Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. Anxiety can be helpful (fight or flight):
- Can serve as a motivator or protective factor.

Anxiety can become a problem when your body reacts but there is no danger.

Anxiety disorder involves intense and excessive anxiety along with other debilitating symptoms:
- Can be in response to real or imagined circumstances.
Types of Anxiety

- Generalized
- Social
- Separation

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.
Relationship to ADHD

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

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
Tips for home

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)
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

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
CBT Based

Worry Monster

• Externalizes the anxiety
• Children can talk back to anxiety
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.

Role Play

Variations:
- Scenarios
- Modeling
- Puppets
Mindfulness Based

Based on awareness of the present moment

Apps:

- Smiling Mind
- Stop, Breathe & Think Kids
- Super Stretch Yoga
- Calm
- Dreamy Kid
- Headspace
- Breathing Bubbles

Breathing Exercises

Pretend you are making a flower

Pretend you are blowing a leaf

Deep breathing using your hand.
**Grounding Techniques**

**Stay Grounded Using Your 5 Senses**

Relax Your Body. Take a few deep breaths and focus on the following...

1. **Things You Can See**
   - ![Eye Icon]

2. **Things You Can Feel**
   - ![Hand Icon]

3. **Things You Can Hear**
   - ![Ear Icon]

4. **Things You Can Smell**
   - ![Nose Icon]

5. **Things You Can Taste**
   - ![Lip Icon]

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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**

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### 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?
- Pink, yellow, green...
- Take in a big breath, and then blow out, filling up your hot air balloon.
- Feel 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, let your balloon land gently.
- Imagine you climb out of your balloon to explore.
- What do you see?
- What do you want?
- How do you hear?
- What do you feel?
- Do you taste anything?
- Now climb back into your balloons.
- Wave goodbye to any friends you’ve made.
- Take in a big breath and then blow out, lifting up your hot air balloon again.
- Feel it float up the ground and float back home.
- Land your hot air balloon on the ground, smile and wave.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

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

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
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.**
Anxiety and Comorbidity

ADHD

Learning Differences

Physical conditions - phobias, panic attacks

Depression

Substance Abuse

Other Mental Health Concerns

Activity

Think of a time you felt anxious.

Name the time and describe the feeling.
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

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
Reframing Anxiety

Discomfort

Stress

Stress related physical reactions

Anxious

Anxiety

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.
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

Fun Strategy that really works!

LAUGH!

Activity: Turn to someone and say HA- they respond with HA. And then HA! HA!
Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

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**?
Acronyms Continued

3. S.E.L.F.

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

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

**E**xercise. 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.

**L**ove. 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.

**F**ood. 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.

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

**R**ecognize when you are consumed with worries.

**E**liminate toxic thoughts which contribute to your negative emotions.

**L**et 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.

**A**ttitude 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.
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.

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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
I want people to believe me.

I am having a hard time.

I need support.

I need to know I’m not alone.

**Comments**

**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

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

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
Coming Up Next

- **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

- **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.

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