

## Anxiety and Related Disorders

While we all feel worried at times, kids with anxiety have added worry, fear, stress, or concern. They often expect the worst and worry about the future with no visible cause. They may be overly concerned about social situations, health, family, school, or other issues. Kids with anxiety have difficulty controlling worry and it can interfere with everyday life.

It may feel overwhelming if this sounds like you or your child - What now? There is **Good News**- your child and family can **OVERCOME** these challenges and achieve great things! Following are supports and resources, further information, and skills to decrease anxiety.

### Support and Resources:

**Anxiety and Depression Association of America:**

<https://www.adaa.org/>

**Hey Sigmund, Where the Science of Psychology Meets the Art of Being Human:**

<http://www.heysigmund.com/>

**National Alliance on Mental Illness, Utah:**

Phone: (801) 323-9900 Website: <http://www.namiut.org>

**US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Patient Medication Guide**

Website: [https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/index.cfm?fuseaction=Search.Search\\_Drug\\_Name](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/index.cfm?fuseaction=Search.Search_Drug_Name)

**Other:**

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### Diagnosis Information:

**National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):**

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/index.shtml>

**American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP):**

[http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Table-of-Contents.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/FFF-Guide-Table-of-Contents.aspx)

### Skills to Decrease Anxiety:

- ❖ **Take care of yourself:** Eat healthy, exercise or play every day, spend QUALITY time with family and friends, do things you enjoy, laugh, get 8 hours or more of sleep nightly.
- ❖ **Deep Breathing:** Take deep breaths in through your nose so your stomach rises, pausing for a few seconds, before slowly breathing out through your mouth. Deep breathing can counteract the physical effects of anxiety.
- ❖ **Imagine a relaxing place:** Think of your favorite calming place, noticing what you see, smell, taste, touch, and hear to healthily distract and relax.
- ❖ **Stretching:** Stretch the muscles in your body gently. Anxiety often causes our muscles to tighten and stretching counteracts this stress.
- ❖ **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Gently tense the muscle groups in your body, one at a time. Then, relax that muscle group and completely relax for at least 15 seconds before moving onto the next muscle. Many people will add deep breathing and calming imagery while relaxing the muscle group. Move through your face, neck, shoulders and back, arms, hands, chest and stomach, legs, and feet one at a time. Be careful not to cause pain when tensing muscles.

- ❖ **Find Balance:** Work to manage time wisely, be careful not to add things that bring more stress to life, create priorities and act accordingly. Ensure you don't feel pulled too hard in any one direction by life's demands.
- ❖ **Ask yourself "What is the worst that can happen?":** If the answer is something that you can live with you can move past worry.
- ❖ **Do not try to control things that cannot be controlled:** We can work to do our very best while recognizing and accepting what we can't control. Nothing is more stressful than trying to change what we have no control over.
- ❖ **Recognize your strengths:** Make a list of your strengths, talents, and positive qualities. Think of times you have overcome worry with your strengths. Focus on what you do well and do not compare yourself to others.
- ❖ **Break down chores, schoolwork, and tasks into steps:** These duties are not as overwhelming when taking it one step at a time. Most of us were not worrying about graduating college on our first day of kindergarten!
- ❖ **Change unhealthy thinking:** Notice unhealthy thoughts you have during the day and think of more healthy thoughts to replace them. Journaling such can be very helpful. Examples of unhealthy thinking include over generalizing, jumping to conclusions, not accepting the positive, and all or nothing thinking.
  - **Example:** Unhealthy thought-"I am not good enough and I am going to make a mistake". Healthy Replacement Thought- "I am working hard and we all make mistakes at times. I can learn from them".
- ❖ **Identify anxiety for what it is- anxiety, not reality:** 1) Label your worry, 2) Tell it to go away, 3) Focus on something else like reading, your teacher, playing, drawing, a cold drink of water, imagining a relaxing place, making a game out of it, or another positive distraction, 4) Remember it will go away and you will feel better.
- ❖ **Be mindful:**
  - What to do:
    - **Observe:** Notice what is going on around you including your thoughts and feelings. Use your 5 senses of what you see, smell, taste, touch, and hear.
    - **Describe:** Use words to describe what you are observing.
    - **Participate:** Be healthily in the moment, not thinking about yesterday or tomorrow. Example: If you are eating a favorite food, enjoy it and take your time as you chew. Notice how it feels to the touch, taste, smell, temperature, etc.
  - How to do it:
    - **Do not judge:** Notice without adding a value judgement of "good, bad, right, wrong, mean, etc." Do not judge your judging. Example: "Something is wrong with me because I worry" can be replaced with "I feel (blank) when I am worrying".
    - **Stay focused:** Do one thing at a time, let go of distractions, concentrate.
    - **Do what works:** If a skill or idea helps to overcome anxiety without causing other problems, keep doing it.

#### THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE

If you or your child begins to have suicidal thoughts, please contact your treatment team immediately or call 911 in an immediate emergency. Effective treatment and safety planning can help you or your child overcome these challenges and find the hope to live!