

ALL ABOUT ANXIETY

Anxiety is worries or fears that are frequent and overwhelming. The feelings don't have to be caused by something specific. People facing anxiety can also have physical symptoms like sweating, dizziness and difficulty sleeping.

QUICK INFORMATION:

- There are about 4.4 million children in the U.S. between the ages of 3-17 who have been diagnosed with anxiety.
- Anxiety can present itself in many ways. Children may feel stressed or panicked. They may have difficulty focusing or sleeping, and they may also feel physical effects like a stomachache or a headache.

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Talk to your child about how they are feeling. Help your child develop ways to cope with their anxious feelings like deep breathing, exercising, and using positive self talk.
- Manage your own anxieties. Different life circumstances can leave us all feeling anxious. Our kids can pick up on this, so it is important to keep your conversations age-appropriate and reassuring.

WHAT TO SAY:

- "I am here for you."
- "Let's work through this together. How can I help you?"
- "I know this is hard."
- "You are safe. I am here."
- "What is your worry telling you?"

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

- Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents by Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons
- What To Do When You Worry Too Much by Dawn Huebner
- www.worrywisekids.org
- Growing Up Brave by Donna Pincus

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- "Stop worrying."
- "Get over it."
- "This isn't a big deal."
- "I don't understand what you're so worried about."
- "It's fine."

PICTURE BOOKS FOR KIDS:

- Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes
- Wilma Jean: The Worry Machine by Julia Cook
- The Huge Bag Of Worries by Virginia Ironside
- Silly Billy by Anthony Brown

TIPS FOR ANXIETY DURING TIMES OF CRISIS

IDEAS FOR PARENTS:

- Explain the incident in age appropriate language. Start by asking what they already know about what is happening.
- Be available to support your child with their feelings and fears.
- Stick to the normal routine as much as possible.
- Limit your child's exposure to adult conversation about the topic. This includes the news if applicable.
- Allow your child to see you handling your own anxiety in a positive way.
- Talk to children about your plan to keep them safe.

WHAT TO SAY:

- "How are you feeling?"
- "I know this is hard for you. How can I help?"
- "Here is what we are going to do to stay safe..."
- "Let's come up with a plan."
- "Would you like a hug?"
- "I'll keep you updated when I find out more information."
- "I'm here for you."

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- "This isn't a big deal."
- "We don't know how bad this will get."
- "I don't want to talk about this any more."
- "Nothing is going on. Everything's fine."
- "I don't understand why you are acting like that."
- "I don't know how we'll get through this."

IDEAS FOR CHILDREN:

- Start a gratitude journal. Gratitude is a great way to combat anxiety.
- Practice deep breathing.
- Write or draw pictures about how you feel during this time.
- Remember that how you are feeling is okay!
- Find activities that help you feel calm like reading, drawing, exercising, or connecting with friends.
- Remind yourself that you are safe.