

POP-UP CONVERSATIONS

My Kid Is Struggling With Anxiety

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Intro: Welcome to our first Pop-Up Parent Conversation! We're so grateful for your presence, and for investing your time in this hour-long guided conversation on behalf of your kids. Today we're going to dive into a topic that's really universal for American families today—the rising tide of anxiety sweeping over young people in our culture. We asked Dr. Daniel Emina, a child/adolescent and adult psychiatrist, and the Associate Medical Director of Amen Clinics, to offer us a 10-minute introduction to the sources of anxiety affecting our kids, and some things to think about as parents who are trying to be a healing, healthy presence in their lives. Let's watch... (Or share the video with parents ahead of time, so that they can come together and discuss what they saw.)

Dr. Daniel Emina (Video - 10 minutes): Anxiety among young people, and hope for parents.

Ask (5 minutes): First, what are your initial reactions to what you just heard? *(Gather feedback, interact, and ask follow-up questions. If you're online, you could choose to have parents give feedback in the Chat instead of spoken. Be sure to take notes on spoken responses in the Chat.)*

Say: Anxiety is similar to a virus—it has the ability to “infect” a social environment, or a relational system like a family. You've seen this up close. When you or someone in your family is anxious, it sets off a kind of chain reaction in your family system. And that can make you feel helpless, overwhelmed, and alone. But parenting is a partnership with God—it's a calling, not just a role. And that means God wants to help us, equip us, and counsel us as we counsel our kids. When our kids are anxious, we can find help, healing, and peace from God as we accompany them.

Let's Talk (Pairs or Trios - 15 minutes): We're going to split into Pairs/Trios now for a 15-minute conversation, then we'll gather back together to debrief what each Pair/Trio talked about. Reference your handout for the questions we'd like you to tackle together... *(or post the questions into three-person chat rooms if you're leading this online)*

- **How have you seen the impact of anxiety on your kids, and how are they coping with it?**
- **How have you tried to address your kids' anxiety, and what's happened as a result?**

Debrief (Whole Group - 7 minutes): Gather back together and **ask:** What stuck out to you in your conversations, and why? *(Gather feedback, interact, and ask follow-up questions. If you're online, you could choose to have parents give feedback in the Chat instead of spoken. Be sure to take notes on spoken responses in the Chat.)*

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Say: In parenting, it's easy to slip into "fix-it" mode with our kids. Subtly and unconsciously, we can start to see them as problems that need to be solved—right? Maybe a shift in perspective can help us enter into our kids' challenges with healthy and healing impact. Daniel Emina hinted at something in his overview that we're going to explore to end our time today...

Let's Talk (Pairs or Trios – 10 minutes): We're going to split back into Pairs/Trios now for a 10-minute conversation, then we'll gather back together to debrief what each Pair/Trio talked about. Reference your handout for the questions we'd like you to tackle together... *(or post the questions into three-person chat rooms if you're leading this online)*

- **From God's perspective, it's no accident that *you* are the parent of your kids—your parenting is a calling. How do you see God as a partner to you as you parent kids who are struggling with anxiety?**
- **Our callings always draw us closer to God. How might God be trying draw you in through what you and your child are experiencing right now?**

Debrief (Whole Group – 7 minutes): Gather back together and **ask:** What's something you heard, or said, in your Trio that offers real help for you as you parent kids struggling with anxiety? *(Gather feedback, interact, and ask follow-up questions. If you're online, you could choose to have parents give feedback in the Chat instead of spoken. Be sure to take notes on spoken responses in the Chat.)*

Closing Prayer: God, sometimes parenting can feel lonely and challenging—never more than when our kids are struggling with anxiety. We confess now our need for you, because we can't do this alone, and don't want to do it alone. Like the Good Shepherd you are, guide us as we guide our kids. In Your name we pray, amen.