



Renee S. McClure, LCSW

Anxious and Overwhelmed

What You Need to Know if You Think Your Daughter May Need to See a Therapist

Should My Daughter See a Therapist?

This is one of the most common questions I get from parents. Below is a list of 9 signs that your daughter could benefit from seeing a therapist.

- ① She asks to see one.
- ② She is having difficulty managing everyday stressors or seems overwhelmed.
- ③ She is isolating and avoiding everyday activities or social engagements.
- ④ She is chronically procrastinating.
- ⑤ She has unexplained physical symptoms such as difficulty sleeping, GI issues, or headaches.
- ⑥ She is overthinking or constantly worrying.
- ⑦ She is feeling overly agitated or irritable.
- ⑧ She is having panic attacks.
- ⑨ She is self-harming or having suicidal thoughts.



Don't Wait to See a Therapist

The prevalence of anxiety disorders among adolescents is about 12% higher for females than for males.

Females

38%

Males

26.1%

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

If left untreated, anxiety disorders tend to continue into adulthood and place adolescents at risk for other problems, including poor academic performance, depression, and drug dependence. Untreated anxiety can also lead to lower self-esteem and confidence.

This can make the transition to college and adulthood tumultuous and problematic. Therapy can drastically improve your daughter's quality of life by providing an understanding of her anxiety and developing healthy coping strategies to move forward confidently.

What to Look For in a Therapist

When looking for a therapist, you want to look for a good match for both you and your daughter. The first session should be a tryout to see if it is a good fit. Girls will not want to go to therapy if they don't feel they can have a good relationship with their therapist. Below are a few things to look out for when choosing a therapist.

- Your daughter needs someone she feels comfortable with. You want someone that you can trust to respect your daughter's privacy and to involve you when therapeutically necessary.
- A good therapist is open, easy to talk to, authentic, honest, and compassionate.
- Credentials are important. A therapist's specialty, experience, and approach to therapy should match your needs.



What to Expect in Therapy

All therapists have their own unique style, but most therapy sessions have the same components. Key things to expect from therapy are:

- ① **Building Rapport:** Allow for your daughter and therapist to spend a few sessions getting to know each other. Good rapport between a client and therapist is linked to more successful outcomes in therapy.
- ② **Talking:** Initially it may take time for your daughter to open up, but there should be conversation. Talking about other interests can help build rapport and a level of trust that is needed to talk about heavier topics.
- ③ **Education:** Your therapist should educate your daughter on her diagnosis, explain what is going on in her body, and help establish healthy coping strategies.
- ④ **Practice or Activities:** Your daughter should be practicing or engaging in activities either inside or outside of the session to help build confidence.
- ⑤ **Problem-Solving:** Your therapist should talk to your daughter about her problems and help her create action plans to solve them.
- ⑥ **Goal-Setting:** Your daughter should be part of the goal-setting process to gauge progress and provide incentive.
- ⑦ **Collaboration:** Your therapist should collaborate with medical professionals to ensure proper medication management if needed.



Benefits of Online Therapy

The key to therapy, whether it is online or in person, is rapport. If your therapist cannot build rapport with your daughter quickly, the effectiveness of therapy plummets. Online therapy has many benefits for both you and your daughter.

- ① **Less of a Wait:** Currently, some agencies have 6-month waiting lists to see clients in person. Online therapy can be more easily accessible with more prompt services.
- ② **No Driving Necessary:** Don't waste time trying to find a ride or driving to and from appointments.
- ③ **Easy to Fit into a Busy Schedule:** Because there is no travel time, girls can attend appointments that they might not otherwise have time for. All you need is an internet connection and a safe place to talk.
- ④ **No Waiting Room:** Parents no longer have to wait in a waiting room or in their car. They can get their own errands done or complete work that otherwise would have been pushed to later.
- ⑤ **No Missed Appointment Costs:** Even if girls forget or get sidetracked, they can quickly get online and avoid no-show costs.
- ⑥ **More Comfortable:** Many girls enjoy the comfort of their own room or space allowing them to feel more at ease and share more.



Things You Can Do To Support Your Anxious Daughter

Parents can have a big role when it comes to supporting their anxious daughters. Below is a list of a few things you can do to help your child manage their anxiety and develop healthy coping strategies.

- ① Understand that anxiety often means your daughter might just be feeling uncomfortable. Help your child to build a tolerance for being uncomfortable by not shying away from things that make them feel that way.
- ② Listen with empathy while encouraging them to face their fears. You never get rid of anxiety, you just learn how to manage it better.
- ③ Set realistic expectations and celebrate the wins no matter how small.
- ④ Build a language around their emotions so they can better identify how they are feeling. Once your daughter can identify how she is feeling, she can better ask for what she needs.
- ⑤ Be there for them when they need to talk and problem-solve better coping strategies for when they are feeling big emotions.
- ⑥ Model good self-care and coping strategies including getting help for yourself if you are struggling.

Remember, no parent is perfect. We are all doing the very best we can with the skills we have. Giving our children better skills than we were taught is the best thing we can do.



About Renee McClure, LCSW



Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Renee McClure, is a dynamic therapist, life coach, educator, and speaker. Over the past 30 years, Renee has helped hundreds of teens and adults learn how to effectively manage their anxiety and build resilience and confidence as they embark on major transitions in their life such as entering high school, college, and the workforce.

"I had no idea how to help my 14-year-old daughter who was having such a hard time with peers and low self-esteem. She immediately hit it off with Renee and looked forward to seeing her each session. I saw her engaged in the process and finally laughing again. She has friends and finally sees her self-worth with the help of Renee. Now everyone can see the confident, self-aware, and happy 16-year-old girl I always knew was in there!" - LB

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20-Minute Consultation***

