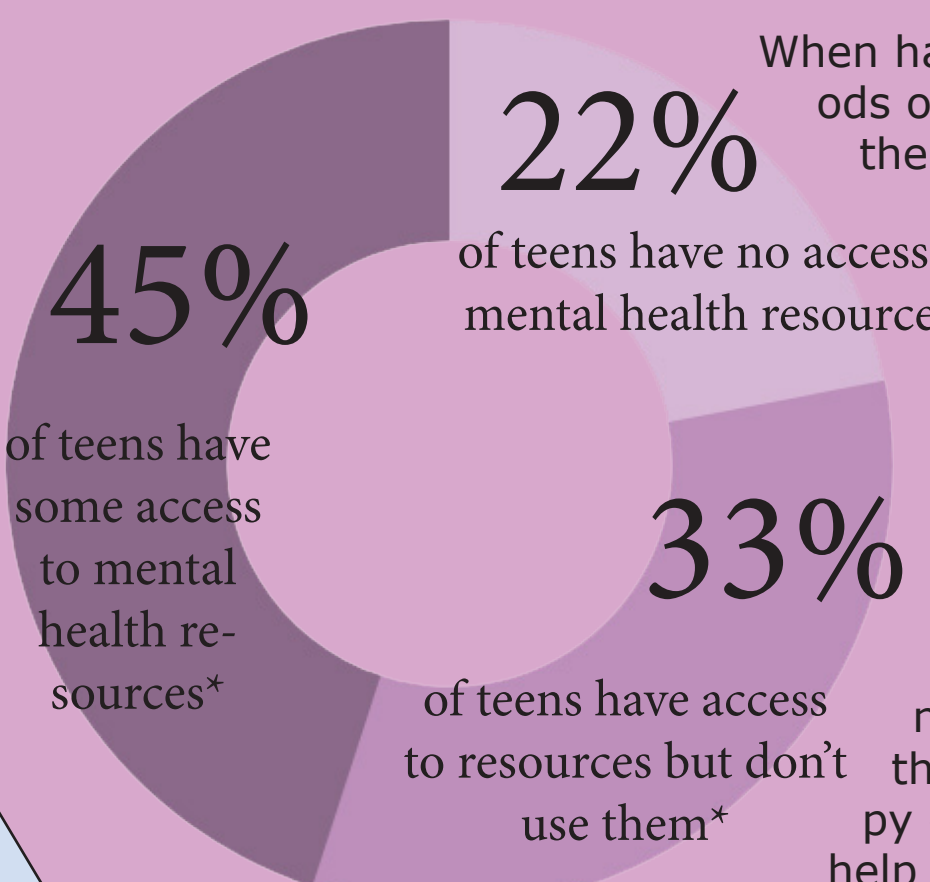


# Finding ways to cope



When handling anxiety, people have many different methods of coping. A common way for people to relieve their anxiety is talking through it with friends, family or a professional. According to the New York Times, expressing one's emotions verbally results in a lessened response from the amygdala, which is a part of the brain that responds to stress and fear.

Talking about one's feelings and stressors can even help reduce stress in the long term, as the amygdala's response to stressful situations will remain lowered if one continues to resolve anxious feelings through talking. Seeking professional help such as therapy can also help build more positive patterns of thinking, and help with managing feelings of anxiety or stress. Further research studies have also shown that problem solving through the situation as well as looking at the issue through different perspectives can be effective in mitigating tension.

“It becomes difficult to kind of see yourself and know where you fit in with everyone else”

Trinity Ezell, 12  
“I tend to do things I enjoy, like I draw, and then sometimes I'll work out to up my energy levels”

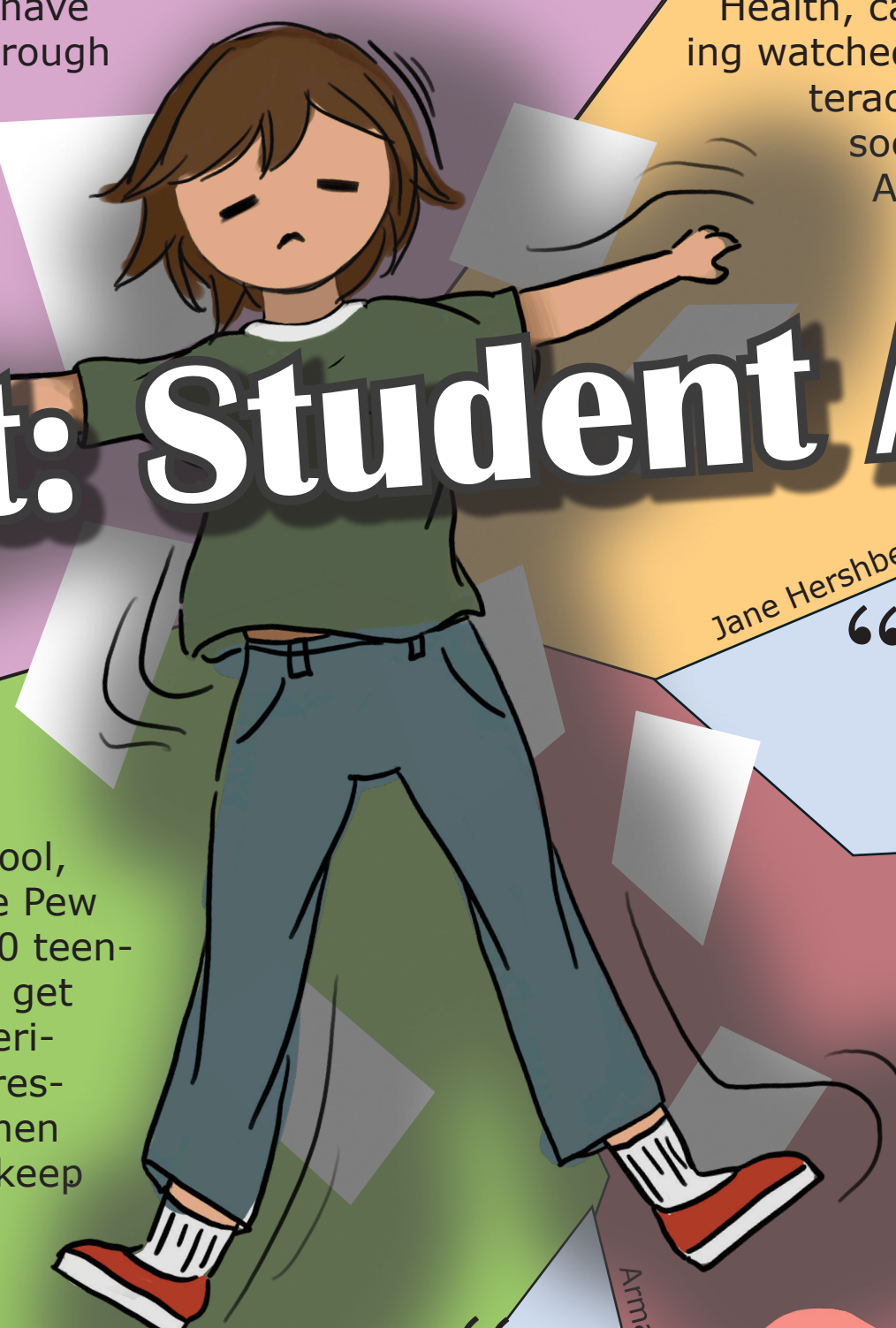
# Dealing with social pressures

High school is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, and many students are exposed to new social situations. According to Choosing Therapy, 85% of high school adolescents experience peer pressure to engage in social behaviors that they would otherwise not participate in. As a result of these social pressures, many teenagers find themselves facing feelings of anxiety as they worry about “fitting in” and conforming to peer expectations.

The way that students interact with and perceive their peers can be a large source of anxiety for many. Social anxiety, according to the National Institute of Health, can be described as an intense fear of being watched and judged by others. With social interaction being a main aspect of high school, social anxiety is prominent among teens.

According to a Panorama survey conducted by the San Mateo Union High School District, 13% of Aragon students consider issues with other students their main stress factor.

# Spotlight: Student Anxiety



Jane Hershberger, 10  
“Sometimes, I think teenagers tend to pressure their friends or other people into doing things because communication kind of gets lost. Some people might feel more uncomfortable but aren't sure how to communicate it”

# Culture of competition



As students progress through their four years of high school, excessive pressure to excel may follow. According to the Pew Research Center, approximately six in 10 teenagers say they feel a lot of pressure to get good grades. At Aragon, students experience varying levels of anxiety and pressure to succeed. Some underclassmen transition into high school, able to keep up with the competitive academic culture of Aragon, while others may start to succumb to the anxiety and stress of a competitive environment.

With the stress of a heavy academic workload, demanding extracurriculars and increasing expectations that start to solidify as students become upperclassmen, they may start to feel the negative impacts of Aragon's competitive nature. The stress of standing out for high-ranking colleges and life beyond high school can result in students comparing themselves to their peers, furthering feelings of anxiety.

Armani Choy, 12  
“My parents expect me to get a 4.0 ... and basically be the best in the school. Well, I can't, really. There's no perfect student out there. I can't be that”

# The role parents play

Students and their peers are not the only ones creating an anxious environment. For some, parents play a key role in creating the pressure students feel to be the very best. As parents want their children to create a better future for themselves, school seems to be a place to get a leg up and climb. Oftentimes though, this pressure to consistently perform well in hopes of a greater future becomes a source of anxiety for the students as it builds expectations that may seem impossible to reach. For other students, support and motivation from parents encourages them to do their best in classes.

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\*Statistics from Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health 2021 Report