

Children and teens may not recognize that what they have been experiencing is anxiety. Often, overly studious or perfectionistic kids believe it is reasonable to study for hours on end, to keep their bedroom as neat as a pin, or to wash their hands excessively after every activity. Others may think there is something “wrong” with them.

Tip:

Does hearing “Don’t worry. Relax!” help you when you’re anxious about something? It probably doesn’t comfort your child much, either. It’s important to acknowledge that your child’s fears are real.

Children may focus on the physical symptoms of worry and anxiety (e.g. stomach aches). Teens may think they’re weird, weak, out of control, or even going crazy! These thoughts might make them feel even more anxious and self-conscious.

*If you are stressed, anxious, feel low, or feel scared, talk to someone.*

Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Samaritans <https://www.samaritans.org/>

The Blurt Foundation <https://www.blurtitout.org/>

Trauma Network UK <https://www.facebook.com/traumanetworkuk/>

## Three steps to helping your child talk about their worries:

**Step 1: Encourage your child to open up about worries and fears.** Begin by describing a recent situation where you observed some signs of worry in your child. It can help to share with your child some things you were scared of when you were the same age (especially if you shared the same types of fears), and ask if s/he has any similar worries or fears.

**Step 2: Help your child recognize anxiety and worry and provide strategies for short term techniques that can help in the moment.**

**I FEEL...**

- lonely disappointed sad
- silly excited hyper
- frustrated annoyed angry
- tired sick hungry
- worried anxious scared
- happy calm focused
- shy confused embarrassed
- brave proud hopeful

**I CAN...**

- TAKE DEEP BREATHS
- TREAT MYSELF & OTHERS WITH KINDNESS
- CREATE ART OR BUILD SOMETHING
- USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK
- ASK FOR HELP
- EXERCISE
- FOCUS ON THE GOOD
- STRETCH OR DO YOGA
- BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS & TRY AGAIN
- GET A DRINK OF WATER
- TAKE A BREAK
- TALK OR WRITE ABOUT IT

WHOLE PLANET HEALING

**Step 3 Help him/her understand the 3 ways that worry presents: physical feelings (e.g. Tummy ache/ Headache), thoughts, and behaviours.** See [www.anxietycanada.com](http://www.anxietycanada.com)

## Helping your children with anxiety and low mood in times of stress

### Children and Young People

## MANAGING CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19) ANXIETY

**For You**

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage
- Connect through calls/text/internet
- Add extra time for daily stress relief
- Practice self-care
- Focus on your mental health

**For Kids**

- Reassure them that they're safe
- Let them talk about their worries
- Share your own coping skills
- Limit their news exposure
- Create a routine & structure

**For Quarantine/Isolation**

- Keep in contact with your loved ones via social media, texts, and phone calls
- Create a daily self-care routine
- Keep yourself busy: games, books, movies
- Focus on new relaxation techniques

BlessingManifesting

*“An easy calming tool to start using right now is to breathe, through your nose, not your mouth, and not “deeply”, but gently and just enough breath to let your body know that there is nothing stressful happening right now. Taking in more air than we need can make us more stressed. When we are calm, we need less air. When we are getting ready to run or fight, we need more air.”*

After <http://www.janeclapp.com/>

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Anxiety is one of the most common mental health concerns for children and young people affecting upwards of 20% of children and adolescents at some point. In times of additional stress, such as during this pandemic, anxiety rises dramatically.

*If you are calm, it will help your child stay calm.*

Anxious kids are often quiet and well behaved, and can go unnoticed by their parents and teachers.

Alternatively others can be disruptive and act out, being labeled as having ADHD or being a “bad” kid.

Both scenarios result in children and young people not getting the help they desperately need. Sadly, untreated anxiety can lead to depression, missed opportunities in career and relationships, increased substance use, and a decreased quality of life.

Helping children cope with stress (WHO 2019)

## **Anxiety 101: What You and Your Child Need to Know About Anxiety**

**Anxiety is normal.** Everyone experiences anxiety from time to time. It alerts us to threats, protects us from danger and helps us reach important goals. For example, it is normal to feel anxious when encountering a bear on a hike, or before taking an important exam.



**Anxiety is not dangerous.** Although anxiety feels uncomfortable, it is temporary and will eventually decrease. The sensations we experience in an anxious situation are designed to alert and activate us. They are normal and part of our body’s natural response to stress. Our body is smart enough to know when to “amp up” and when to “calm down.”

**Anxiety helps us prepare for real danger, such as crossing a busy street.** It can also help us perform at our best, and motivate us to study for an exam or practice for a big game. When we experience anxiety, it triggers our “fight-flight-freeze” response, and prepares our body to react.

**Anxiety is part of life.** Trying to eliminate anxiety from your child’s life is almost impossible, and even if it were possible, we are not sure you will have created a life worth living for your child. Since anxiety is everywhere, one of the greatest gifts you can give your anxious child or teen is the confidence and skill to tolerate anxiety whenever it occurs, and to continue living his/her life anyway!

Separate what is in our control from what is not.



[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F189291990566599482%2F&psig=AOvVaw0DSdiK7Ny\\_BDGdzHzzKHR&ust=1584531997875000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCNChiOm3oegCFQAAAAAAdAAAAABAc](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F189291990566599482%2F&psig=AOvVaw0DSdiK7Ny_BDGdzHzzKHR&ust=1584531997875000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCNChiOm3oegCFQAAAAAAdAAAAABAc)

### **Supporting Kids**

Role modelling is biggest priority- staying calm as a parent/caregiver is very important

Be conscious about how much news you have on at home

Be aware of how you’re talking to each other as parents/ care givers- children often overhear or can infer your “tone” of anxiety/fear

Relay age appropriate information from reputable sources like the World Health Organization or [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)