



UL Health

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U^{of}L Health

Anxiety in Children and Teens

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Training Goals

- To develop a basic understanding of anxiety and how it impacts children and teens
- To learn more about anxiety management strategies



Training Objectives

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- Recognize signs and symptoms of anxiety in children
- Understand mental health and medical interventions for anxiety in children
- Provide support to children who experience anxiety



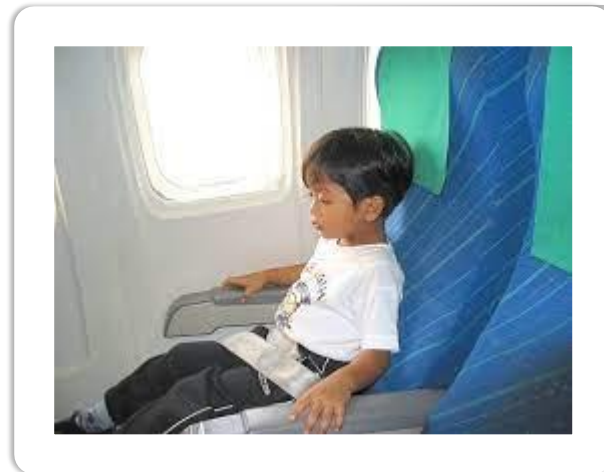
What is anxiety?

- A mental health disorder characterized by feelings of worry, anxiousness, fear, or restlessness that are strong enough to interfere with daily activities.
- When children do not outgrow the fear and worries that are typical in young children, or when there are so many fears and worries that they interfere with school, home, or play activities, the child may be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder (CDC).
- Diagnosed by self-report of symptoms or collateral information from parent. Lab tests of imaging are not required.
- Treatable by medical and mental health professionals.



We all experience anxiety at times...

- Is not exactly a bad thing in and of itself.
- Only when it becomes disruptive in the functioning of an individual for a set period of time does it become an *Anxiety Disorder*.



There are good reasons to feel it...

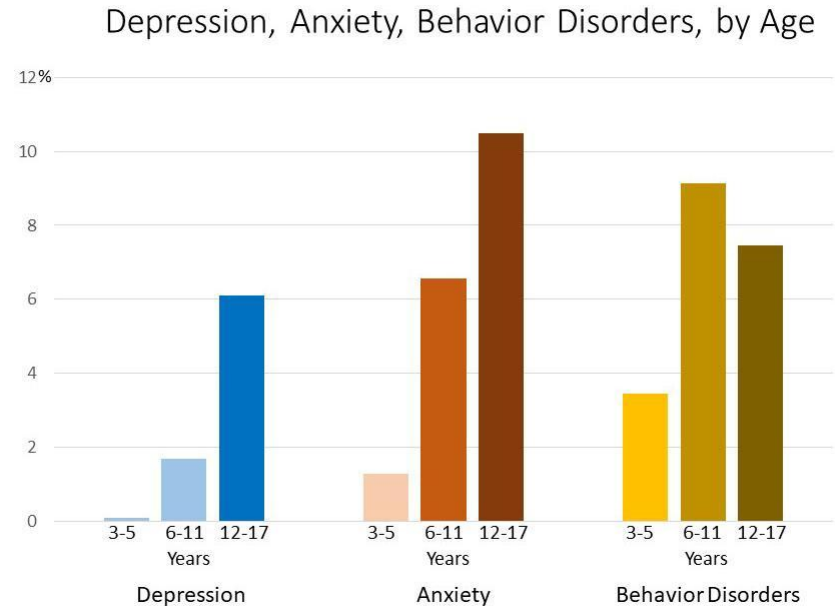
- Threats to our safety
- Some people are scary and aggressive
- Some situations are crucial
- Some possessions are valuable or cherished.

Chinese proverb:

- *“A **little anxiety** helps to focus the mind, but too much paralyzes it.”*

Facts about anxiety

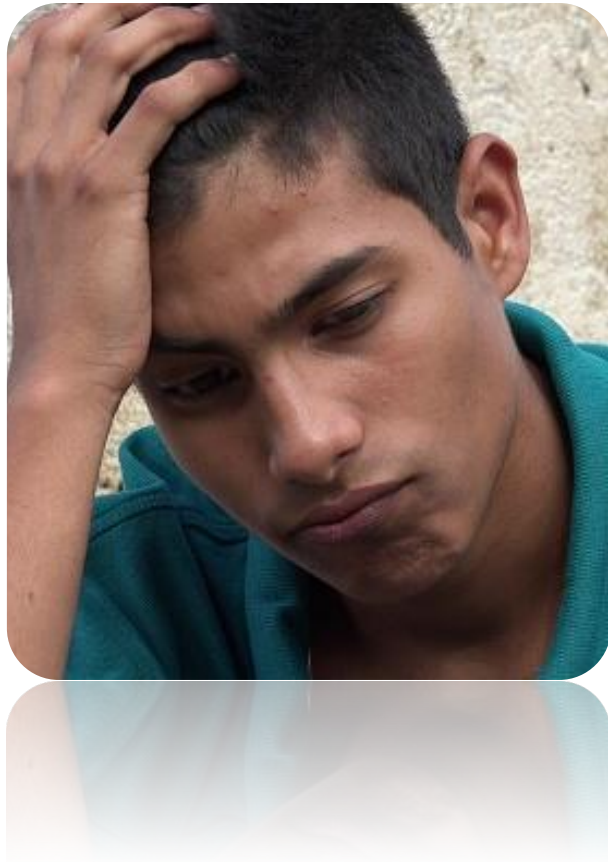
- Anxiety is the most common mental health disorder experienced by children.
- 6 in 10 children (59.3%) with anxiety received treatment (CDC, 2016)
- Anxiety disorders are often misdiagnosed as some other mental illness.



Anxiety and the Brain

- <https://youtu.be/2xeDcPBD5Fk>
- https://youtu.be/FfSbWc3O_5M

What causes anxiety?

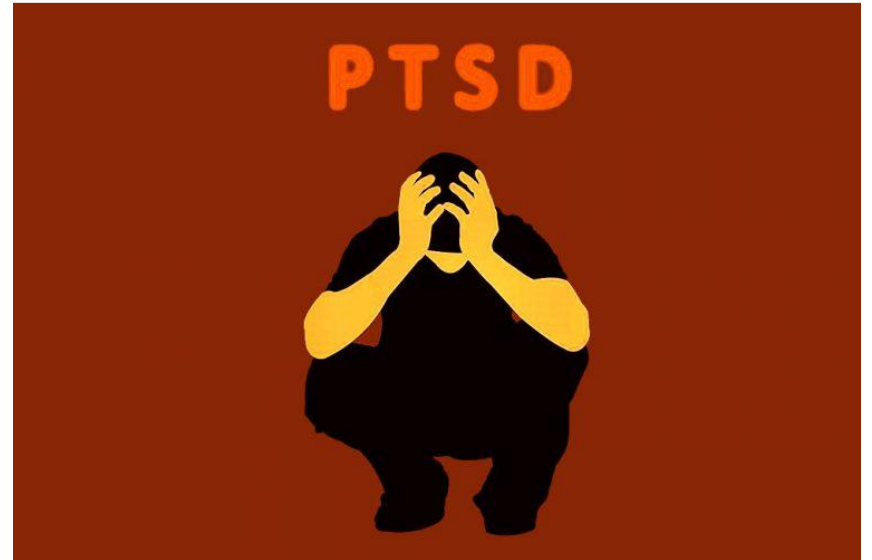


- No single identifiable cause
- Genetics
- Modeled/Learned
- Drugs/Medication
- Medical conditions
- Life events/Trauma

What does anxiety look like in children?

- ▶ Agitation
- ▶ Restlessness
- ▶ Inattention
- ▶ Avoidance
- ▶ Tantrums
- ▶ Aggression towards self and others
- ▶ Crying
- ▶ Forgetful, distracted
- ▶ Physical reactivity
- ▶ Poor concentration, memory, problem solving
- ▶ Refusing to go to school
- ▶ Jumpy / startles easily
- ▶ Isolation and withdrawal
- ▶ Disruption in sleep and appetite
- ▶ Skin picking
- ▶ Somatization (headaches, tummy aches, physical complaints)

What else does this sound like??



Anxiety Disorders



According to the DSM-5, there are 11 specifically defined and recognized anxiety disorders, each with their own diagnostic criteria.

Separation Anxiety Disorder

- Primarily seen in children, but can also occur in adults
- Recurrent and excessive distress about separation from home OR from major attachment figure



Selective Mutism Disorder



- Primarily seen in children, but can also occur in adults
- Failure to speak in specific social situations, despite speaking in other situations

Social Anxiety Disorder

- Marked fear/anxiety about one or more social situations
- Irrational fears of being judged or negatively evaluated by others





Panic Disorder

Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks

Racing hearts, sweating, chills, trembling, difficulty breathing, weakness or dizziness, tingly or numb hands, chest pain, stomach pain or nausea

Agoraphobia



- Marked fear/avoidance of 2 or more of the following:
 - Public transportation
 - Open spaces (parking lots, bridges, etc.)
 - Enclosed places (shops, theaters, etc.)
 - In crowd or queue
 - Being outside of home, particularly if alone

Specific Phobias

- Marked fear of anxiety about a specific object or situation (i.e. flying, heights, animals, seeing blood, etc.)
- Each may be known by a specific name (Aviophobia/Aerophobia, Acrophobia, Arachnophobia, Cynophobia, Hemophobia, Triskaidekaphobia, etc.)





Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- Excessive worry (apprehensive expectation)
- Inability/Difficulty with controlling the worry

Substance/Medication Induced Anxiety Disorder

- Symptoms of anxiety manifest as result of drugs/medications (EtOH, Caffeine, Cannabis, Inhalants, Opioids, Hallucinogens, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Sedatives, Hypnotics, Anxiolytics, etc.)



Anxiety (Therapies)

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Coping Skill Education
- Exposure Therapy
- Play Therapy
- Group Psychotherapy
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) EMDR stands for Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy. It is an entire therapy model that has been proven to be highly effective for those who have experienced trauma. EMDR therapy is founded on the basis that our emotional well-being is interwoven with our physical (somatic) state. Therefore, EMDR employs a body-based technique called **bilateral simulation during which a therapist will guide a client through through eye movements, tones, or taps in order to move a memory that has been incorrectly stored to a more functional part of the brain.**

Anxiety (Medications)

- Consult with a pediatric psychiatrist.



Anxiety Management Strategies

Basic strategies for reducing anxiety, stress and panic.

DIET

1. Reduce or eliminate caffeine from your diet.
2. Reduce or eliminate sugar intake.
3. Reduce intake of red food dyes.

INTENTIONAL RELAXATION

1. Practice deep, slow breathing (15-second breaths—5 seconds to inhale, hold 5 seconds, exhale over 5 seconds)
2. Exercise.
3. Relaxation techniques such as visualization, meditation, yoga.
4. Hobbies.
5. Hot baths, showers, saunas, hot tubs.

LIFE and TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Develop or improve time management skills and efforts.
2. Learn or improve your assertiveness.
3. Use your behavior to modify situations,
 - a. smile more,
 - b. Initiate positive situations.
4. Simplification of your life.
 - a. Pay off credit.
 - b. Does status really matter?
 - c. Change jobs?

THINKING PATTERNS

1. Give up the need to be a perfectionist—few things if any in this world are perfect.
2. We feel better when we do not make assumptions about what other people are thinking.
3. The less we feel that we have to prove ourselves the more relaxed we are.
4. **Think in the present**—yesterday only matters as much as we want it to and worrying about tomorrow is irrational because we have no control over it until we get there.
5. Think pleasant—there is less stress in being positive than in being negative.
6. Only so much analysis is useful. There is a time where analysis can become worry.

Activities you can do to reduce your anxiety

- **Practice relaxation techniques**

- **Exercise**

According to the Mayo Clinic, “Doing 30 minutes or more of exercise a day for three to five days a week may significantly improve depression or anxiety symptoms. But smaller amounts of physical activity — as little as 10 to 15 minutes at a time — may make a difference.”

- **Get enough sleep**

“Strong evidence indicates that sleeping problems are not only a symptom of anxiety. Instead, sleep deprivation can instigate or worsen anxiety disorders. Researchers have found that people who are prone to anxiety are especially sensitive to the effects of insufficient sleep, which can provoke symptoms of anxiety” per the Sleep Foundation.

Babies-12-16 hours

Toddles 11-14 hours

Preschoolers 10-13 hours

School-aged kids 9-12 hours

Teenagers 8 to 10 hours

Per Cleveland Clinic



Sensory Based Activities

- Breath Regulation/deep breathing (4/4/4/4 or 4-7-8)
- Stretching/yoga
- Meditation/Guided Imagery
- [Bing Videos](#)
- Relaxing Music
- Grounding



Grounding Exercises

5-4-3-2-1 technique

What are 5 things you can see? Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.

What are 4 things you can feel? Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.

What are 3 things you can hear? Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.

What are 2 things you can smell? Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Carry gum, candy, or small snacks for this step. Pop one in your mouth and focus your attention closely on the flavors.

Body Awareness Technique

1. **Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.**
2. **Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.**
3. **Stomp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.**
4. **Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.**
5. **Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.**
6. **Rub your palms together briskly. Notice the sound and the feeling of warmth.**
7. **Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.**
8. **Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.**

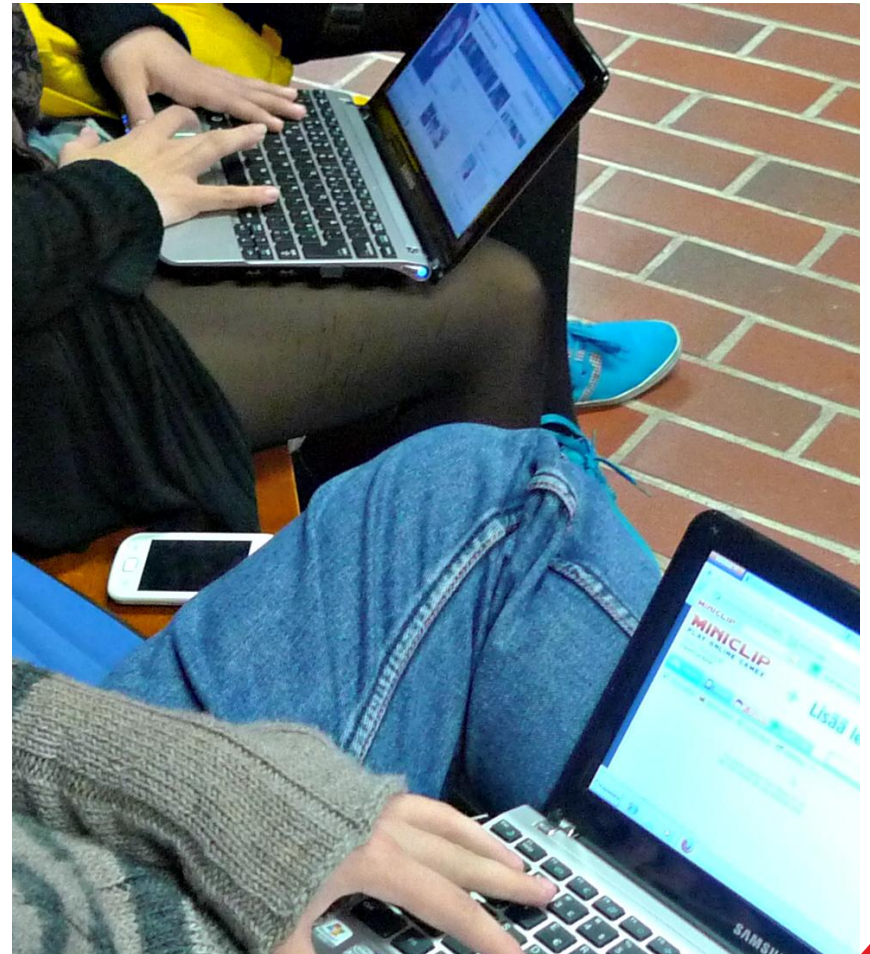
Consistency/Routine

- Routines makes us feel safe. Keep a regular schedule when possible (ex. Meals, homework time, tv/game time, bath time, bedtime, etc.).
- Try to avoid abrupt changes in your routine.



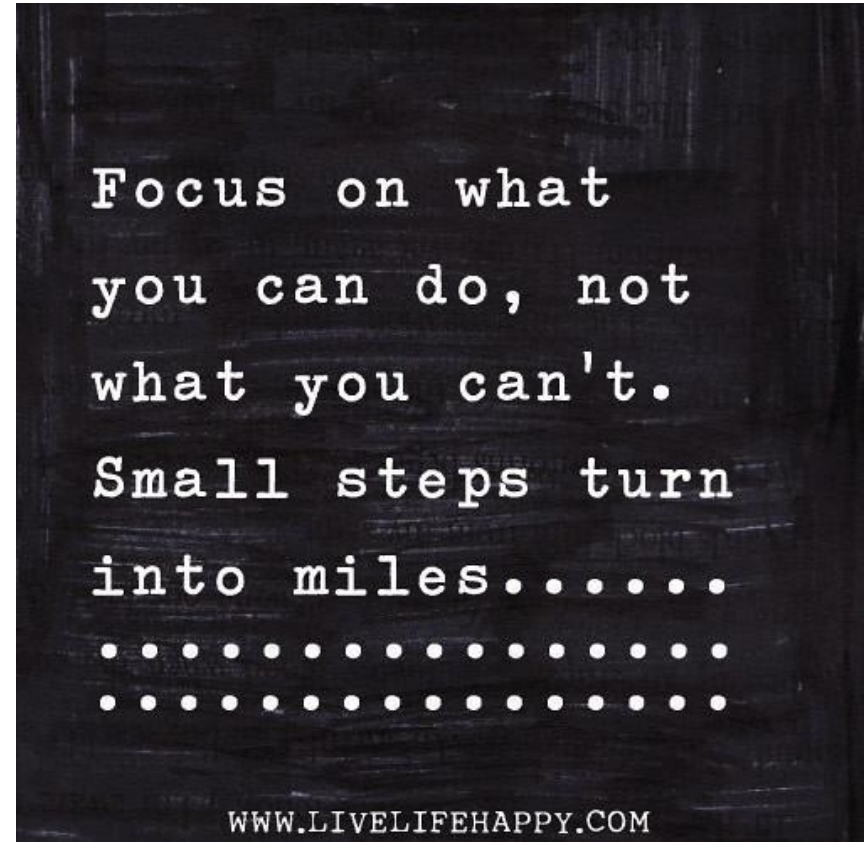
Homework Time

- Break up homework time into intervals with breaks and snacks
- Provide clear, organized space to do homework
- Remove distractions (i.e. TV, games, loud noises, etc.)



More Tips

- Take “small steps” to ease your fears or anxiety.
- Talk with a trusted adult or friend about your feelings.
- Seek support
- Focus on the positive



Other resources

- **Online support for kids can be found at:**
- **BRAVE** (an online program for children 8-17 years experiencing anxiety)
- **Youth moodgym** (an interactive self-help book to prevent and manage symptoms of depression and anxiety)
- **BITE BACK** (a program to increase well-being and prevent depression and anxiety for adolescents aged 13–16 years).
- **Headspace**

This is one of the more recognized mindfulness apps available. It focuses on teaching meditation and mindfulness skills from world-class experts. There are hundreds of guided meditations focusing on everything from sleep to anxiety and mind-body health.

- 988, suicide prevention hotline

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