

Research

Many of my friends have anxiety issues, breaks my heart in every way but I knew they could help me with this. I sent out a "call to arms" on Facebook and had many people respond. I was looking for someone who was a student that suffers with anxiety and Christine messaged me and said she would love to help. I believed that it would be easier for me to interview someone with anxiety because I suffer from the illness but it was actually more difficult. I was trying my best to focus on her and her experiences while attempting not to let my own get in the way of the interview. Ultimately, I think I gained a deeper understanding of what it is like for her and I noticed that she experiences a lot of the same issues I do but made sure I kept the interview focused on her.

Christine is a 15 year old student who is currently a sophomore at Kalamazoo Central High School. I know Christine because she is the daughter of a good friend of mine. Throughout the interview, she had told me that her anxiety gets so bad that she often misses school because of it and on the days that she doesn't miss school, she tends to have a very difficult time sleeping the night before because she is in constant anticipation of the anxiety and fear she will be facing the following day. I asked her if she had thought of taking classes online through K12. I believed something like this may help ease her fears due to the fact that she relayed to me many of her triggers come from being called on in class, working in groups, and taking tests. Christine told me that she had spoken with her mother about taking classes online but that her mother (who also suffers from anxiety) didn't want her to miss out on the social engagement high school provides. Christine stated that if she wasn't obligated to go to school, she would rarely leave her home, so I completely understand why her mother would want her to physically go to school because of that. I asked Christine if there was anything she does, during her time in school, to

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ease her anxiety and she responded by telling me that sometimes her teachers will let her sit out in the hall while she takes tests or works on assignments that aren't group assignments. She stated that her teachers are aware of her problem and are very accommodating. I then asked her if she felt that her anxiety hinders her learning in anyway and she answered by telling me that she often has a hard time concentrating, that her lack of sleep makes it hard for her to do well in class, and that her fear of being in school and having a panic attack makes her feel as if she is constantly dwelling on the thought of when her next attack will happen and isn't paying attention to what her instructors are attempting to teach her.

After speaking with Christine, I tried to put myself in her shoes. I have had my own issues with anxiety but they didn't take place when I was in high school. Knowing how difficult high school can be to navigate without having a mental illness to deal with, makes me wonder how Christine even manages to get to school at all. I know she told me she has missed many days but I don't know that I would be able to face my fears long enough to go on any day. I would guess that if I was her, I would beg and plead for my mother to let me take online classes because I just would be so terrified that I would experience panic and fear in school, I would never ever want to step foot in the building. I understand her mother is trying to do the best she can for her daughter (nobody wants their child to be anti-social) but I do wonder if she would be able to learn more and be more successful throughout her educational journey if she was allowed to take classes online. I wonder if Christine did take classes online if there were other ways she could socialize without having it interfere with her education.