

A photograph of several teenagers looking out over a field. The focus is on a young woman in the foreground, looking slightly to the right. Other teenagers are visible behind her, slightly out of focus. The background shows a field under a bright sky.

RESILIENCE IN OUR TEENS™ (RIOT) PROJECT

3 simple steps parents and carers can
take to support the RIOT project in
your school



It's time to develop teenage resilience, and we're here to help.

You're probably already aware that today's teenagers are more anxious than previous generations of teenagers.

Many people think that teenagers have become more anxious as a result of the pandemic, however, teenage anxiety has been problematic for over a decade. The good news is most teenage anxiety is treatable not only by psychologists, but by significant adults in their lives like parents and teachers.

While the (RIOT) Resilience in Our Teens Project being conducted in NSW high schools can't fix all teenage anxiety, it can provide strategies for the key adults to use to stop anxiety from becoming worse.



"A teenager's anxiety will not usually fix itself. Unless something changes, it will tend to worsen. However, the good news is that seemingly modest interventions delivered by significant adults can make a difference and turn that progression around."



Michael Hawton MAPS;
Psychologist

Facts about teenage anxiety:

- Most anxiety is learned. It's mostly a set of learned habits. The good news about anything that is learned is that **these habits can be changed.**
- Teenagers can use to learn 'return-to-calm' skills that can help them **overcome their anxiety.** While this is not often taught, teenagers equipped with these well-researched skills can build resilience under their own steam.
- Teenagers can be taught how to be the **'boss' of their anxiety** and with each successful attempt at doing this, they can become emotionally stronger and manage their anxiousness.
- A tween's anxiety will **tend to worsen** across their teenage years, if it's not attended to early.
- Mentors, teachers and parents are **important trainers of teenagers' emotional wellbeing.**



3 useful steps to support RIOT

Step 1:

What do you want for the 'future' teenager you're raising?

When parents are asked this question, they'll often say: "I just want him or her to be 'happy'". But, if they're asked to dig a bit deeper, they will say that they want their teenager to be:

- Resilient
- A good problem solver
- Emotionally strong
- Someone with friends and to do well in life.

Now, have a think about this yourself. In the box below, write down what you would wish for your teenager as they mature.

Please don't skip this step, as visualising what you have in mind for your teenager's future will help you focus on what you can do to contribute to this outcome.



Step 2:

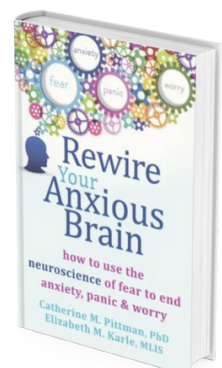
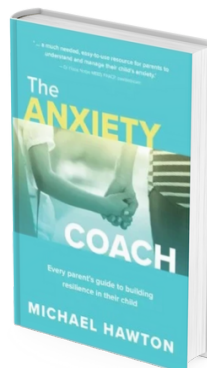
Be an active partner with your school

Here are some ways that you can support your school to build your teenager's resilience.

Educate yourself by:

- Completing the RIOT teenage development course, by attending 3 x 2.5-hour Zoom meetings hosted by a psychologist. Ask your school about the limited number of free & discounted passes available to parents for this training.
- Reading one or both of these books: The Anxiety Coach – every parent's guide to

building resilience in their child, 2023, by Australian psychologist, Michael Hawton or Rewire your Anxious Brain by Catherine Pittman and Elizabeth Karle.



You can buy these books at: [Parentshop.com.au/shop](https://www.Parentshop.com.au/shop) or at your local bookshop.



Step 3:
Recognise that the teachers at your school are interested in your teenager doing their best and want them to do well in life.

Support your school's efforts to build your teenager's resilience.

- Talk with your school's local RIOT Champion about the RIOT project at your school.

Name:

Contact:


- Support the teachers' efforts to help your teenager overcome anxious moments by learning strategies to help your teen problem-solve.

- Avoid prematurely jumping in to fix school-based problems that are within your teenager's ability to solve.
- Get specialist help if your teenager's anxiety worsens.

School staff are trained to deal with teenagers who have mild to moderate level anxiety. If your teenager's anxiety worsens or is interfering with day-to-day activities, talk to your GP about a referral to a psychologist. In addition, here is a referral hub: <https://psychology.org.au/find-a-psychologist>

More resources to support parents are available on this website.



 [Instagram.com/parentshopparents/](https://www.instagram.com/parentshopparents/)

 [Facebook.com/Parentshop](https://www.facebook.com/Parentshop)

