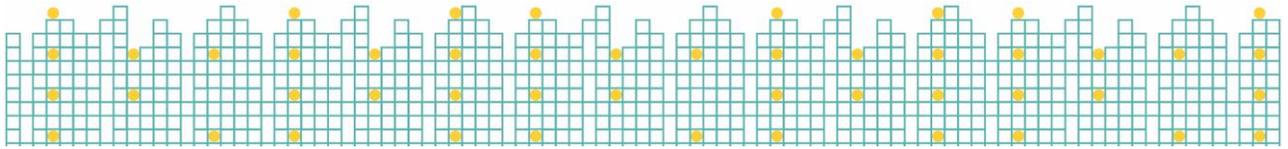


Working Together To Help Anxious Students

January 20, 2021

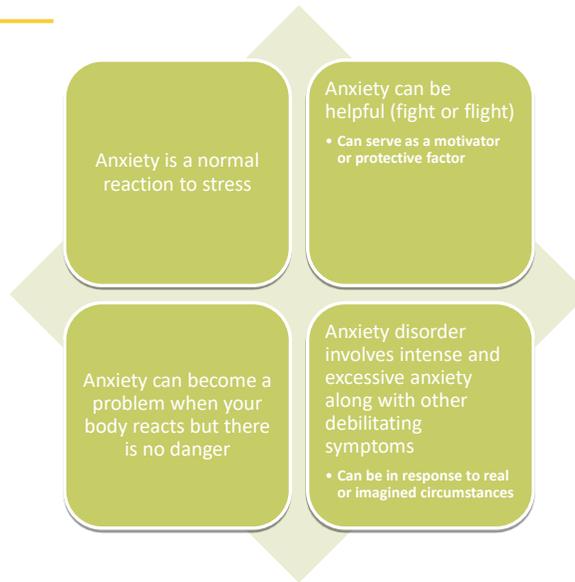


LEARNING CENTER



1

Anxiety



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Types of Anxiety



Generalized

Social

Separation



3

3

Symptoms of Anxiety

SIGNS OF ANXIETY

It is normal to be worried and stressed during times of crisis. While worry is a part of anxiety, people with anxiety tend to experience more exaggerated feelings of worry and tension. Some common symptoms include:

					
Uncontrollable worry or dread	Stomach and digestion problems	Trouble with concentration, memory, or thinking clearly	Increased heart rate	Changes in energy and difficulty sleeping	Irritability and/or restlessness

In extreme cases of anxiety, people may experience a panic attack. Panic attacks are often mistaken for heart attacks at first, but usually go away when people are able to talk to someone else to calm their fears and practice deep breathing.



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Relationship to ADHD

Failing to identify anxiety accurately may explain why some children do not respond as expected to medications prescribed for ADHD.



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What is the goal?

- **The goal is not to eliminate the anxiety, but to help a child manage it**
- **Prevent avoidance and learn healthy coping mechanisms**



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Tips for home



10 Tips to Parent Your ANXIOUS Child
 By Anne Marie Albano, PhD, author of *You and Your Anxious Child*, with Leslie Pepper

1. Respect and validate your child's feelings! Anxiety is a real emotion and not pleasant.
2. Teach your child deep, slow, belly breathing. This is an easy and very portable skill for self-soothing and calming.
3. Listen to your child and ask "Tell me what you are thinking?" This will help to reveal scary thoughts and scenes that build up in your child's mind.
4. Rather than swooping to reassure, ask your child "How likely is (that thing you're afraid of) to happen?" You'll be teaching him to challenge his anxious thinking.
5. Prompt your child with "Tell me some things you can do to handle this situation" and help her to brainstorm, rather than just giving her solutions. She'll feel empowered.
6. Give up the idea of "mental health days" "skip days" "sleep with mom nights" or other ways of avoiding feared situations. This just makes the anxiety stick more firmly and lead to further avoidance.
7. Encourage your child's attempts to be brave, no matter how small they may seem to you. Use labeled praise such as "I'm so proud of you for sleeping in your own bed last night!"
8. Work with your child to outline small steps leading to a bigger goal.
9. Create opportunities for your child to practice being brave and coping, and then high-five his/her efforts!
10. Recognize when you are anxious and say aloud what you can do to calm down and solve the situation. You'll be modeling coping for your child, but be mindful and don't overshare your anxiety!

Graphics by: Miss. Funk

kidlutions.com



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More Strategies for Home



Put distance between anxiety and child – can come back and reflect

Worry time
 Jot down worries



Exercise



Focus on strengths (protective factors)



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When to See the Counselor



Impacts a child's ability to learn

Impacts a child's ability to make friends

Impacts a child's ability to have fun

Impacts family functioning



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Counseling Strategies

Two evidence-based areas shown to be effective
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Small group settings helpful

Normalize experience

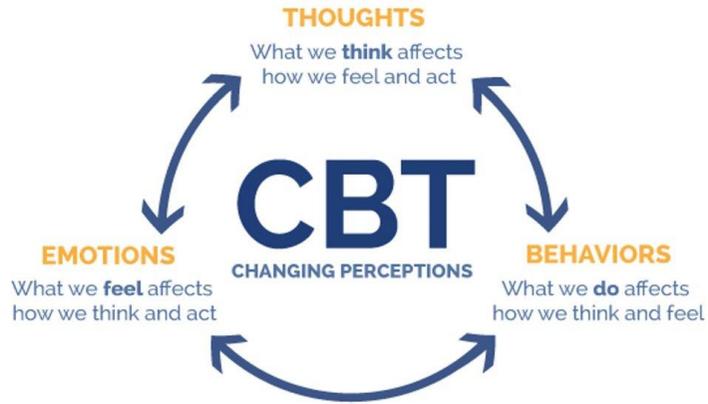
Gain support and learn how peers cope with stress and anxiety



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CBT Based



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Worry Monster



- Externalizes the anxiety
- Children can talk back to anxiety



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Thought Checking

1. Look at all of the facts.
2. Think about the past.
3. Look for counter-evidence.
4. Look for alternative explanations.
5. Put it in perspective.

Challenging Negative Self-Talk

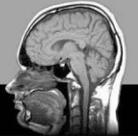


Look for alternative explanations
 What is my evidence for and against my thinking?
 Are my thoughts factual, or are they just my interpretations?
 Am I jumping to negative conclusions?
 How can I find out if my thoughts are actually true?

Reality testing
 Are there any other ways that I could look at this situation?
 What else could this mean?
 If I were being positive, how would I perceive this situation?

Putting it in perspective
 Is this situation as bad as I am making out to be?
 What is the worst thing that could happen? How likely is it?
 What is the best thing that could happen?
 What is most likely to happen?
 Is there anything good about this situation?
 Will this matter in five years time?

Using goal-directed thinking
 Is thinking this way helping me to feel good or to achieve my goals?
 What can I do that will help me solve the problem?
 Is there something I can learn from this situation, to help me do it better next time?



<http://psychcentral.com/1020/Challenging-negative-self-talk/>



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Role Play



Variations:

- Scenarios
- Modeling
- Puppets



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Mindfulness Based

Based on awareness of the present moment

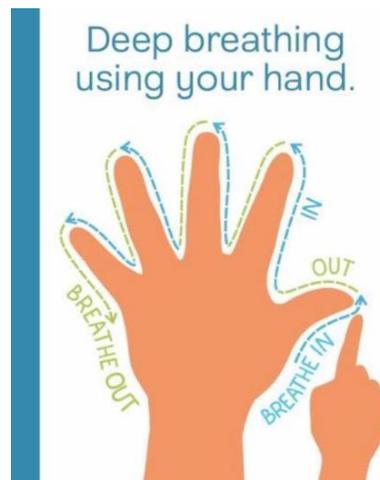
Apps:



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Breathing Exercises



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Grounding Techniques

Stay Grounded Using Your 5 Senses

Relax Your Body, Take a Few Deep Breaths and Focus on the Following...

- 5 Things You Can See 
- 4 Things You Can Feel 
- 3 Things You Can Hear 
- 2 Things You Can Smell 
- 1 Thing You Can Taste 

www.mindfulnessmatters.com
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Alphabet grounding



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Guided Mental Relaxations

[7 Meditation Scripts for Kids](#)

[Child Relaxation Script](#)

[Green Child Magazine's Guided Relaxations](#)



A Hot Air Balloon Trip

Imagine you climb into a great big hot air balloon.
 What color is your balloon?
 Your favorite color?
 All the colors of the rainbow?
 Polka dotted?
 Take in a big breath, and then blow out, filling up your hot air balloon.
 Feet your hot air balloon lift up off the ground and float into the sky.
 Do you see any birds, planes, or clouds?
 Look down—I think you are flying over your house!
 Now choose where you are going to fly, anywhere you want to go.
 The beach...the mountains...the North Pole...the desert...the jungle...
 Once you get there, feel your balloon land gently.
 Imagine you climb out of your balloon to explore.
 What do you see?
 What do you smell?
 What do you hear?
 What do you feel?
 Do you taste anything?
 Now climb back into your balloon.
 Wave goodbye to any friends you have made.
 Take in a big breath and then blow out, filling up your hot air balloon again.
 Feet it lift up off the ground and float back home.
 Land your hot air balloon on the ground, safe and sound.



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Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Whole Body Script

1 Forehead
Scrunch up your forehead like you are thinking hard. Squint or tighter, tighter! Now you can relax. (hold for around 10 seconds)

2 Eyes
Squeeze your eyes tight like you are about to blow out the candles on your cake and make a wish! No peeking! (10 seconds)

3 Cheeks
Puff your cheeks out as far as you can. Blow them together like you have a mouth full of food. Now relax. (10 seconds)

4 Mouth
I want you to pretend you are chewing a really big piece of gum! It's really hard to chew, but keep chewing! (10 seconds)

5 Shoulders
Lead you to try and touch your shoulder blades together! Squares tighter, you're almost there! Now you can relax. (10 seconds)

6 Arms
I want you to relax and arms as straight and stiff as possible! Relax! you are in good! Now you can relax. (10 seconds)

7 Lower Back
Sit up super straight and try to touch like you can't. Tuck! Tuck! And now relax! (10 seconds)

8 Legs
I want you to make your legs as straight as you can! Pretend you are frozen again! Now you can relax. (10 seconds)

9 Feet
Lead you to press your feet into the ground as hard as you can! Push, Push! And now relax. (10 seconds)

10 Toes
Pretend you are at the beach, and squish your toes in the sand! So squishy! And now relax. (10 seconds)

Tyler of Tomarow



In the classroom



Challenging thoughts



Mindfulness exercises Mindful moment



Access to calm corners/calm toolkits Counselor can help set up



Possible Accommodations

Preferential seating

Pre-arranged breaks

Exit plan to a safe space

Explicit guidelines for assignments

Clear behavior plans

Identifying changes in routine in advance

Extended time for tests



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Resources

Books

- **Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children** by Reid Wilson and Lynn Lyons
- **Freeing Your Child from Anxiety** by Tamar Chansky

Websites

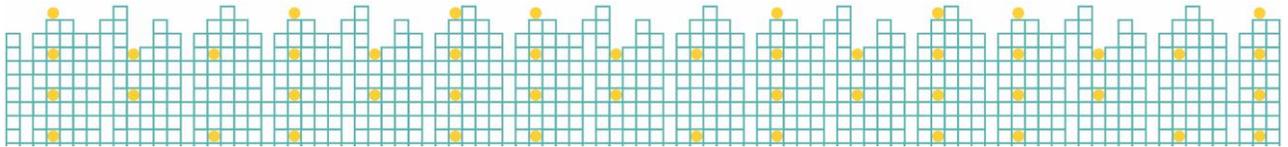
- [SEL Sketches](#)
- [Child Mind Institute](#)
- [Kidshealth](#)



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Anxiety: Teens and Older



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Definitions of Anxiety

APA defines anxiety as :

an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.

People with anxiety disorders usually have recurring intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations out of worry. They may also have physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, dizziness or a rapid heartbeat

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress

Anxiety is a reaction that allows us to deal with tense situations.

Anxiety is characterized by a feeling of apprehensions, nervousness or fear.



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Anxiety and Comorbidity

ADHD

Learning Differences

Physical conditions- phobias, panic attacks

Depression

Substance Abuse

Other Mental Health Concerns



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Activity

Think of a time you felt anxious.

Name the time and describe the feeling.



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Anxiety Disorder

Excessive anxiety and worry

Interferes with daily functioning

Causes physical reactions and sometimes even pain

Feels difficult to control

Lasting and consistent and sometimes unexplained



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What to look for and understand if someone is experiencing anxiety

Interfering with the ability of the person to function in typical activities

Persistent and repetitive

Continued distress can cause frequent physical disturbances

Severity of the emotions



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Reframing Anxiety

Discomfort

Stress

Stress related physical reactions

Anxious

Anxiety



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Activity

Self-talk- describe feeling anxious. What can you say?

Try doing this:

Name the issue: I am feeling nervous about this important job interview.

Describe the feeling: Like butterflies in my stomach

What I will try: deep breaths, refocusing, reminding myself I am prepared

Outcome: Started off nervous but once I got into it, felt better. Lavender aroma helped.



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Strategies

Plan – Place to go, breathing exercises, Physical exercise, redirect attention Acronym that works for you

Inform – Who? Person that helps remind you of the plan

Word – Calming word

Challenge your thoughts- mindfulness, humor

Recreate words – nervous = excited; stress-care; upset-concern

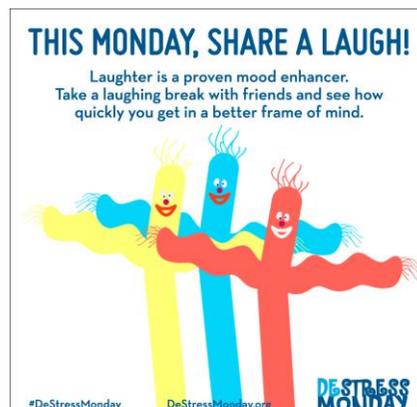


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Fun Strategy that really works!

LAUGH!

Activity: Turn to someone and say HA- they respond with HA. And then HA! HA!



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Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)



Anxiety and stress can create muscle tension. Learn to relax using PMR, where you create tension and release the different muscle groups of your body one at a time.

HOW TO DO IT

- 1 Choose a quiet place and set aside about 15-20 minutes for this exercise.
- 2 You'll squeeze your muscles from the feet to your head: feet, legs, hands, arms, buttocks, stomach, chest, shoulders, neck, mouth, eyes, and forehead.
- 3 Focus on the first target muscle group. Take a slow, deep breath in and tense (squeeze) the muscle group, holding it for 5-10 seconds.
- 4 Focus on the difference between the tensed muscle and the relaxed muscle.
- 5 Relax for 10-20 seconds before moving onto the next muscle group.
- 6 Once you finish, count backwards from 5 to 1 to bring your focus back to the present.

! Don't tense your muscles too hard! You shouldn't feel any pain or cramping during the exercise.

Visit WalkAlong.ca for more wellness tips.



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Acronyms

1. R.A.I.N.

The acronym RAIN was originally created by Michele McDonald. Here is a modified version by Tara Burch.

- R – Recognize what is happening
- A – Allow life to be just as it is
- I – Investigate inner experience with kindness
- N – Non-Identification.

2. T.H.I.N.K.

Hallmarks of [anxious](#) communication include negative self-talk, reacting in the heat of the moment, over-explaining yourself (AKA, emotional vomiting), and obsessive attention to overanalyzing decisions.

Before you speak, ask yourself the following:

- Is it Truthful?
- Is it Helpful?
- Is it Insightful?
- Is it Necessary?
- Is it Kind?



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Acronyms Continued

3. S.E.L.F.

The following strategy is adapted from Kathleen Hall, founder of The Stress Institute and Mindful Living Network.

Serenity. Practices which reduce the production of stress hormones are key. This could be deep-breathing, meditation, yoga or a walk in nature.

Exercise. The calming effects of physical fitness are endless. And you don't have to hit the gym to reap the benefits. Simple stretches while you work, or opting for the stairs rather than the elevator, count too.

Love. In addition to reducing stress, **spending time with others** means you're taking in another person's perspective on a situation. Connecting with others also means less time spent inside your head.

Food. Nutrition has a major impact on moods. Processed foods, and excess sugar, salt and alcohol can increase stress levels. Consuming foods rich in vitamin B6, such as bananas, nuts, turkey, or tuna are recommended. Additional healthy choices include whole grains, blueberries, and oatmeal



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Acronyms

4. R.E.L.A.X.

Recognize when you are consumed with worries.

Eliminate toxic thoughts which contribute to your negative emotions.

Let go of the anxious mindset that seeks reassurance that everything will turn out okay. Failure is a part of life, and life doesn't always go as planned.

Attitude is key to problem-solving. Adopting a flexible, open-minded attitude reduces feelings of insecurity and fear, and the habit of rumination. An added benefit of a positive outlook is less reliance on others for approval and validation.

X-tra sleep. As a psychotherapist, I'm a huge fan of sleep hygiene. Making sleep a priority is a must for mental health and physical and emotional wellness.



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Stressed? Try the S. T. O. P. Technique

Stop
Interrupt your thoughts with the command 'stop!' and pause whatever you're doing.

Take a Breath
Notice your breathing for a second. Breathe in slowly through the nose, expanding the belly, and exhale slowly and deeply through pursed lips.

Observe
Become the observer of your thoughts, emotions and physical reactions. What thoughts do you notice? What emotions are present? How does your body feel? Tune in and sit with whatever arises for a few moments.

Proceed
Mindfully consider how you'd like to respond. What's one thing you can focus on right now? What's your most important and urgent priority? Narrow down your focus and take it one small step at a time.

DISCOVER PLENTY OF TECHNIQUES FOR REDUCING STRESS AND PHYSICAL ANXIETY IN THE STRESS AND AUTOSTRESS WORKBOOK. CLICK TO FIND OUT MORE AT THEWELLNESSOCIETY.ORG.



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My Favorite Acronym

BREATHE

B- Be in the moment

R-Relax

E- Energize- do something

A- Action- put your plan in place

T- Tell someone

H- Halt/Stop and refocus

E- Exclude thoughts OR Exercise OR Exhale



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Comments

I want people to believe me.

I am having a hard time.

I need support.

I need to know I'm not alone.

Accommodations

Listen openly; Try not to judge; Reflect on what is being said- Such as, How have you handled this before?

Acknowledge the feeling; remind of the plan; Does that include going for a walk; doing mindfulness together, playing a game

Use the apps; talk to parent/counselor; Buddy person

Validating feelings not commiserating



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"If you want to conquer the anxiety of life, live in in the moment, live in the breath." ~Amit Ray



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Resources

Popular Apps:

Mindshift



Calm App

Books:

[What to Do When you Worry too Much - Dawn Huebner](#)

[Mindfulness for teens in 10 minutes a Day - Jennie Marie Battistin
MA LMFT](#)

Websites:

[TheNationalCouncil.org Publishes - The Mental Health Newsletter](#)
(select « sign up for e-news » button)

<https://bornthisway.foundation/>



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References

American Psychological Association; apa/topics/anxiety

**American Psychological Association; FYI-The Role of
Psychotherapy in Effective Treatment**

**Acronyms; Psychology Today- Four Awesome Acronyms
for Anxiety Relief-Linda Esposito, LCSW**

www.mindful.org

The National Sleep Foundation on Anxiety and Sleep

Thensf.org



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Coming Up Next



Learn More: bit.ly/HillMonti2021

- **A Community Fundraiser** supporting the Wendy B. Speir Student Financial Aid Fund
- **February 25th** at 7:30
- **Virtual storytelling event** featuring **five members** of the **Hill community**
- **Make a gift of ANY amount** and **join us** for an **inspiring evening**



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Coming Up Next



Save the Date: April 14, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

- **Community Education Series** event featuring **Amanda Morin** on the topic of **Resilience**
- Amanda Morin is a **speaker, author, podcast host, former classroom teacher and early intervention specialist, and mom.** She also serves as an **in-house adviser for Understood.org.**

She has **written for and served as an expert resource** for numerous outlets, including **NPRED, Education Week, Associated Press (AP), The Atlantic, Washington Post, Parenting Special Needs Magazine,** and more.



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Thank you!

