

Perfectionism's Impact on Young Minds

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. aspect (Noun) /'æspekt/: A particular part or feature of something, often one that is important.
Example: The most exciting aspect of the movie was its surprising plot twist.
2. worry (Verb) /'wʌri/: To feel anxious or troubled about something, especially when you think about problems or fears.
Example: She would often worry about her upcoming exams.
3. achievable (Adjective) /ə'tʃi:vəbl/: Something that can be accomplished or done with effort.
Example: Graduating from college is an achievable goal if you work hard.
4. realistic (Adjective) /ri:'ælɪstɪk/: Something that is sensible, practical, and possible to achieve.
Example: Setting a realistic budget for your vacation will help you avoid financial stress.
5. excellence (Noun) /'eksələns/: The quality of being outstanding or extremely good in a particular area or activity.
Example: Striving for excellence in your work can lead to career success.



Trying to be perfect seems good, but a 2023 study shows it might be linked to problems with mental health in young people.

Researchers in Australia studied perfectionism and how it relates to anxiety, depression, and OCD in people aged 6 to 24. OCD, or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, is a mental health condition where a person has recurring unwanted thoughts and does things repeatedly to try to stop those thoughts or make them go away. They used data from 121 studies and looked at two **aspects** of perfectionism: "perfectionistic concerns" and "perfectionistic strivings."

"Perfectionistic concerns" are when people **worry** too much about being perfect. "Perfectionistic strivings" are when they really want to be perfect or almost perfect. The study found that perfectionistic concerns were strongly connected to anxiety, depression, and OCD. Perfectionistic strivings were also linked to anxiety and OCD, but not as strongly.

Other research in the past has found similar connections between perfectionism and mental health, but in recent years, it has become a bigger issue, especially among young people. Social media and the pressure to do well in school are some reasons for this.

To deal with perfectionism, experts suggest setting small, **achievable** goals, being **realistic**, and being kind to yourself. If perfectionism causes big problems, getting professional help is important. One psychology professor advises aiming for **excellence** instead of perfection and allowing room for mistakes.

DISCUSSION

1. If you could give advice to a young person struggling with perfectionism, what would it be, and why?
2. Imagine you are a mental health superhero. How would you help young people combat perfectionism-related stress and anxiety?
3. Can you share a personal story about a time when you felt pressured to be perfect? How did you handle it?
4. If you were a school counselor, what fun and creative activities would you organize to help students deal with the stress of trying to be perfect?
5. In a make-believe world, what magical solutions or tools could help young people manage their perfectionism in a healthy way?
6. How do you think social media influences the way young people perceive perfection and how they feel about themselves? What changes would you make to improve this situation?