

# Secondary education anxiety disorder (sead)

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

With bleary eyes, I grudgingly lift my head from my cloud-like pillow to glare at my alarm clock. “WHAT?!” I screech, as I sit up with a jolt. I feverishly grasp for my alarm clock, praying that my first glance was the remains from a nightmare.

No such luck. For a moment, I sit there bewildered at the mocking red numbers glaring back: “7:05 am.” I have 10 minutes to leave for school or I’ll be late. Being late is not an option. Without a moment’s hesitation, I bound out of bed, and scurried to the bathroom for my hairbrush and toothbrush.

As I ferociously brush my hair and teeth, a memory slams into my rudely awakened mind: I still have an essay to finish and print! I drop my toothbrush in the sink, rush back into my room, load my laptop, and scramble to find that essay that has life-and-death importance. Then I see it. For the second time that morning I sit staring with the dumbstruck face of a freshman at the SATs. “It’s Saturday.... Saturday means no school,” I repeat this simple logic multiple times until it finally sinks in. Hysterical laughter bubbles out of my throat, and this same lunatic laughter follows me as I crash back on to the haven that is my bed.

When the clock strikes noon, I rise again, still in a state of delirium. The reason for this late morning is that during this past week I was forced to make a choice: study for two tests and write a paper and complete a diorama project and have a reasonable social life, or receive the normal allotted time for sleep. Want to guess which path I dragged myself down? I’ll give you a hint; I’m a zombie with a high G. P. A.

Trust me, it was not ideal to spend hours on homework rather than relish the sweet release of sleep. Sadly, however, this is normality for high-achieving high school students buried under mountains of paper and ink. I'm still brooding on this as I schlep my half-asleep body down the stairs, ready to bite off the first head that dares speak to me. Somewhere in the back of my mind I feel anticipatory remorse for the off-handed scathing remarks that I will ultimately spit out, but the war with my school anxieties has been lost as I cast out that pent-up frustration on the first poor soul I see. On this particular morning my sister receives the honor of my presence. " Morning, sleepy head!" " Bite me.

" " That was rude!" " Good." " B\*\*\*\*!" " Jerk." My parents think this routine illustrating my rotten mood is just " teenage angst," and in a way, I suppose that is true. But the complete truth is that my reactions stem from something other than hormones. They stem from the aggravation theMicrosoftWord cursor causes as I stared at it on Monday night, watching as it blinked in and out of existence, mocking me, daring me to start the essay. They stem from the dread as I pass forward that accursed green Scantron that holds my test answers and consequently my future. They stem from uneasiness as I sit at my wooden desk and await my ill-fated essay grade. Over the week my mind blocks all these sensations to protect itself from the ensured trauma. But during the weekend my walls come down, my defenses vanish, and my emotions tumble. Usually, those emotions tumble into sarcastic remarks that, according to my mother, I will regret while I am forced to spend the weekend locked in my room.

Because I would prefer not to spend the rest of my high school existence trapped in my personal prison cell, I decide to go see a therapist. “ Am I crazy? Cuckoo for crazy nuts? Please tell my parents that my actions cannot be held against me in the court of parental punishment!” I plead with my potential savior. “ Actually, you are not crazy,” she calmly responds. “ What you are experiencing is the result of sleep deprivation and an emotional blockade that high schools trigger in teenagers, which causes their psyches to crack. The clinical term for this is Secondary Education Anxiety Disorder, or SEAD.

I am going to write you a prescription for decreased hours of homework to give you the chance to get those precious hours of sleep and diminish the anxious emotions that cause outbursts and—subsequently—groundings.” As I was told of my true affliction, I realized how many of my fellow students had been misdiagnosed with “ teenage angst”, and that all high school students must rush to the nearest psychiatrist to receive the proper prescription.