Enjoy the Relaxing Music…
STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS WITH ANXIETY

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Mental Disorders

- Impacts thinking, feeling, mood and behavior
- Disrupt the ability to relate to others
- Disrupt daily routine
- Can affect anyone
Anxiety Disorders
What IT Feels Like To Have Anxiety

Video
What we don’t see...
Does this look familiar?

- Mind racing?
- Dizzy, disorientated, lightheaded?
- Vision strange, blurry?
- Possible sleep disturbance?
- Difficulty in swallowing?
- Feeling breathless, breathing fast & shallow?
- Heart racing, palpitations?
- Nausea / Lack of appetite?
- Sweating or shivering?
- Trembling?
- Restless?
- Wanting to run?
- Jelly-like legs?
Anxious “Thought Cycle”…
Typical Anxiety -vs- Anxiety Concern

Typical Anxiety

-A temporary and expected response to a potentially stressful situation.

-It doesn’t happen often and its appropriate to what's going on.

-Kids feel worried or fearful about something…BUT it passes.

-Typical anxiety can sometimes reach a point where it becomes too much and it develops into an anxiety concern.

Anxiety Concern

-Frequent and intense feelings of anxiety that can sometimes be a diagnosable medical condition, like generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, and separation anxiety disorder.

-Kids spend more time than not feeling anxious and the feelings are out of proportion to what's going on.

-Interferes with everyday functioning.

-Anxious feelings can sometimes come out of the blue. There may be no specific event or situation that triggers them.
Types of Anxiety Disorders

• Generalized Anxiety Disorder
• Panic Disorder
• Social Anxiety Disorder
• Phobias/Specific Phobias
• Separation Anxiety Disorder
• Selective Mutism
• Agoraphobia
Stop
It!

You're
Okay

Breathe

Hurry up and
go away!

OMG
I'm going to
faint!

There's nothing
to fear

Stop
tinking
about it

You're not
going
to die

I'm so
tired of this!

Relax

I HATE
This!

Think happy
thoughts

I can't
breath!

Deep breath
Hold.....
Exhale

You're free
to leave

You can
do this

The first
60 seconds
of a Panic
Attack

I hope
nobody's
looking

I have to get
out of here
now!

Why
Me?

You're
free
to leave

Hold.....
Exhale

Focus

Why
Me?

I have to
do this!

There's nothing
to panic about!

Deep breath
Hold.....
Exhale

I hope
nobody's
looking

You're free
to leave

You can
do this

Stop!

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Why
Me?
Panic Attacks

• Abrupt surge of intense fear or intense discomfort that reaches a peak within minutes

• Feelings of terror that strike suddenly and repeatedly with no warning

• Cannot predict when next attack will occur, creating more anxiety
LIVING WITH ANXIETY IS LIKE BEING FOLLOWED BY A VOICE. IT KNOWS ALL YOUR INSECURITIES AND USES THEM AGAINST YOU. IT GETS TO THE POINT WHEN IT’S THE LOUDEST VOICE IN THE ROOM. THE ONLY ONE YOU CAN HEAR.

I WILL BREATHE.
I WILL THINK OF SOLUTIONS.
I WILL NOT LET MY WORRY CONTROL ME.
I WILL NOT LET MY STRESS LEVEL BREAK ME.
I WILL SIMPLY BREATHE. AND IT WILL BE OKAY. BECAUSE I DON’T QUIT.

— SHAYNE MCCLENDON
At some point, anxiety affects 30% of children and adolescents, yet 80% never get help.
Average Age of Onset

- Average age of onset:
  - Age 11
    - Separation Anxiety Disorder and Specific Phobias
  - Age 14
    - Social Anxiety Disorder
Importance of Early Intervention

50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24.¹

Just 1% of youth seek treatment at the onset of anxiety symptoms...

70% of youth in state and local juvenile justice systems have a mental illness.¹

The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.¹
Anxiety and Depression

Youth with Social Anxiety Disorders are more likely to become depressed later…

- Youth without anxiety
- Youth with social anxiety disorder: 3x risk
- Youth with other types of anxiety: 2x risk
Key Concepts

Promotion + Prevention = Positive Outcome
Protective Factors

◦ Feeling of “being connected”
◦ Feeling close to at least one adult
◦ Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for seeking help
◦ Healthy Eating
◦ Getting Enough sleep
◦ High Self-Esteem
◦ “Break” from Technology
How Can I Help

- Anxiety can be a good thing
- Teach kids to recognize/manage
- Relationship/Build trust
Why Preventative…

○ “Rewards and consequences are super helpful to increase motivation for something I am able to do”, said a person with anxiety.

○ “However, during times of increased anxiety, my brain has shut down and I am not able, in that moment, to complete the task being asked of me”, said a person with anxiety.

○ The BEST way to support an individual with anxiety is to PREVENT ANXIETY TRIGGERS…
Antecedent-Based Strategies

- Relationship Building with your students
- Increase Predictability
- Give Advance Notice
- “Jump Starts”
- Behavioral Momentum
- Scheduled Breaks
- Antecedent Writing Exercise
- KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)
- Support Lagging Skills
- Organization
- “On the spot” Modifications/Support Lagging Skills
- Choices
- Token Economy
- Teach Expected Behaviors
- Non-Contingent Reinforcement
- Environmental Considerations-Proxemics
- Visual Supports
- Articulate Support
Drug testing is limited on children...
Despite Our Best Efforts

Anxiety May INCREASE…
Teaching Coping Skills...

out of the moment...

Trying to teach a child to relax in the midst of high anxiety is like trying to teach someone how to swim when there are sharks in the water.
Be Mindful

breathe in. breathe out.
Mindful Eating

For this exercise, pretend you have never seen a Hershey’s kiss before.

Pay careful attention to:
- The way the Hershey’s kiss looks
- How it feels
- How your skin responds to touching the Hershey’s kiss
- Its smell
- Its taste

Focusing on the single object of the raisin/Hershey’s kiss is meant to bring your awareness to the present, to what is right in front of you.

“By focusing on the Hershey’s kiss in your hand and making a point to notice everything about it, you are unlikely to be expending energy, time and attention on worrying or ruminating about other parts of your lives”

Adapted from: https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/
We All Need to Remember to Breathe...
Imagery Breathing
Square/Star Breathing

1. Breathe in for 4 seconds.
2. Hold for 4 seconds.
3. Breathe out for 4 seconds.
4. Hold for 4 seconds.

Repeat as needed.
Coping Strategies

◦ **Utilizing cognitive exercises to help rewire thoughts:**
  ✓ Count to ten backwards and forward
  ✓ Say the alphabet backwards
  ✓ Listen to music
  ✓ 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Activity (See next slide)

◦ **Utilizing Vestibular Strategies:**
  ✓ Repetitive activities/tasks
  ✓ Bouncing a ball
  ✓ Walking/Stairs
  ✓ Organization/Sorting Activities

◦ **Mindfulness Strategies:**
  ✓ Mandala Coloring—decreases emotional reactivity; form of meditation
  ✓ Deep Breathing Exercises
  ✓ Mindfulness apps
  ✓ Mindful Walk
  ✓ Mindful Eating
  ✓ Journal Writing

◦ **Self-Talk Scripts:**
  ✓ Specific scripts on how to “talk down” the anxiety

◦ **Distractions from the repetitive thoughts:**
  ✓ Crossword puzzles, sports trivia, Where’s Waldo books, or Highlight Magazines, etc...
5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Activity

5 things you see in the classroom?

4 things you can touch or feel with your body (e.g., the chair on my back, feet on the floor, fingers on the table)?

3 things you hear (e.g., a car, the clock, the humming of the vent)?

2 things you smell or taste (or like to smell and taste)?

1 mindful breath
## Fighting Panic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panic Script</th>
<th>Anti-panic Script</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Something is wrong...</td>
<td>Nothing is wrong. I feel like something is wrong, but I’m in no danger-everything is the same as it was 2 seconds ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m losing it!</td>
<td>This is a false alarm: my brain sent the wrong signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to get out!</td>
<td>I need to slow my body down. There’s no danger, nothing is happening and nothing has changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if I stop breathing?</td>
<td>I will get a drink of water. If I breathe slowly, I will reset my system. My body will get a new signal and everything will go back to normal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mindshift
Higher emotional investment in social media was strongly correlated with higher levels of anxiety.
Examples of Anxiety Scales
## Anxiety Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Step</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Find an safe adult and let them know that you are taking a break to follow your plan. (Include Relationship Building)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Get a drink and complete the first anxiety thermometer gauge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Listen to a song, color a mandala, mindfulness act, cognitive activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Complete the <strong>second</strong> anxiety thermometer gauge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Self-talk: I can do this! I got this!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Go back to class and continue with activity.</td>
</tr>
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Use of more visuals...

<p>| | |</p>
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<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>Find a safe adult and let them know that you are taking a break to follow your plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>My level is ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong></td>
<td>Utilize a calming/safe strategy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td>Report your second anxiety level after completing the above coping strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td>Positive Self-Talk: I can do this! I got this! “I am ready to roll!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong></td>
<td>Go back to class and continue with activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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What’s in YOUR Toolbox?

THE ANXIETY TOOLBOX

- A long shower
- Exercise
- Fresh air
- Warm (non-caffeinated) tea
- Distraction
- Meditation
- Netflix
“Take Home Message”

Message from Dr. Harold S. Koplewicz
“Everyone Knows and Loves one of these Kids”

Dr. Harold Koplewicz
Thank you!

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Training and Consultation Team
Resources

◦ ASCA, October 2016; Learn how to use evidence-based tools and data to help students with anxiety, regardless of their age. BY MARY E. MCCORMAC


◦ tamarchansky.com/books/freeing-your-child-from-anxiety


