

ANXIETY

IMPORTANT FACTS

- Anxiety often starts in childhood.
- 15 to 20% of children and adolescents have an anxiety disorder.
- Children and adolescents have a hard time talking about anxiety.
- People with anxiety disorders respond well to treatment.
- The median age of the onset of anxiety is 11 years old.^{1,3}

TYPES OF ANXIETY

- **Social Phobia** — anxiety in social settings or performance situations.¹
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder** — chronic, excessive anxiety about multiple areas of life.¹
- **Specific Phobia** — fear of a specific object or situation.¹
- **Panic Disorder** — unexpected, brief episodes of intense anxiety without an apparent trigger.¹
- **Separation Anxiety** — excessive fear of being separated from home or caretakers.¹
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder** — repetitive mental acts or behaviors to alleviate anxiety without an apparent trigger.¹
- **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder** — anxiety symptoms following exposure to a traumatic event.¹

WAYS TO SUPPORT

Validating Emotion

- Help the child become more aware of emotions.¹
- Help the child talk about their own emotions.¹
- Help the child become calmer and more accepting of negative emotions.¹
- Help the child transfer emotional validation to others.¹

Tools

- Deep breathing exercises.
- Progressive muscle relaxation.
- Guided imagery.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy.
- Parent-based therapy.
- Medication (i.e. SSRI's).

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Struggling to concentrate.¹
- Not sleeping, or waking in the night with bad dreams.¹
- Not eating properly.¹
- Quickly getting angry or irritable, and being out of control during outbursts.
- Constantly worrying or having negative thoughts.¹
- Feeling tense and fidgety.¹
- Complaining of stomach aches and feeling unwell, or using the toilet often.¹
- Being clingy.¹
- Always crying.¹
- Somatic symptoms like stomach aches.¹

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- Anxiety is a problem when kids feel frequent intense distress, feel unable to cope or feel unable to do what they need or want.¹
- Anxious kids imagine bad outcomes, increasing anxiety and avoidance.
- Avoidance convinces children that they can't face their fears.
- Anxiety can worsen without treatment, but generally improves with treatment.

RESOURCES TO HELP

- namioklahoma.org/resources/oklahoma-resources
- childmind.org/topics/anxiety
- depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/PDF/TF-%20CBT/pages/cognitive_coping.html
- aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/The-Anxious-Child-047.aspx

REFERENCES

1. Chesher, Tessa (2023). *OKCAPMAP Provider Education Anxiety in Children and Adolescents Learning Module*
2. American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)* <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
3. Zhang, Y., Zhang, Z., Ge, H., Q., Li, Y. & Li, N. (2019). The application of artificial intelligence in the diagnosis and prognosis of colorectal cancer: A review. *Frontiers in Medicine*, 6, 224. <http://doi.org/10.3389/fmed.2019.00224>