

Child & Adolescent Anxiety

Better Care Through Better Understanding

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WHAT WE WILL COVER...

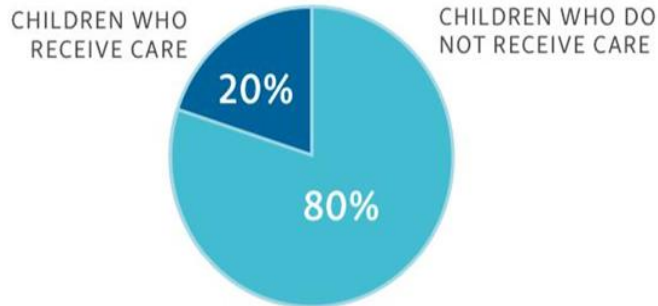
- What is Anxiety and how common is it?...
- What Anxiety look like in the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of children and adolescents...
- Anxiety vs. Anxiety Disorders...
- What causes Anxiety...
- Tools, Interventions & Treatment...
- Scenarios...
- Questions...
- Resources...

WHAT IS ANXIETY AND HOW COMMON IS IT?

Anxiety is a normal and healthy physiological response to a threat in the environment. Anxiety disorders arise when we develop out-of-proportion anxiety responses to things most of us cope with easily. – Child Mind Institute

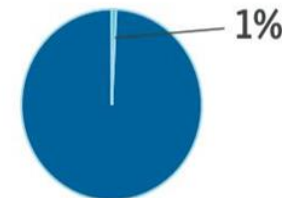
PREVALENCE

- At some point, anxiety affects 30% of children and adolescents, yet 80% never get help.

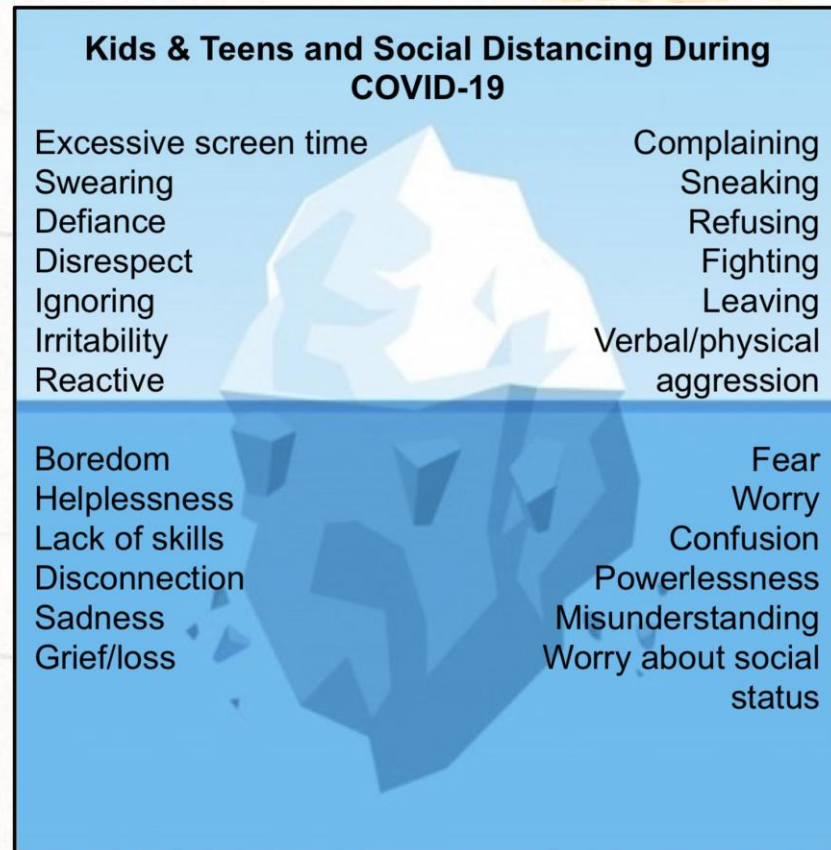
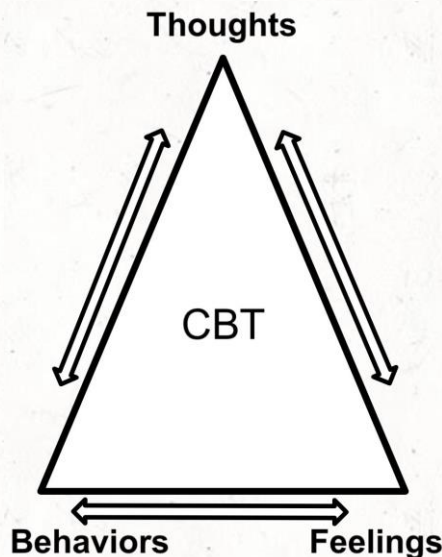


LACK OF RECOGNITION

- As little as 1% of youth with anxiety seek treatment in the year their symptoms begin, and most anxiety symptoms go untreated for years.
- Anxiety is often mistaken for another disorder, resulting in ineffective treatment.



WHAT DOES ANXIETY LOOK LIKE IN THE THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND BEHAVIORS OF CHILDREN AND TEENS?



ANXIETY VS. ANXIETY DISORDERS

Situational Anxiety (stress) is normal. Stress can help us meet daily challenges and motivates us to reach our goals. Stress is also part of a vital warning system, triggering our fight, flight and freeze responses.

Here are a few examples of developmentally appropriate anxiety during different developmental stages...

Infants - fear of loud noises, fear of being startled

Toddlers - fear of imaginary creatures, fear of the dark, animals, and strangers

School-aged Children - scary news or TV shows, injury, natural events (storms), death

Older Children/Adolescents - fears related to school performance, athletic/physical ability, appearance, social competence, fitting in, health issues.

<u>ANXIETY</u>	<u>ANXIETY DISORDER</u>
Triggered by a specific stressor	Intense or disproportionate emotional response
Has a beginning and end	Seemingly comes out of nowhere
Can be helpful or motivational	Interferes with day-to-day life
Lessens significantly or disappears when away from the stressful situation	Ongoing and intrusive, lasting days, weeks, months
Relaxing often helps you feel better	Physical symptoms like sweating, trembling, lightheadedness, racing heart lead to further feelings of panic
Sadness, or difficulty sleeping after a traumatic event	Recurring nightmares, flashbacks, or emotional numbing related to a traumatic event that happened months/years ago (PTSD).

WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?

Genetics

A child who has a family member with an anxiety disorder is more likely to have one too.
Kids may inherit genes that make them prone to anxiety.



Brain chemistry

Genes help direct the way brain chemicals (called neurotransmitters) work.
If specific brain chemicals are in short supply, or not working well, it can cause anxiety.



Life situations

Things that happen in a child's life can be stressful and difficult to cope with.
Loss, serious illness, death of a loved one, violence, or abuse can lead some kids to become anxious.



Learned behaviors

Growing up in a family where others are fearful or anxious
also can "teach" a child to be afraid too.



TOOLS, INTERVENTIONS & TREATMENT

Connecting Skills
(together or modeled)

Coping Skills
(together or individually)

Treatment
(with the support of individual and/or family therapists, medication management)

CONNECTING SKILLS

- **HALT!** Ask yourself, “Is my child **H**ungry? **A**ngry? **L**onely? **T**ired?”
- Try using a check-in scale 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

What you model, matters

Connect with the right hemisphere (yours and theirs) first using...

Soft - tone of voice, demeanor, eye contact, touch

Slow - cadence of speech (12 words or less), physical movements

Low - get eye level (or below) with your child

Connecting to Calm by Dr. Dan Siegel

Coping skills (can also be connecting skills!)

Encourage your child to check in with themselves by using
HALT! and by asking "What number am I?"

"Am I **H**ungry? **A**ngry? **L**onely? **T**ired?"
"Can I meet this need for myself or do I need help?"
"Who can help me?"

"What number am I?"

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Write it out, Draw it out

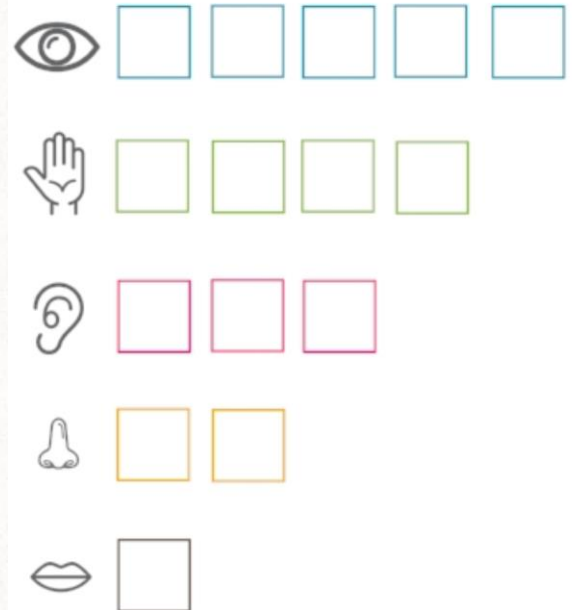
write and tear
worry journal
worry (mail)box

Practice Relaxation & Grounding Exercises

deep breathing
progressive muscle relaxation
move your body, change your mind - go outside!
create a relaxation kit: music, coloring books, fidget/sensory toys, mini
sandbox, clay, books, stuffed animals

Use your (spidey) senses

5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Exercise



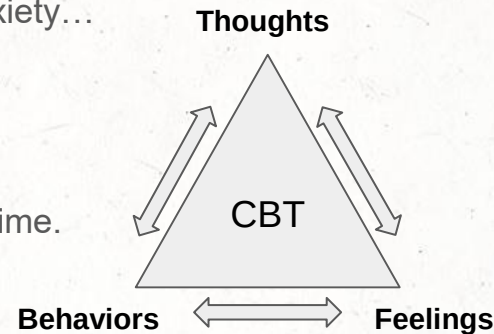
TREATMENT

There are two evidence-based treatment interventions for child and adolescent anxiety...

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) / Trauma-Focused CBT
- Medication Management (PCP or child/adolescent psychiatrist)

What's considered "evidence-based" might not always work for every child, every time.

So what else can I do to support my child's treatment?



- **Get established with a therapist you trust** - this normalizes seeking help/support, does not ostracize the child as the one with "problems" or the one who "needs to be fixed", creates safety in modeling that we won't ask our kids to do something we're not willing to do, demonstrates a willingness and flexibility to learn and try new things for the sake of ourselves, our children and our family - Parenting From the Inside Out by Dr. Daniel Siegel is a great resource - (available on Audible)
- **Seek relationships that provide community, support and understanding** - it does take a village, and you are alone in your experience
- **Self-Care** - you cannot draw from an empty well
Give Your Child Healthy Parents with Good Self-Care by Dr. Karyn Purvis

Scenario

Alex is a 13 y/o female.

She has not attended school in three weeks due to restrictions related to COVID-19.

Alex and her mom have been getting into arguments daily over seemingly “little things”.

Mom says that Alex is not keeping up with any of her chores and is refusing to complete her online school assignments.

Mom feels confused and frustrated because, “Before all this, Alex was enjoying school and keeping up with her responsibilities at home. Alex has all this extra time these days. She’s on her phone constantly, she’s FaceTiming with her friends, she even gets to see her classmates when her teacher sets up a video/virtual class. She has no excuse to be treating me like this. The only thing I can do to get her attention is take away her phone...maybe then she’ll focus on school and be motivated enough to do her chores.”

- What do you think Mom might be feeling or experiencing?
- What might be a need Alex has that Mom is missing or misinterpreting?
- How might Mom engage Alex in a supportive conversation about what’s going?
- What do you think about the consequences Mom wants to put in place? Alternatives?

Resources and printouts

For Parents:

- What To Do and Not Do When Children Are Anxious
- Mindful Parenting
- Family Mindfulness Schedule
- Supporting Families During COVID-19
- Tips for a Calm and Connected Home
- Questions to Ask Yourself

For Kids and Adolescents:

- Worry Coping Cards - for kids
- Coping Skills Handout - for adolescents
- Grounding Techniques
- Mindfulness Exercises

COVID-19 and Anxiety

- *Supporting Families During COVID-19 - CMI*
- Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus
- How to Talk to Your Anxiety Child or Teen About Coronavirus - ADAA

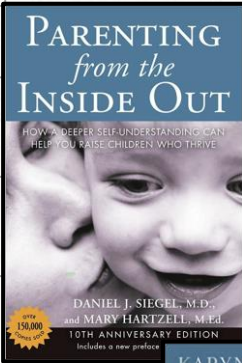
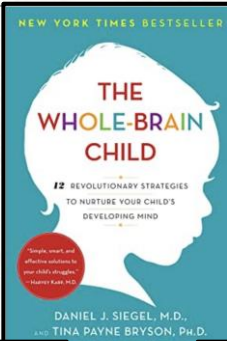
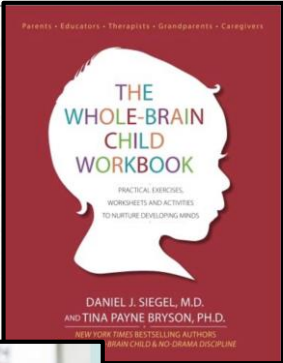
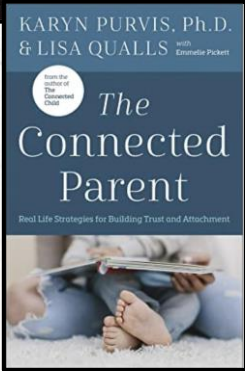
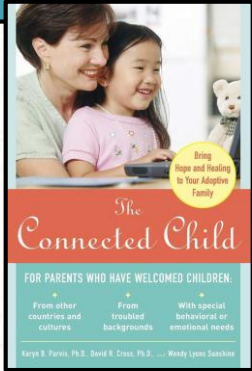
Recommended Readings:

- Parenting From the Inside Out by Dr. Daniel Siegel
- Whole Brained Child by Dr. Daniel Siegel (book and workbook)
- The Connected Child by Karyn Purvis
- The Connected Parent by Karyn Purvis and Lisa Qualls

RESOURCE HYPERLINKS

Resource	Link
Supporting Families During COVID-19	https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/
What to Do and Not Do When Children are Anxious	https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/
Mindful Parenting	https://childmind.org/article/mindful-parenting-2/
Family Mindfulness Schedule	https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/family-mindfulness-schedule.pdf
Worry Coping Cards - Children	https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/worry-coping-cards.pdf
Coping Skills Handout - Adolescents	https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/coping-skills-anxiety.pdf
Grounding Techniques	https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/grounding-techniques.pdf
Mindfulness Exercise	https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/mindfulness-for-children.pdf
Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus	https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/
How to Talk to Your Anxious Child or Teen About Coronavirus	https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/how-talk-your-anxious-child-or-teen-about

RESOURCE HYPERLINKS

Resource	Link
Video: Connecting to Calm by Dr. Daniel Siegel	https://youtu.be/aV3hp_eaoiE
Video: Give Your Child Healthy Parents with Good Self-Care by Dr. Karyn Purvis	https://youtu.be/6r-rmadMs-l
Book: Parenting From the Inside Out by Dr. Daniel Siegel	    
Book: Whole Brain Child by Dr. Daniel Siegel (book and workbook)	
Book: The Connected Child by Karyn Purvis	
Book: The Connected Parent by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Lisa Qualls	

Scenario

Alex is a 13 y/o female. She has not attended school in three weeks due to restrictions related to COVID-19. Alex and her mom have been getting into arguments daily over seemingly “little things”. Mom says that Alex is not keeping up with any of her chores and is refusing to complete her online school assignments.

Mom feels confused and frustrated because, “Before all this, Alex was enjoying school and keeping up with her responsibilities at home. Alex has all this extra time these days. She’s on her phone constantly, she’s FaceTiming with her friends, she even gets to see her classmates when her teacher sets up a video/virtual class. She has no excuse to be treating me like this. The only thing I can do to get her attention is take away her phone...maybe then she’ll focus on school and be motivated enough to do her chores.”

- What do you think Mom might be feeling or experiencing?
- What might be a need Alex has that Mom is missing or misinterpreting?
- How might Mom engage Alex in a supportive conversation about what’s going?
- What do you think about the consequences Mom wants to put in place?
- What alternatives could mom try?

- Mom might be frustrated & stressed.
- Use the 12 words when talking with her
- Mom might be worried about what is going on with her teen.
- Mom is feeling overwhelmed. Mom needs to sit down with Alex and share how she is feeling.
- Mom might be feeling disrespected, confused
- Stressed and overwhelmed due to all the changes.
- Alex is feeling lonely and/or angry.
- mom feels like she is the boss/in charge and not recognizing Alex's developmental independence
- Mother is likely frustrated and stressed, likely scared about virus and her teen
- feels out of control
- Mom might be feeling overwhelmed and out of ideas.
- Alex is scared
- Mom is overwhelmed and is experiencing changes herself so she's trying to find a quick fix
- Mom may be missing that Alex may be anxious about what's happening and the unknown of what comes next with covid
- She might be missing or misinterpreting the true loss Alex is feeling
- Mom feels out of control and maybe some pressure about Alex's schooling and education
- Mom can take time specifically to work on connection each day. Connecting before correction.
- Mom is focusing so much on what is not going well, and could benefit from focusing on how Alex is feeling and what she is experiencing.
- This happened so fast and no one got to mentally prepare
- Take a walk and have an honest conversation about feelings/situation
- She is probably missing Alex's need for connection/socially

- Alex might be needing social time. and structure/schedule.
- Mom may need to provide Alex a place to connect. Do something fun, do something together. Taking the phone away removes more connection Alex is seeking
- Try to find a way for Alex to get meaningful connection with friends and family.
- Focus on what Alex is doing well
- Mom might be resentful of all the extra stuff she has to do right now too. Instead of being "hands off" with school, now she has to check in all the time.
- taking phone away might make Alex more anxious
- By sharing her feelings and concerns for how things are and to have a conversation around these scary times.
- It seems like Alex's phone is her connection to the outside. If she takes away the phone, that would isolate Alex even more.
- Mom's feeling frustrated and dealing with her own anxieties about this COVID-19. Mom might share these feelings with Alex and suggest that they explore ways for both of them to get through this difficult time.
- I do not think taking away the phone is appropriate perhaps timing when she can use her phone and help Alex structure her day. Without school a lot of kids are missing structure and it can trigger anxiety
- Mom needs to understand that Alex's way to handle her stress and anxiety about COVID-19 is to chat with her friends so she doesn't feel alone.
- I think Alex needs a routine and mom has got to help her stick to it. it will help them both out in the long run.
- Alex maybe grieving being with friends and fresh air
- Taking the phone might make things worse, maybe try a schedule with a set phone time, chores, and schoolwork.
- for kids it might be first time in their life experience
- alternative...set up schedule with lots of breaks to connect with friends
- I think that limiting time for Alex on her phone is appropriate, but I love the idea of the mom talking through her own feelings of fear and anxiety to draw out Alex in talking about hers is very healthy for both of them.
- Mom should acknowledge the changes and affirm that they feel very real, and maybe tell Alex that she's experiencing changes too
- As parents we often need to take a breath and not take things personal - it is not an attack on you
- Alex and Mom get out go for walk.
- Mom might need social time too
- She needs to connect with friends so taking away the phone will cause more anxiety. Alternative might be checking in each morning - figure out a schedule that works - time to talk to friends, time for assignments, time for exercise together or family time.
- For example you can use your phone for an hour and half to socialize then we'll work on assignments then we'll take a walk or something along those lines
- I think go for walks with Alex so she can refocus.
- i think "consequences" should consist of more opportunities for connection with family. go on a walk, play a game together, etc.
- Alternative consequence might be talking to Alex about the issue at hand (needing to do school work, chores) and asking her what she thinks would be a fair