
Squeeze my hand but not too hard to help me snap out of it.

**14. Are there certain school situations, experiences, or times that escalate or “trigger” stress or anxiety in a manner that impacts your life in a negative way?**

Being invited to a meeting and not knowing why  
Academic competition of all types but especially competition in front of others  
Being called over the intercom (2)  
Storms  
Pep Rallies, Assemblies, events with lots of noise, energy, and emotion  
Crowded hallways and cafeteria  
Being the center of attention  
Having to make presentations  
Some topics can increase stress or anxiety, especially those topics that bring a lot of emotion or conflict  
Situations with conflict (debates, heated discussions, disagreements) can be terrifying and I shut down, cry, or my emotions become heightened or overwhelming  
Being late to class or having to leave class early  
Sometimes student joking can make it worse, especially when there is sarcasm or when someone turns my actions or circumstances into a joke  
When I come home and have to deal with family issues when I should be doing my homework.  
When I get upset, I can't focus and I get behind and the more behind I get, the more upset I get.  
Coming to school, riding the bus, some teachers and a lot of the students, my Dad's side of the family  
Fights  
Every single day something sets me off. It could be anything.  
Sometimes when I smell the cleaner in the bathroom, it reminds me of when I went to the mental hospital and all those memories come back so being in the hallways can be a problem for me.  
Pep rallies & assemblies. They are too loud. Talking to people and teachers that I do not know.  
Teachers not listening or believing me.  
Being yelled at, having lots of homework, tests, and projects that are all overlapping at the same time  
Seeing someone I am trying to avoid.  
Having to present in front of class  
Not being given options  
Large crowds (3)  
Transition times  
Talking to others  
Being called out (3)  
Having to be in groups in class when you don't know anyone.  
Being called out even when my hand isn't raised.  
Being told to “calm down”  
Being told “I'm overreacting.”  
When someone touches me  
Lots of the same due dates, I procrastinate.  
Fighting with friends – every guy friend I've had has left me. Starting with my Dad.

**15. What would you want teachers or school staff to know or understand about a teen’s struggle to manage stress and/or anxiety? Does stress and/or anxiety have an impact on how you are doing in school?**

Yes, it does have an impact on me. I just want teachers to know that anxiety can affect a student’s learning.

I think it can have an impact depending on the person.

Sometimes you can’t help, sometimes you have to let others help themselves.

Most of the time the kids don’t want to talk about it so you might have to go to them and just start out by listening. Yes, anxiety and stress can have an impact on grades and all sorts of things.

Sometimes I can’t participate in class and I need to leave. Anxiety does have an impact on how I am doing.

Yes it makes school hard because when you have anxiety, you can’t focus.

Let students have break in class when it is all just too much

I wish they knew the importance of really knowing their students, the importance of positive relationships with teachers and that I need a positive classroom environment.

I choose my class change transition path to minimize my interaction with others.

I shut down and get defensive.

My earbuds help me cope during transition – there isn’t music on but I use them to avoid people and conversation.

My grades are low because I can’t focus and I don’t ask for help.

I disassociate.

From the moment I step in school in the morning, I want to leave.

It takes us times to get back on track when my panic attacks happen right after I feel weak, tired, and lost so it would take some time to get back to what I’m doing.

I want teachers to know anxiety isn’t just a stressful moment. It means my mind (or someone else’s) is going on a rampage.

I break down and cry.

Yes- how we present ourselves and we don’t always want to talk about it.

Makes me zone out, get paranoid, If someone looks at me, I run to the bathroom.

I’m afraid at school because other students get bullied and I have experienced it too.

I won’t raise my hand. If someone is struggling, teachers should not ignore it. They should escort them out of class and get them to someone they trust.

Excuse me from things or give me more time.

**16. When my anxiety peaks at school, others might see (personal behaviors)?**

I stutter (2)

I’m mad and sometimes aggressive. (2)

Fidgeting (2)

Panic Attacks (2)

I disassociate.

Speedwalking

Breathing fast (2)

Talking to myself

Chest pain

Sleeping in class (2)

“Hiding” in my clothes

Acting stupid or loud

Nervous laughter

Foot tapping  
Wide eyes  
Stretching, cracking, snapping fingers  
Walking out of class  
Shaking (4)  
Get quiet  
I walk away.  
Eyes watering  
Itching, Itching all over  
Leg Bouncing  
Not making eye contact (2)  
Look at my phone  
I go to the bathroom a lot and I cry a lot at school.  
I isolate myself (2)  
Avoiding others (2)  
Crying (2)  
Being rude  
Weazing  
Stare off in the distance  
Paranoia  
Can't focus

### **Program development questions:**

#### **17. What can we do to make school a safe place for you to talk about or seek help related to stress or anxiety?**

Teacher, staff, and nurse training on anxiety

We are afraid of overreaction and we don't want to be sent to residential treatment or the alternative school

Having trained counselors, therapists available who know how to LISTEN and how to communicate with empathy, non-judgment, compassion, and how to help you "unpack" but they aren't trying to solve it because they can't. They need to go soft of solutions and suggestions.

Less Judgment

Having staff or someone to talk to who has experienced it.

Knowing there could be consequences to me or my family or that I will be labeled or stereotyped makes me not want to ask for help.

Making me feel safe – not labeled or watched, not targeted and not making me feel like there is something wrong with me.

Let me have a quiet place

Helping me find someone who has the same personality as me.

Meetings, field trips, activities, bonding, etc.

A safe, calm place like a room that's comfortable to calm down in.

Having classes for makeup and self-confidence

#### **18. Do you think it is important that we have a support group for students who are dealing with stress and/or anxiety? Why or why not?**

Yes, because anxiety can make it a struggle to balance everything.

Yes, because when you go through something alone, its hard and dangerous so having a support group will help them.

Yes because some students would prefer to have help.  
Yes because it could help reduce the stress or anxiety.  
Yeah cause it shows them that they are not alone.  
Yes, so many students are stressed and have anxiety to the max and it makes them lose all motivation which makes them wanna give up.  
Yes, some people don't have anyone there for them and really need the support.  
Yes and no. People may not understand and may not want to open up.

**19. If we start a student information/support group focused on stress management, anxiety, and emotional wellness, what will keep you coming back?**

Long conversations  
Good conversation, finding something relational and memorable  
I will keep coming back to help others.  
A comfortable area, snacks, just a stress free zone – designed by the teens so it's what we would feel comfortable in.  
YES I WILL COME! New people

**20. If we start a student information/support group on stress management, anxiety, and emotional wellness, what would get in the way and keep it from being successful?**

People that don't care about education.  
Not staying consistent on trying to find and help students  
People not knowing about it, shame, stigma, or labeling, confidentiality breaks, not having enough time in the day  
People who don't understand and won't listen

**21. What types of information, activities/services, programming, and staffing related to stress and/or anxiety do you think would benefit students?**

Parent and teacher education about stress and anxiety  
Having a room that we can chill, calm down, process without consequences – really think and concentrate  
Having a place to post thoughts about emotions  
A place that is calm that we can go instead of pep rallies, assemblies, or lunch or to deal with social anxiety  
Having more choice in how to provide a presentation or participate in class activities like debates  
I think it is great when teachers give us the change to tell them “10 things I should know about you”  
Health curriculum should be updated to include more information about mental and emotional or social health  
Yoga and meditation classes as a PE option  
Having the option to bring an ally with us to meetings  
Having a school therapy dog  
Stressballs and conversation, coloring books, yoga classes, peer to peer support  
Yoga, gym, bowling, skating, paintball (basically anything physical)  
Teen groups to discuss anything – sometimes just having people to talk to one another to get their minds off things  
Giving us the option of bringing an ally with us to meetings that cause us to have stress or anxiety.  
Group stuff like this.  
Makeup, tai-chi, yoga, knitting classes, having fidget items available in classrooms and offices

It would be great if teachers were trained in breathing and de-stress activities and if they were allowed in class

Having positive quotes in classrooms and in the school building

Teacher training regarding anxiety and how they can respond to their students and lessen anxiety

Having some mental breaks during the day or at the beginning of class to focus

Having therapists at school

Having support groups at school to help me learn how to help calm myself and others

**22. How do you think we should go about inviting others to this group or getting the word out that we are going to have a group like this for our students?**

Making fliers to hang up around school

Posters, announcements

Flyers around the school, emails and texts, having people talking about it and inviting others, not making it a joke, making it good

Make posters, text messages, morning announcement, have students help announce and recruit

**23. Do you have any suggested names for an information/support group for students struggling with stress and/or anxiety who are hoping to learn more about strategies for emotional wellness?**

No responses

**24. When you think about this struggle with stress and/or anxiety, what gives you hope?**

Marching band

My life, my parents, family, friends, satisfaction, accomplishment

I just know better things will come in good time

That one day I will be ok.

My Dad

My dreams about my future

**25. If you could meet with a young adult who struggled with stress and/or anxiety as a teen but is now doing well, what would you would ask him/her?**

Is it affecting your school career now?

I wouldn't ask anything because I'm also struggling with it and I know what it is like.

How did you survive? What problems were you facing?

How did you deal with it?

How have you survived?

**26. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?**

Sadness can be caused by multiple triggers and some of them from a long time ago and some of these same things are also linked to my stress and anxiety.

Sometimes I think you just have try hard to find something to be happy about.

It's okay to feel this way, but it's not okay to live in it forever.

Depression can be caused by mental illness and past trauma.

I would like to be happier but certain situations seem to dictate my happiness.

There are other emotions other than sadness that go with depression but sadness is just the main one.

I like how you explained the difference in stress and anxiety. It helped me understand it. I guess never really knew what the difference was but I definitely think I have both at different times.

I'm shy.

My stress is triggered by memories, my past, and tests.

Thank you Kirsten Corley for the perfect description I've always struggled to put into words:

Anxiety is more than just worrying.

Anxiety is the restless nights of sleep, as you toss and turn. It's your brain never being able to shut off. It's the thoughts you over-think before bedtime and all of your worst fears become a reality in dreams and nightmares.

It's waking up tired even though your day just started.

Anxiety is learning how to function with sleep deprivation because it took you until 2 am to shut your eyes.

It's every text you wonder 'how do I word this properly?' It's a double or triple text in case you messed up. Anxiety is answering texts embarrassingly fast.

Anxiety is the time you spend waiting for an answer as a scenario plays out in your mind of what they could be thinking or are they mad?

Anxiety is an unanswered text that kills you inside even though you tell yourself, 'maybe they're busy or will answer later.' Anxiety is that critical voice that says 'maybe they're deliberately ignoring you.' It's believing every negative scenario you can come up with.

Anxiety is waiting. It always feels like you're waiting. It's the inaccurate conclusions drawn as your mind takes off and you have no choice but to follow its destructive lead.

Anxiety is apologizing for things that don't even require the words, 'I'm sorry.'

Anxiety is self-doubt and a lack of confidence both in you, yourself and those around you. Anxiety is being hyper aware of everyone and everything. So much so, you can tell if there's a shift in someone merely by their tone or word choice.

Anxiety is ruining relationships before they even begin. It tells you, 'you're wrong, they don't like you, they're going to leave.' Then you jump to conclusions.

Anxiety is a constant state of worrying and panicking and being on the edge. It's irrational fears. It's thinking too much, it's caring too much. Because the root of people with anxiety is caring.

It's sweaty palms and a racing heart. But on the outside, no one can see it. You appear calm and at ease and smiling but underneath is anything but that. Anxiety is the art of deception for people who don't know you. And for the people who do, it's a constant stream of phrases like, 'don't worry' or 'you're overthinking this' or 'relax.' It's friends listening to these conclusions you've drawn and not really understanding how you got there. But they're there trying to support you, as things go from bad to worse in your mind.

Anxiety is wanting to fix something that isn't even a problem.

It's the stream of questions that make you doubt yourself.

Anxiety is the uneasiness at a party because you think all eyes are on you and no one wants you there.

Anxiety is that extra shot you take and it seems like you're finally relaxing. Until you wake up the next day hungover, full of regret and wondering what you said to whom and do you owe them an apology?

Anxiety is the overcompensating and trying too hard to please people.

Anxiety is being everywhere on time because the thought of being late would put you over the edge.

Anxiety is the fear of failure and striving for perfection. Then beating yourself up when you fall short. It's always needing a schedule or a plan.

Anxiety is that voice inside your head that's saying 'you'll fail.'

It's trying to exceed people's expectations even if you're killing yourself to do so. Anxiety is taking on more than you can handle just so you are distracted and not overthinking something.

It's breaking down in private and crying when you're overwhelmed but no one will ever see that side of you. Anxiety is picking up and trying again because the only thing worse than overcoming other people is overcoming you and your own demons.

It's beating that critical voice that says, 'you really fucked up' or 'you should feel awful right now.'

Anxiety is the want and the need to control things because it feels like this thing in your life is outside of your control and you have to learn to live with it.

But more than anything anxiety is caring. It's never wanting to hurt someone's feelings. It's never wanting to do something wrong. More than anything, it's the want and need to simply be accepted and liked. So you try too hard sometimes.

And when you come across friends who begin to understand, they help you through it.

Then you realize this might be a battle you face every day, but it's one you won't have to face alone anymore.