

Anxiety-Related School Refusal: Strategies to Encourage Attendance and Lessen Anxiety

Refusal: At some point in our lives, we all experience tasks that we don't want to perform (i.e. washing the dishes, public speaking, going to the dentist, etc.). In these situations, we form strategies to help us complete those tasks in the most painless, effective ways possible:

- Recognizing the benefits of completing the task
- Tackling the task right away
- Doing the task with others

School Refusal: Students who experience school refusal generally do so because of a major life stressor. Some of these stressors may include being bullied, starting at a new school, or fear of not succeeding academically.

Anxiety-related school refusal impacts 2-5% of students, and usually occurs at times of transition (i.e. middle to high school) and in students with average or above average intelligence (Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 2016).

Strategies to deal with **Anxiety-Related School Refusal:**

- Slowly expose students back into the school setting
- Discuss specific feelings and fears around school with students
- Emphasize the positive aspects of attending school
- Parents can meet with teachers and counselors to discuss supports
- Encourage hobbies and interests specific to the student
- Help the student establish a support system

For more information: <http://www.adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/children/school-refusal>