

MAY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

HOW TO DEFINE & OVERCOME IN THE K-12 SETTING

Presented By:

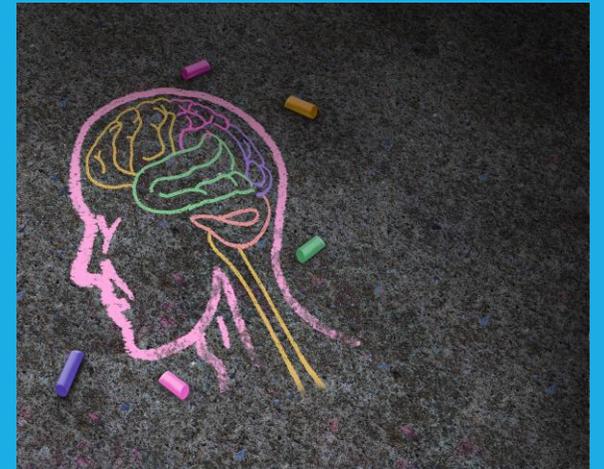
Ms. Alison LaBella - MS Counseling Interventionist

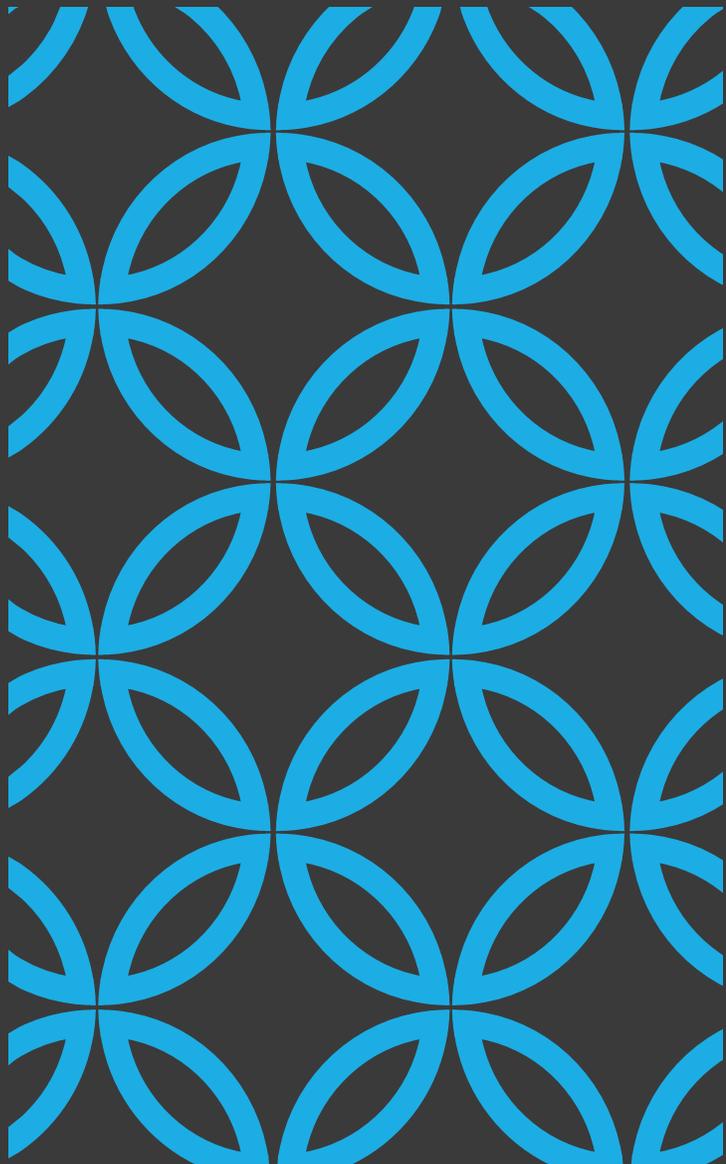
Mr. Aaron Lemons - HS Counseling Interventionist

Ms. Jill Wanielista & Ms. Grace Saile - ES
Counseling Interventionists

OVERVIEW OF TOPICS

- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Anxiety: What is it?
- Mindfulness Activity
- Identifying/Managing anxiety inside and outside of the K-12 setting
- School-Based and Community Resources/Interventions





WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH?

- "A time to raise awareness for individuals living with mental or behavioral health issues and to reduce the stigma so many experience" (American Hospital Association, 2022)

- NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Health) will utilize the following message for May 2022: "Together for Mental Health"

- NAMI plans to bring voices together for mental health advocacy in order to improve our nation's mental healthcare system



ANXIETY: WHAT IS IT?

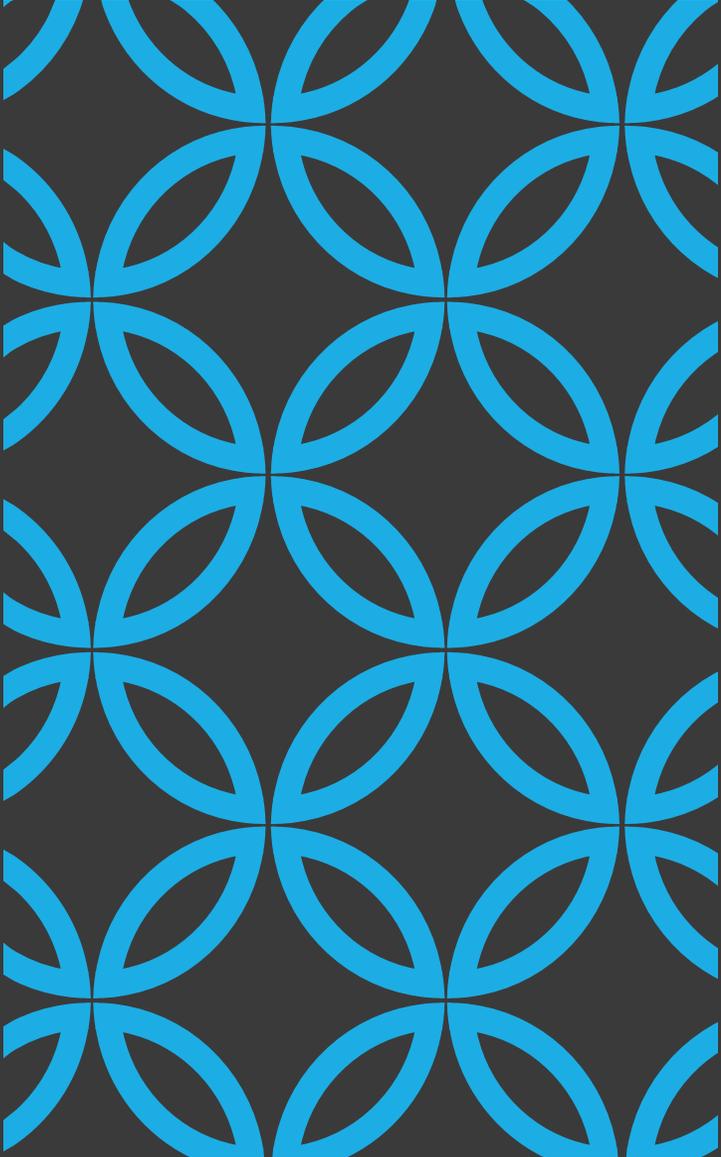


Under the DSM V, clinical professionals look for the following symptoms to determine if the presence of GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder) exists:

- Excessive anxiety/worry about a variety of topics, events, or activities that typically occurs for at least 6 months
- The excessive worry is difficult to control, and the topics of worry can shift easily
- Anxiety/worry is accompanied by at least 3 of the following cognitive or physical symptoms (in children, only 1 of these needs to be present): Restlessness, Excessive fatigue, Impaired concentration, Irritability, Increased muscle aches, Difficulty sleeping

The presence of these symptoms impedes the ability to successfully carry out daily activities and responsibilities, and this may cause issues in personal and work relationships

(Source: verywellmind)



GOOD STRESS VS. BAD STRESS

Good Stress:

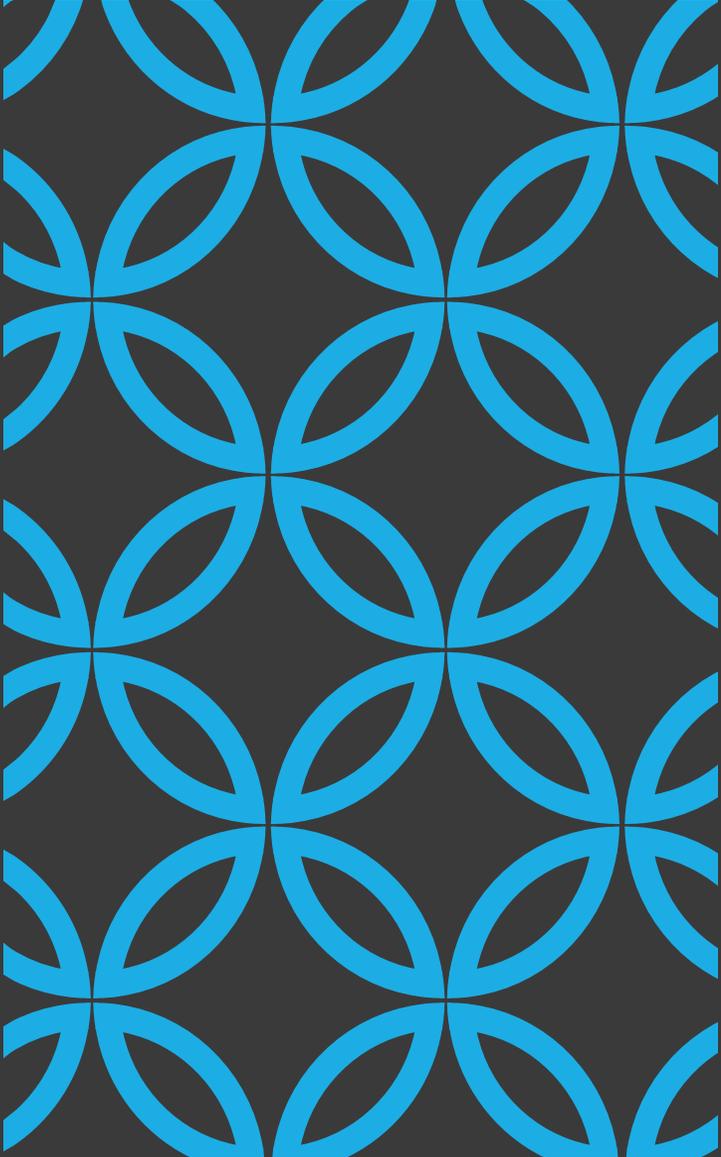
-Motivational, focuses on energy, feels exciting, improves performance, and is perceived within our coping abilities.

Bad Stress:

-Causes anxiety or concern, feels unpleasant, decreases performance, and can lead to mental and physical problems.

MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

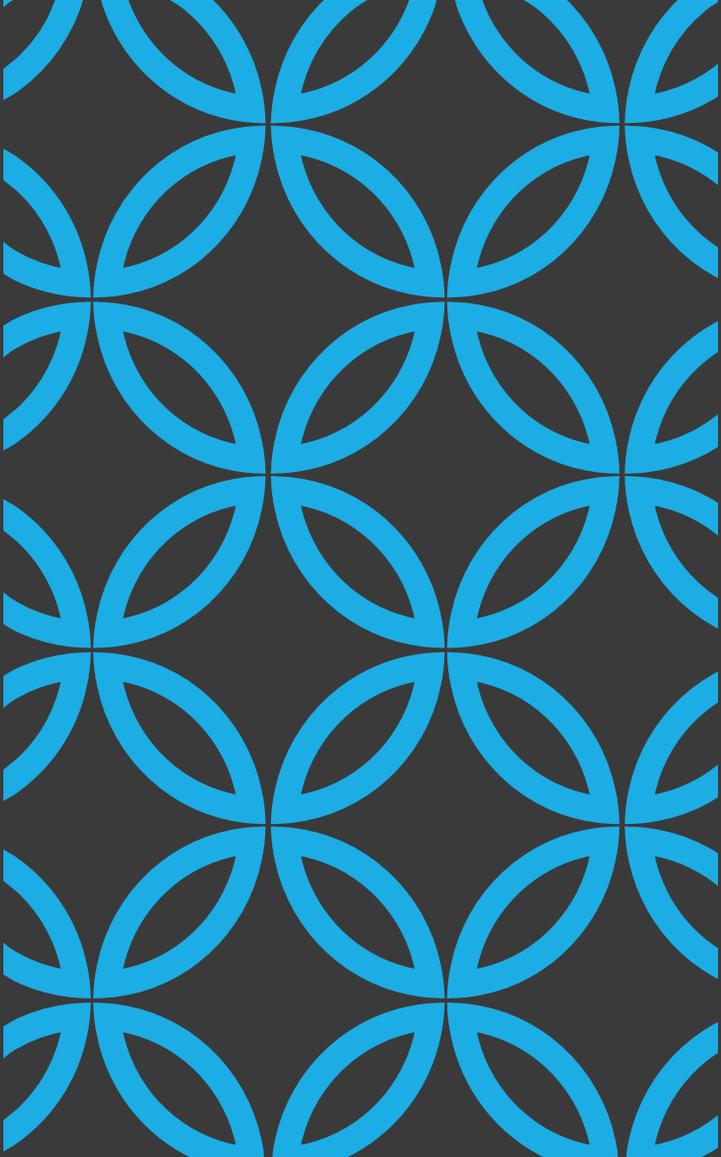




ANXIETY IN HIGH SCHOOL

Anxiety disorders are the Most Common Mental Health Issue amongst adolescents. Some Examples include:

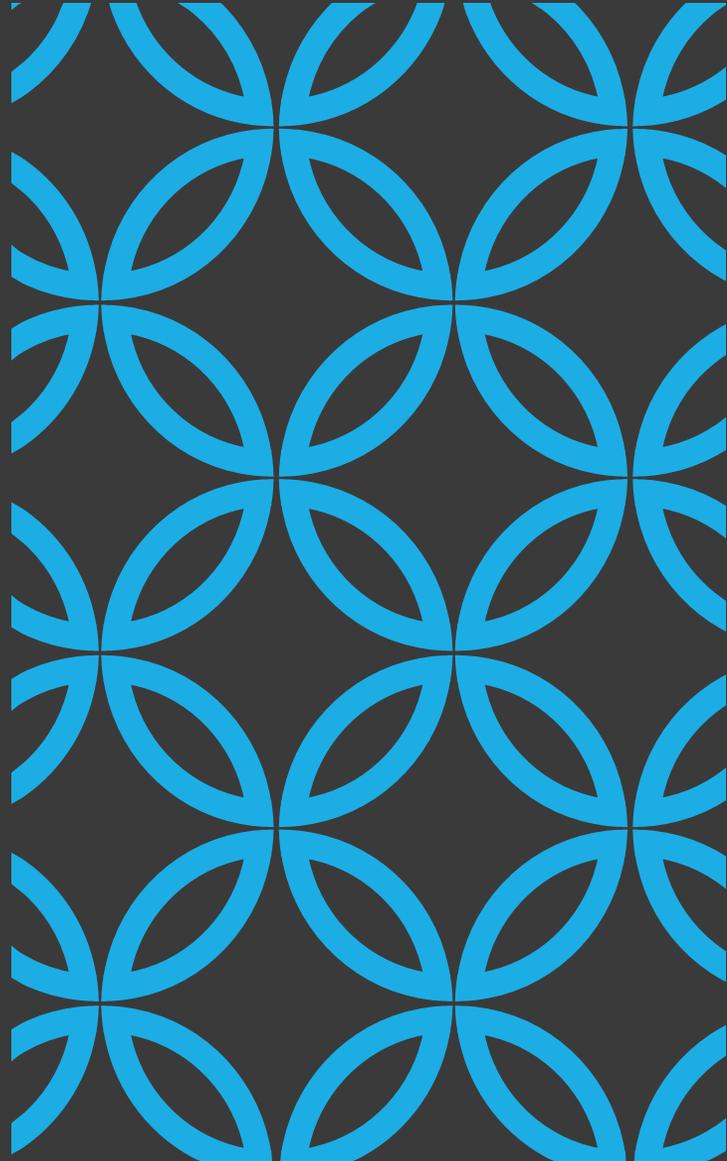
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Test and Performance Anxiety
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder



ANXIETY IN HIGH SCHOOL

Physical Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety:

- Exaggerated or Unwarranted Worry
- Anticipate Worst-Case Scenarios for Every Situation
- Avoid Social Interactions
- Accelerated Heartbeat
- Stomach Pains
- Lack of Sleep or Oversleeping
- Cannot Focus



WHAT ANXIETY MAY LOOK LIKE IN HIGH SCHOOL ...

Testing Anxiety



Fitting in with Friend Groups



Dating & Peer Pressure



Sports/Club Activities

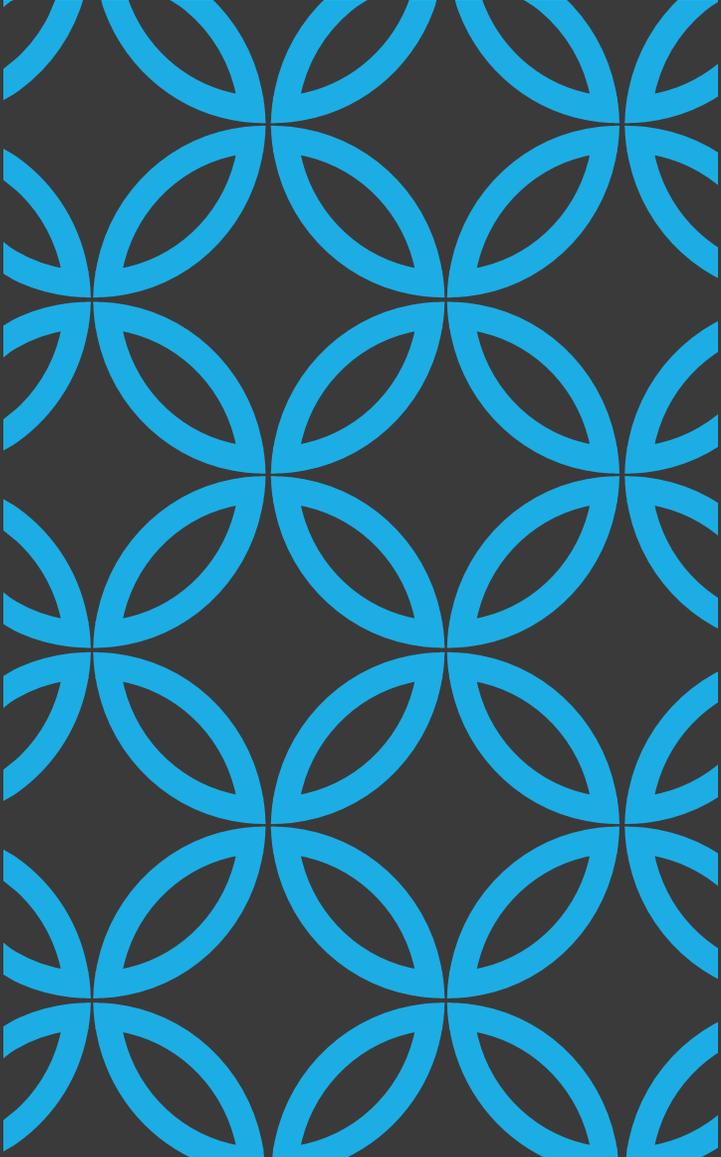


Home Life Issues



Substance Abuse



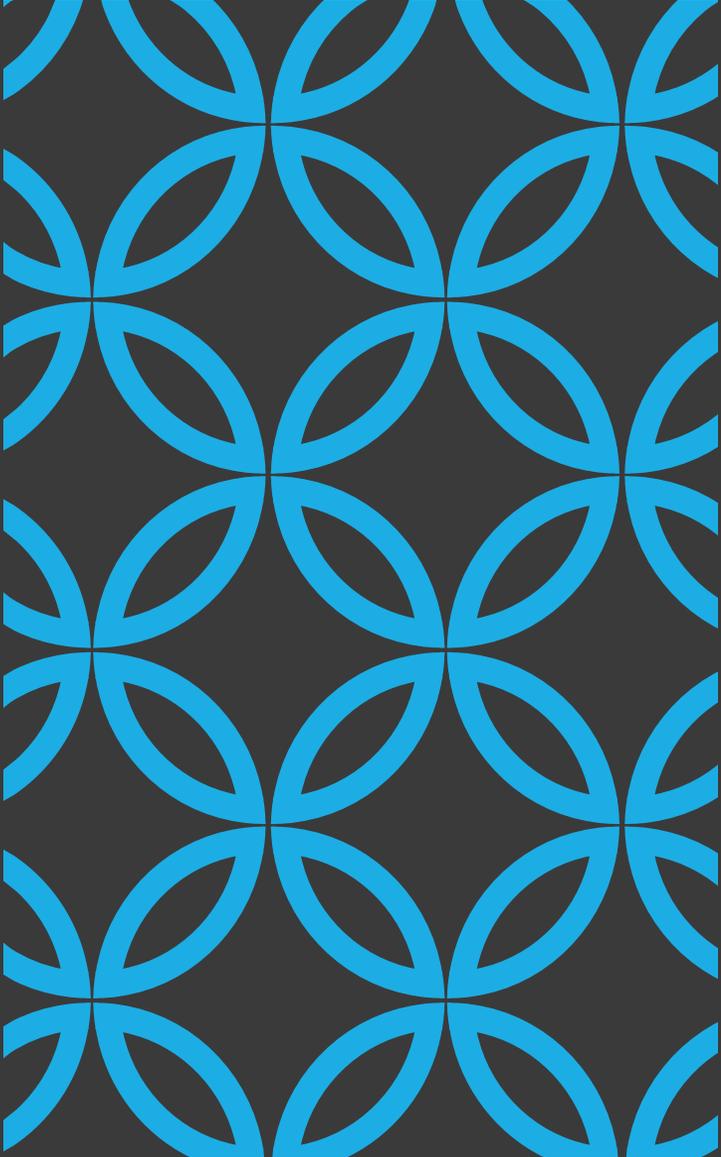


ANXIETY & COMORBID DISORDERS

The most prevalent disorders that are comorbid with GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder) include: MDD (Major Depressive Disorder), Bipolar Disorder, and Substance Use Disorder

Because GAD causes worry about common elements of life (jobs, family, and financial status), individuals can experience a decline in self-esteem and overall outlook, accompanied by chronic feelings of sadness and loss of interest over a period of time.

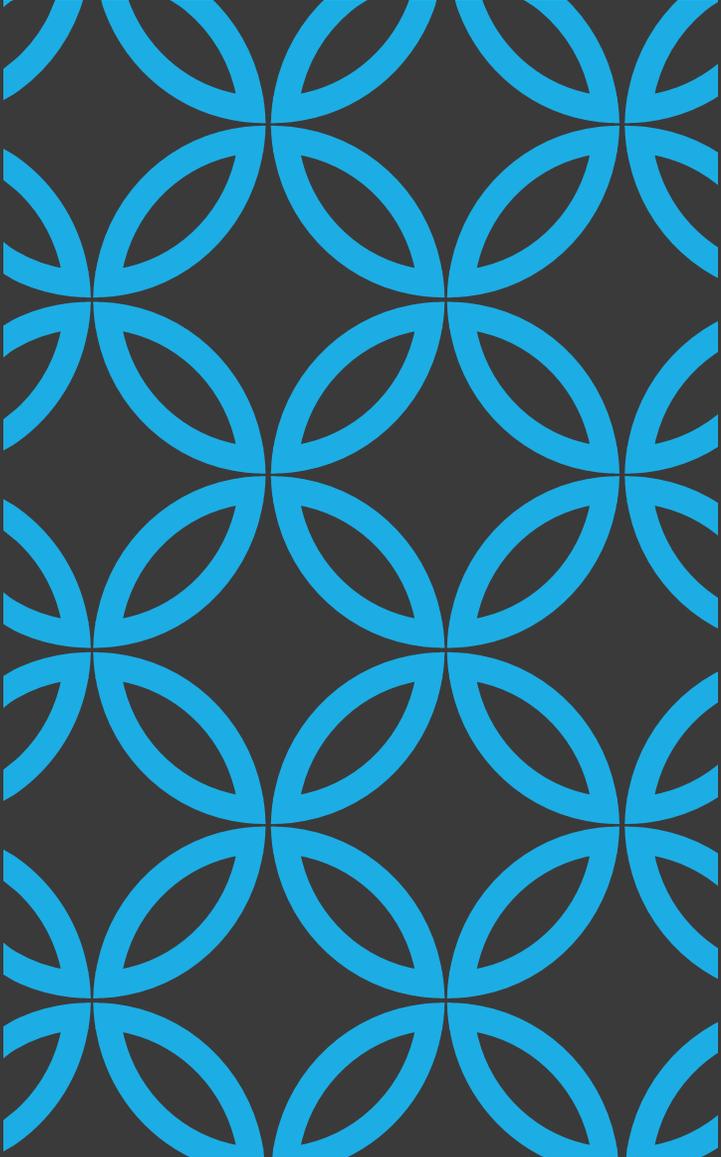
(Source: News Medical LifeSciences)



ANXIETY & SUBSTANCE CONNECTION

- Research has seen a significant link between individuals with GAD and substance use/abuse
- Many people with GAD are unaware of their illness and try to self-medicate their anxiety via alcohol and drugs
- Approximately 1 / 3 of individuals with GAD also have SUD (Substance Use Disorder), and **the pattern between the 2 disorders can originate in the following ways:** Anxiety leading to substance use -> Substance use leads to anxiety -> Genetic predisposition to both GAD and SUD

(Source: News Medical Life Sciences)



ANXIETY IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Anxiety in Middle School can manifest in the following ways:

- Inattention/restlessness
- Chronic absenteeism
- Separation anxiety
- Stomachaches and regular visits to the school nurse
- Decline in grades and incomplete work
- Shying away from social activities

When left untreated, anxiety in middle school can contribute to the following:

- Depression
- Self-harm
- Physical aggression
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Changes in appetite/eating behavior

(Source: Friends' Central School)

Anxiety presents itself in many different ways...

www.thepathway2success.com

The desire to control people and events



Difficulty getting to sleep



Feeling agitated or angry



Defiance and other challenging behaviors



Having high expectations for self, including school work & sports



Avoiding activities or events (including school)

Pain like stomachaches and headaches



Struggling to pay attention and focus



Intolerance of uncertainty



Crying and difficulty managing emotions



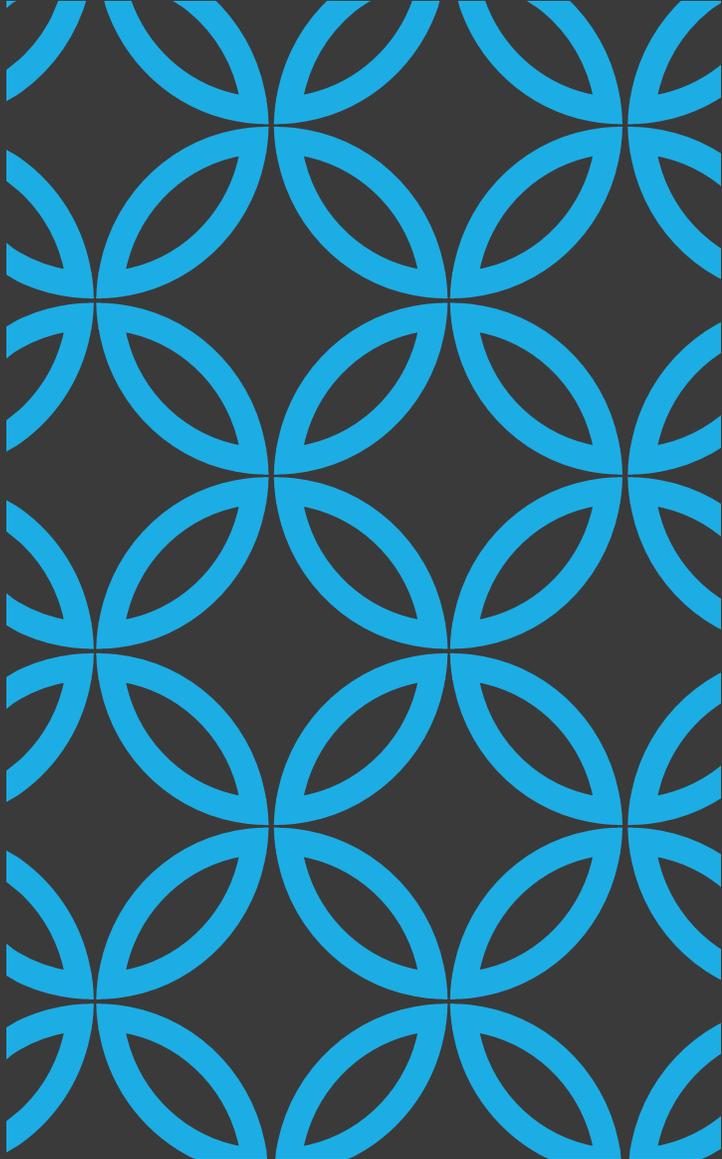
Over-planning for situations and events



Feeling worried about situations or events

www.thepathway2success.com

Clipart by Kate Hadfield & Sarah Pecorino



COMMON ANXIETY TRIGGERS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

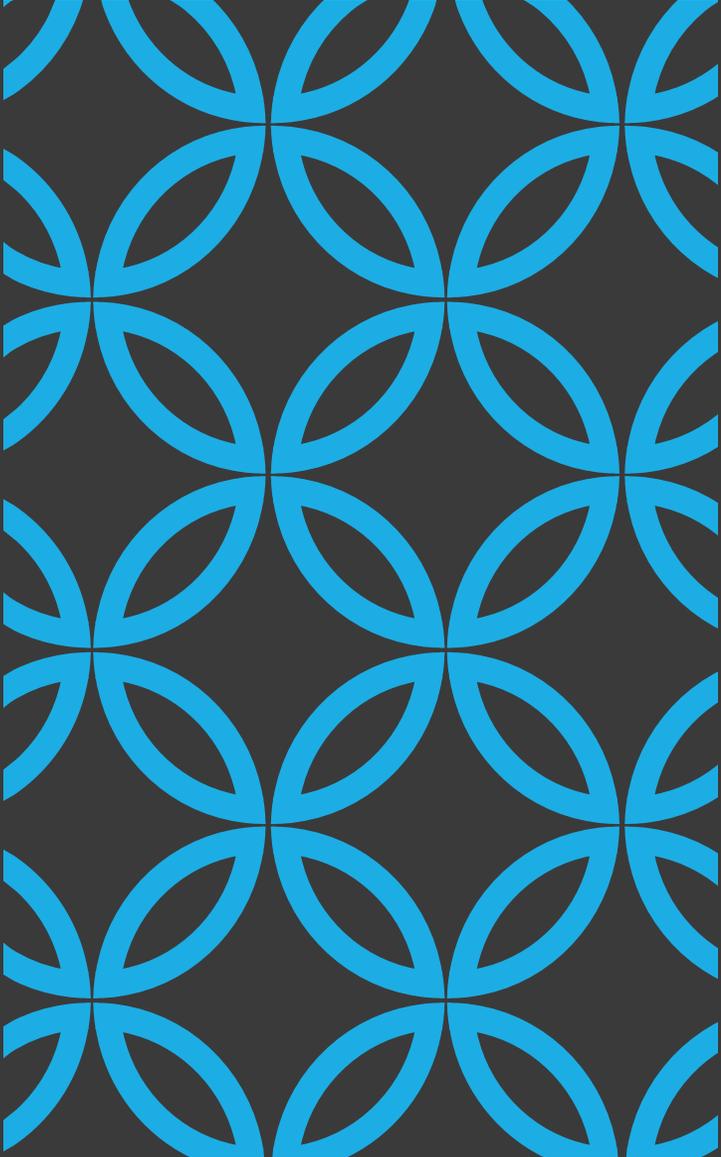
Transitioning Between School Buildings: It is common for students to experience anxiety when making the leap from elementary to middle school, or when getting ready to leave middle school and move on to high school.

-Additionally, it is common for students who are new students in general to feel anxiety about this change too

A Major Life Change: Students can exhibit anxiety in the school setting, but not have the anxiety be triggered by actual school concerns.

-*Examples of anxiety inducing life changes include:* parental divorce, illness, or death of a loved one

(Source: Understood.org)



ANXIETY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

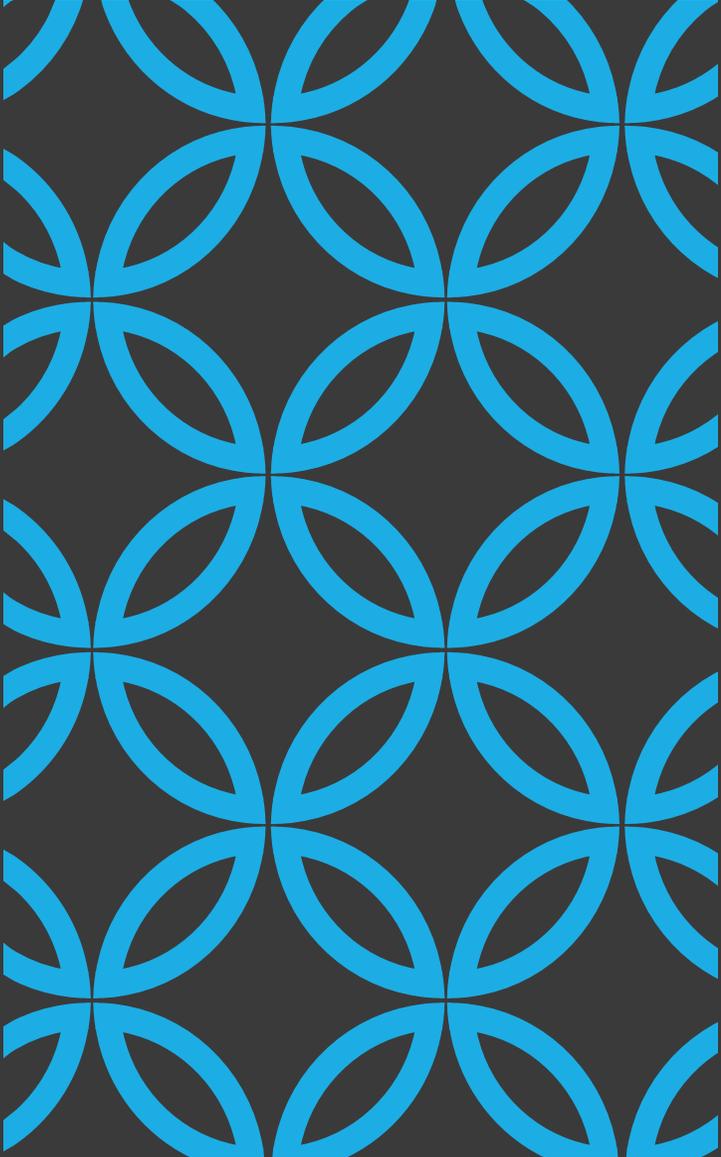
WHAT ANXIETY LOOKS LIKE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Physical Signs: headaches, stomachaches, refusing to eat, muscle tensing, trouble falling asleep, or restless/fidgety/distracted during class, ragged breathing

Emotional Signs: crying, sensitive, frequent anger/outbursts, nervous to make mistakes, worrying about the future/improbable events, trouble making friends or answering questions in class

COMMON ANXIETY TRIGGERS

Leaving parents/guardians, fear of making a mistake, changes in routine, phobias, problems at home, making friends, talking in class, bullying, negative thinking



ANXIETY IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Coping Strategies:

Breathing exercises: deep breathing, figure 8 breathing, box breathing

Label the feelings and talk to someone about them

Do an activity you enjoy: doodle, paint, craft, listen to music

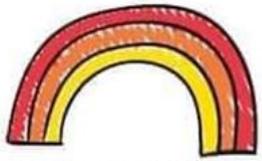
Go outside, enjoy nature, or go on a walk when possible

Practice positive self-talk

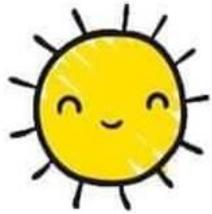
Create and utilize a calm down kit (stress balls, worry rocks, bubbles, fidgets) or coping strategies booklet

Ask for help from a teacher, school counselor, or another trusted adult at school

Self-Care & Mental Health for Kids



Share your own feelings to encourage self-awareness.



Set aside time for low-stress or solo activities.



Find social groups that help them feel like they belong.



Practice self-care for yourself to set the standard.



Focus on articulating feelings.

"I am angry."
"I am sad."

Encourage journaling and diaries.

Encourage your child to focus on the moment.



Establish a self-care routine.



Recognize toxic stress events.

BlessingManifesting

Cultivate interests and hobbies.

IT'S OK TO FEEL:

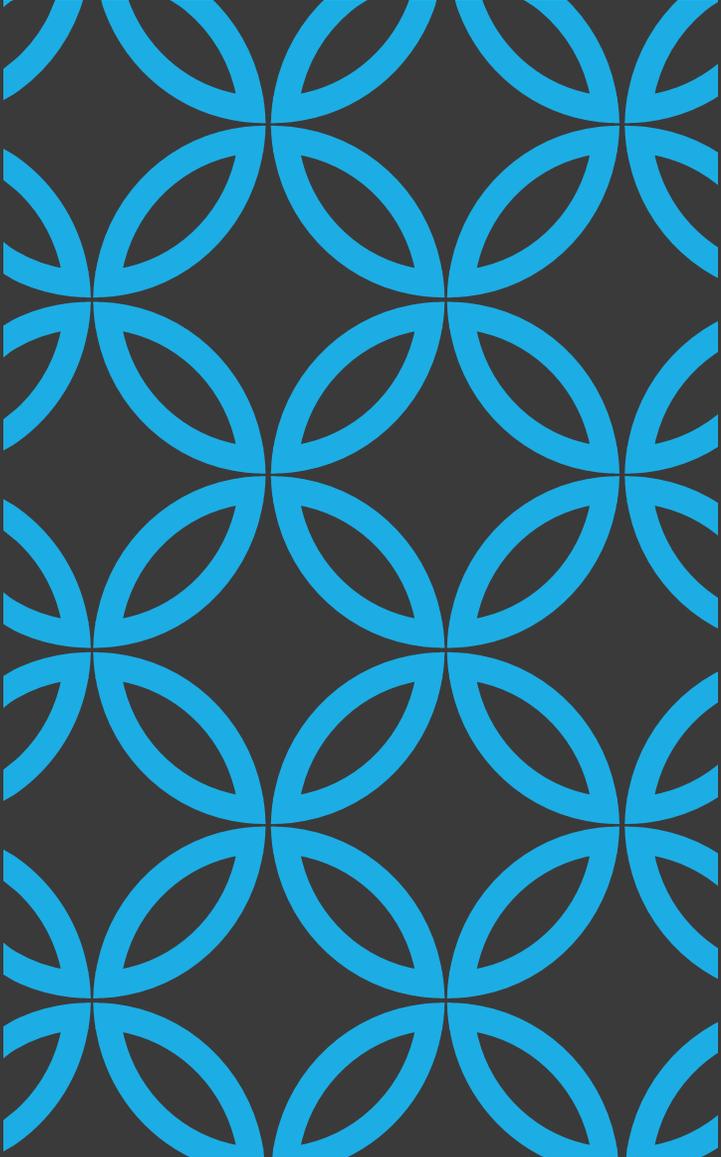


EVERYBODY FEELS THAT WAY SOMETIMES.

WE DON'T LIKE IT, BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE US WEAK. IT MAKES US

HUMAN.

AND IT HELPS TO TALK ABOUT IT.



HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY INSIDE OF SCHOOL

Do a Body Scan:

-Notice what sensations you are feeling and describe them to yourself. For example, do I feel butterflies? Are my hands sweaty? Are my hands shaking? Is my heartbeat faster?

Breathe:

-Take some slow, deep breaths. Doing so can refocus your mind to not be paying attention to

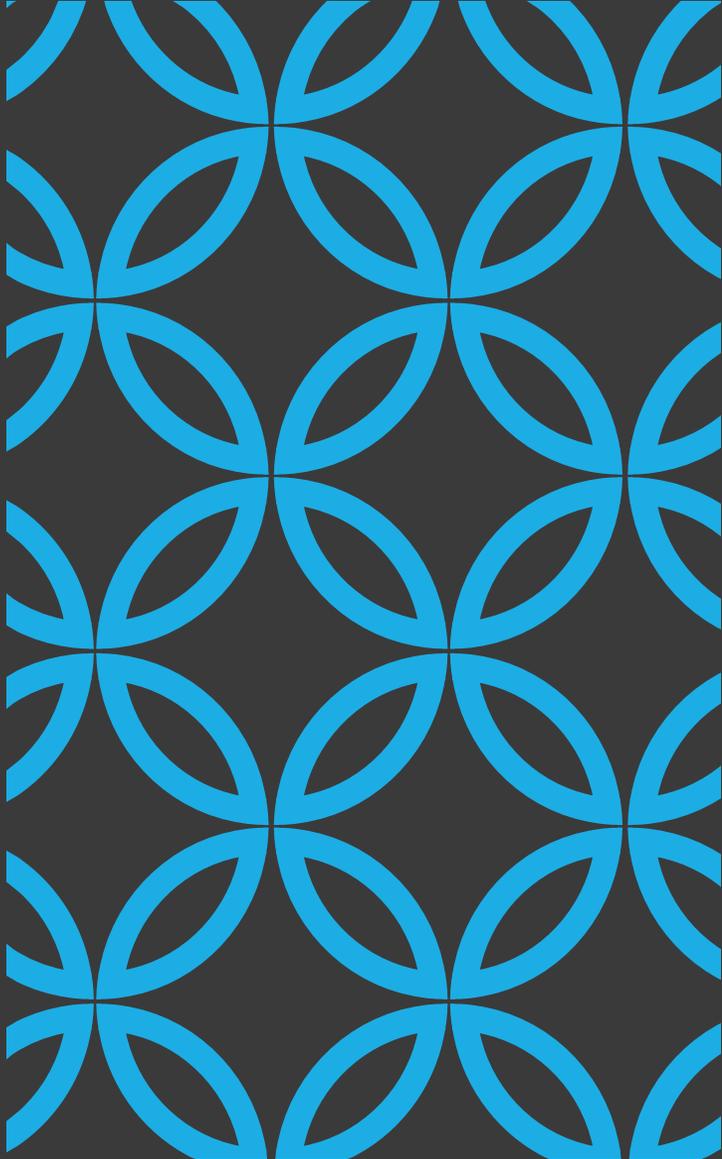
Positive Self-Talk:

-Tell yourself, "I can do this," or "It's ok to feel anxious. I can do this anyway."

Face your Situation:

-Facing your anxiety through exposure can help you manage it

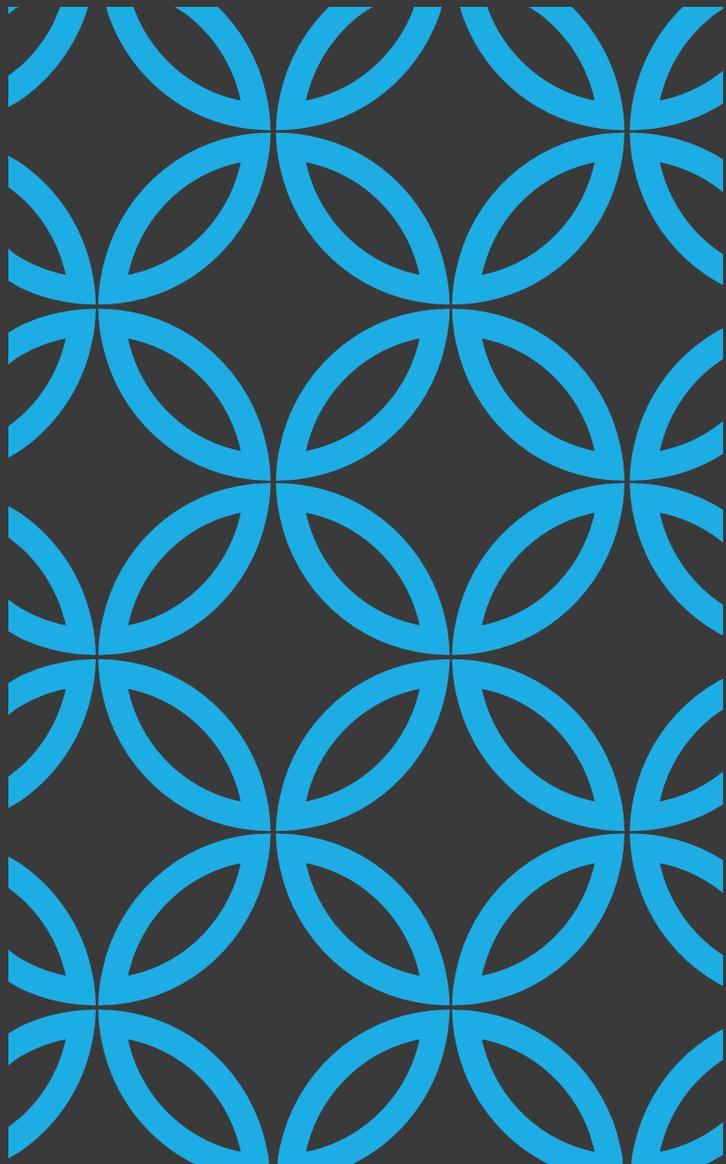
(Source: Nemours TeenHealth)



HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Stepping away from the problem or situation is a good way to clear your head. When feeling anxious or stressed when not in school, try these few things:

- Practice yoga
- Listen to music
- Meditation/Relaxation/Deep breathing techniques
- Color or Draw
- Journal
- Talk to someone



WTPS COMMUNITY RESOURCES LIST

[Community Resources List](#)

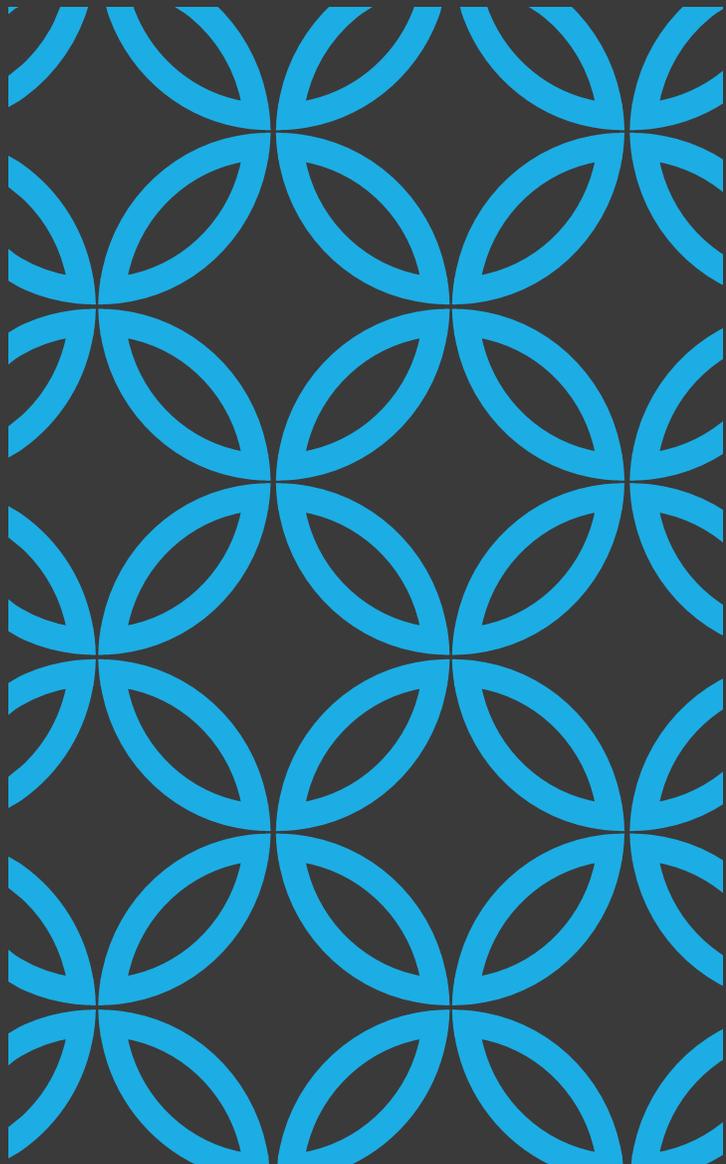
WTPS MTSS INTERVENTIONS



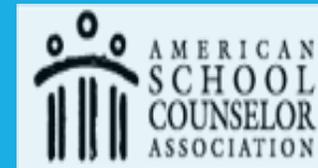
Within the framework of the ASCA (American School Counselor Association) model, school counselors work to develop/implement the Multitiered System of Supports (MTSS). Under this model, school counselors do the following:

- Provide all students with standards-based school counseling instruction to address universal academic, career and social/emotional development
- Identify and Collaborate on research-based intervention strategies implemented by school staff
- Evaluate academic and behavioral progress after interventions
- Revise interventions as appropriate
- Refer to school and community services as appropriate
- Collaborate with administrators, teachers, other school professionals, community agencies and families in MTSS design and implementation
- Advocate for equitable education for all students and working to remove systemic barriers

(Source: ASCA, Revised 2021)



WTPS MTSS INTERVENTIONS



School counselors align their individual programs by providing both direct and indirect tiered services:

- Tier 1:** interventions are provided via classroom lessons/school-wide programming
- Tier 2:** interventions include small-group and individual counseling, consultation/collaboration with school, family, and community-based stakeholders
- Tier 3:** interventions are indirect student support services provided through consultation, collaboration, and facilitation of referrals

(Source: ASCA, Revised 2011)

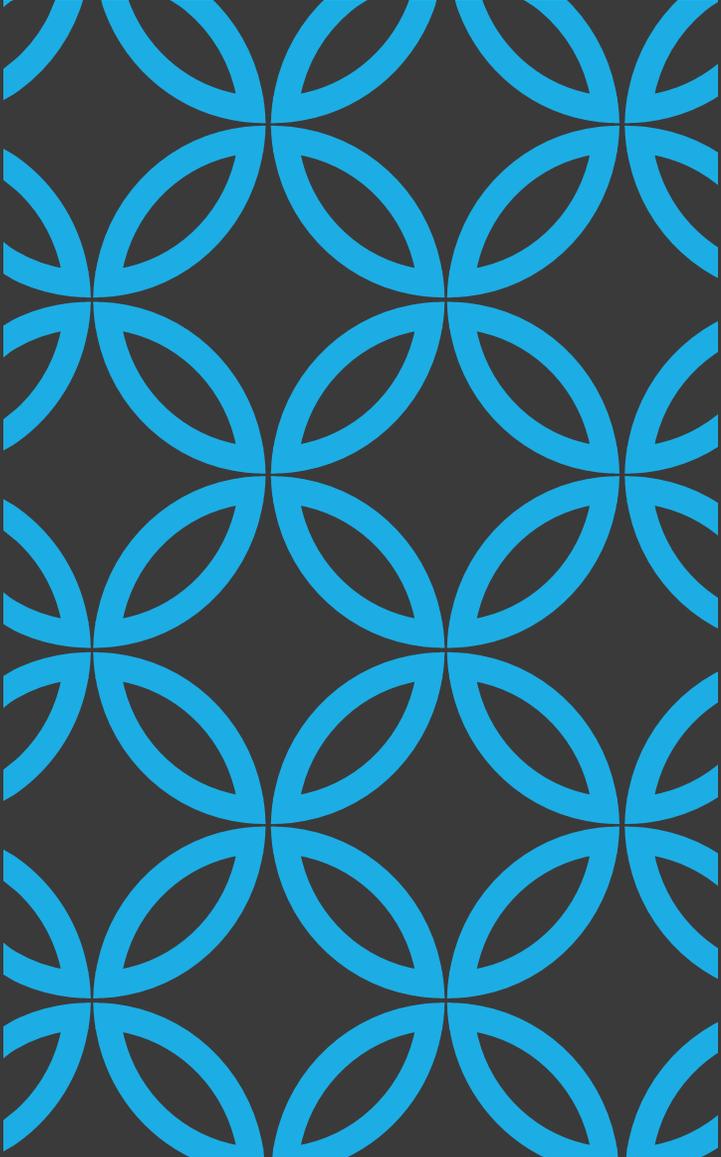
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



-**Sliding Scale therapy** is offered for sliding scale fees based on an individual's income; non-profit clinics and private practice therapists commonly use this process to ensure therapy is made accessible for people who can't afford the standard rate of therapy

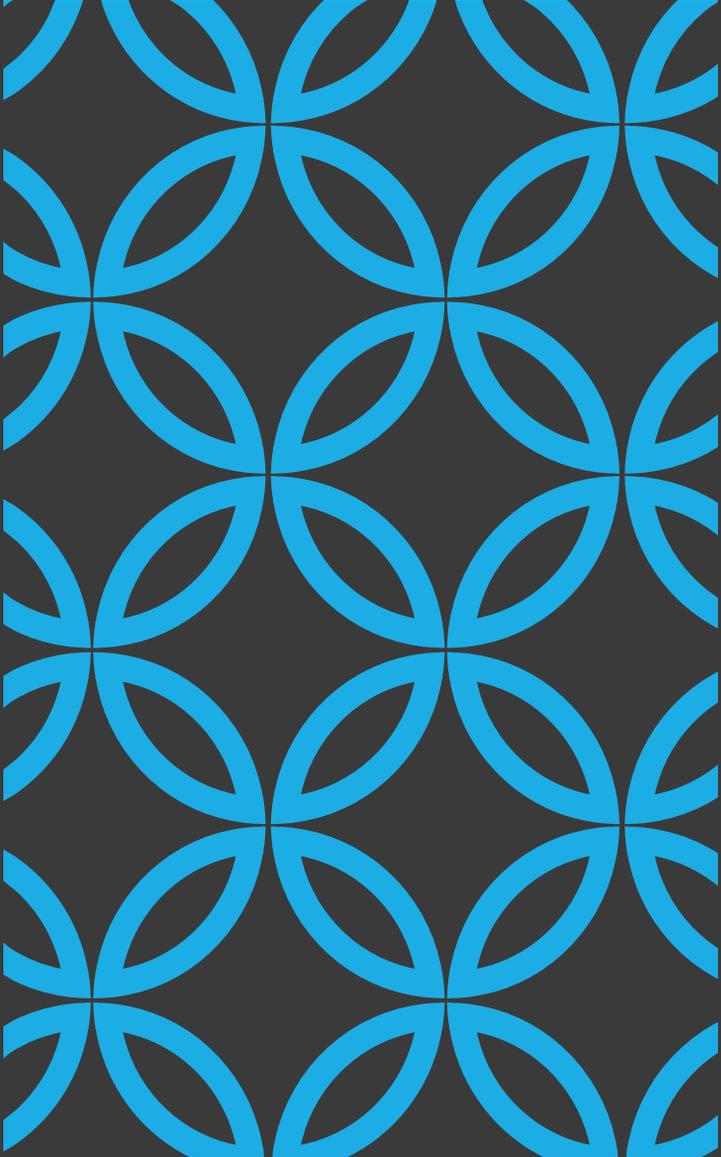
-**Helpful tips:** 1) Even if the therapist doesn't specifically advertise that they use sliding scale, you can still ask if they could participate
2) Consider what you can actually pay; you don't want to forego important necessities (i.e., grocery shopping) to afford your visit with the therapist

(**Source:** OpenCounseling)



SOURCES USED IN THIS PRESENTATION

- [American Hospital Association](#)
- [ASCA](#)
- [Friends' Central School](#)
- [NAMI](#)
- [Nemours TeensHealth'](#)
- [News Medical LifeSciences](#)
- [OpenCounseling](#)
- [Undestood.org](#)
- [VeryWellMind](#)



THANK YOU!

Do you have any questions for us?