



Helping children manage and overcome anxiety

(Evening 2)

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Managing Anxiety Problems in Children and Teenagers

Evening 1

- 1. Appreciate your children's strengths**
- 2. Pause in the face of anxiety/ Make a plan**
- 3. Managing your own and your children's feelings of anxiety**
4. Problem Solve 1 – Addressing the situation that makes the child anxious
5. Problem Solve 2 – Investigating the anxiety itself
6. Tackling problems step by step

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Respond to Anxiety with an Action Plan

- 1. PAUSE** – Take a moment to reflect about your child's anxiety and how you are currently responding to it
- 2. TUNE IN** – What is going on for your child (and you)?
- 3. RESPOND**– what is best way to respond when your child is anxious? – **Create a step by step plan of action**
- 4. PREVENT** – How can you prevent problems from happening again?, How can you address the underlying issues?
Create a prevention plan

GOALS FOR COURSE 2018

- 10 year mild anxiety
- 4 year old, anxious to try new things, wants it to be perfect
- 8, worry about something new, how going to sleep?
- 13, anxious in general , worry about fitting in, in school
- 6yo, quite negative, 'I'm stupid', getting something wrong
- 14 yo, boy, see's worst case scenario, constantaly anxiou struggles to sleep
- 15, panic attacks, can happen at any time, learning to cope
- 16 yo girl, avoiding school, doesn't want to mix peers
- 12, and 20, general anxiety about things, not sleeping, ... learning to cope... tinkering through and processing
- 8yo girl sick nausea, tinnitus, worries about death (bereavment)
- 8 yo separation anxiety , cried going to school...
- 10 yo dyslexia, worry about school work,
- 8 yo, unable to socialise group
- 9 yo anxious in new situations

Feedback extra night

- Child getting sick with worry, complaining of headaches, tummy bugs etc
- Child having anxiety meltdowns, behavioural problems as result
- Child self-harming and cutting their arms and legs as result of stress and anxiety

Anxiety Meltdown– Step by Step Plan

1. Remain **calm** and **respectful**.
2. **Acknowledge feelings** *‘you sound very worried – tell what is bothering you’*
3. **Address disrespect** *‘I know you feel upset...but you can’t hit out/ take it out on others – you must speak politely.’*
4. **Coach/ soothe** – *‘shhs lets calm itpractice taking a few breaths... we will talk in a few minutes’*
5. End conversation **if disrespect continues** *‘lets take a break - when you are calm, then we can talk.’*
6. Use **consequences** – *‘If you continue to scream you will lose pocket money.’*
7. If rudeness/ meltdown continues, **take action** – e.g. walk away
8. **Follow up later** to talk through when things are calmer, impose consequences

'Feeling sick' due to anxiety– Step by Step Plan

1. Remain **calm, warm and empathic**.
2. **Listen to symptoms** - *where do you feel it? What do you feel?*
3. **Acknowledge pain** - *that sounds sore, that must feel bad*
4. **Name Anxiety as external** – *'Is the Anxiety unsettling your tummy again? You know that is just the Anxiety, giving you the headaches'*
5. **Coach in agreed strategies** – *'Lets take a few breaths, now to relax your tummy' / 'lets start walking, once you get moving you will feel better'*
6. **Reassure** – *'Once you get going you will feel better*
7. **Praise** - *' you are very strong/ brave... keeping going'*

Prevention Plan

- Take time to **address causes** of worries where possible.
- During worry time, **listen empathically** and encourage **child to come up with solutions**, *‘What can we do to help?’*
- Encourage child in **‘worry free’ happy activities** that child is good at (to build self-esteem etc.)
- Set aside a **daily play and connecting parent child time.**

Prevention Plan (ctd)

Coach child in

- Assertiveness and **strategies to cope with situation** that causes the anxiety
- in **relaxation** techniques (e.g. how to relax body and mind)
- in better techniques to communicate anxiety
 - **talking and not hitting out**
 - **self-distraction rather than cutting** or self-harm

'I hate myself' (when corrected) – Step by Step Plan

1. Remain **calm** and **warm** (often parent is using negative correction)
2. **Acknowledge feelings** – you sound annoyed...
3. **Encourage talking** - what is upsetting you?
4. **Sometimes ignore** – lets just turn off the internet now
5. **Gently discipline** – no screens in bedrooms - I am only doing this to create a relaxing routine
6. Use **consequences not criticism**- 'if you don't turn it off, you will only lose some time tomorrow'

Principle 4

‘Problem Solve – Addressing the situation that causes the worry’



Problem Solving with Older Child

1. Pick a **good time and place** to talk
2. **Listen** to your child first
 - What is happening for you?
 - What are you feeling?
3. Help your child **think up solutions**
 - What would you like to happen?
 - What would make things better?
 - What can you do?
4. Agree a **Plan** – What would you like to try?

1. Pick a good time and place to talk

2 different types of children:

Child who talks to you too much about their worries and anxieties

- Set up 'worry time' / special problem solving time

Child who wont tell you what is on their mind

- Work hard at helping child open up and talk

2. Listen to your child when they talk

- When they talk repeat what they say
- Wait and use lots of silence
- Don't rush in with advice
- Focus on feelings – 'you must feel sad about that'
- When you think you have listened enough, listen longer
- When you have listened longer, then listen even more!

3. Help your child think up solutions

- Ask your child for their ideas on a solution, before you give your own advice.
- Ask your child good questions to generate solutions.
 - What would you like to happen?
 - What would make things better?
 - What can you do?



Moving from Problem to Solution Thinking



Focusing on Solutions

– Asking good questions



Focus on what might go well

- *We have talked about the worst thing that can happen – but what is the best thing that can happen?*
- *How can you make sure the best thing can happen?*

Focus on what has worked before

- *When have things gone well before? What did you do then?*
- *How did you get to school that time?*
- *What did you say to yourself to manage the anxiety?*
- *How were you able to persist?*
- *What does it say about you that you were able to do that then?*

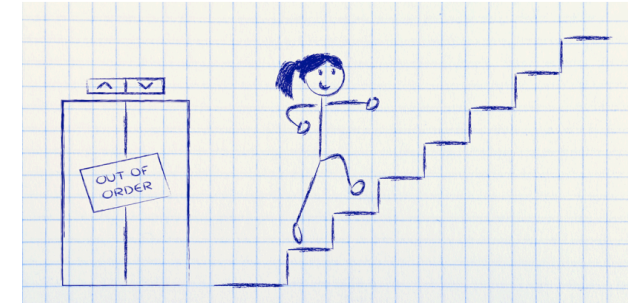
4. Agree a plan

- Agree a plan for what your child will do and what you will do to help going forward.
- Make sure to talk again and review.

Tackling anxious situations in small steps



Exposure - Tackling anxious situations in small steps



What is the first small step?

1. **Preschool child** refusing a bath or screaming if you try to wash her hair.
2. **Primary school age** child afraid of dogs and avoiding going out as a result.
3. **Older child** who is socially and avoiding going on sleepover/school trip.

Tackling separation anxiety in small steps

Example: Child/ teen afraid of being by themselves/ needing constant reassurance

1. Child stays in room with parent right beside them
2. Child stays in room with parent at door
3. Child stays in room with parent downstairs for five minutes before parent comes back
4. Extend period to ten minutes
5. Extend period to twenty minutes

Tackling social anxiety in small steps

Refusing/ anxious about going to school



What is the first small step?

1. Meet staff member at the gate
2. Go to counsellor/ year head's office
3. Go in an hour late
4. Go in for half day
5. Start back on day when favourite subject is on
6. Parent waits near by in car
7. Go down with parent half way

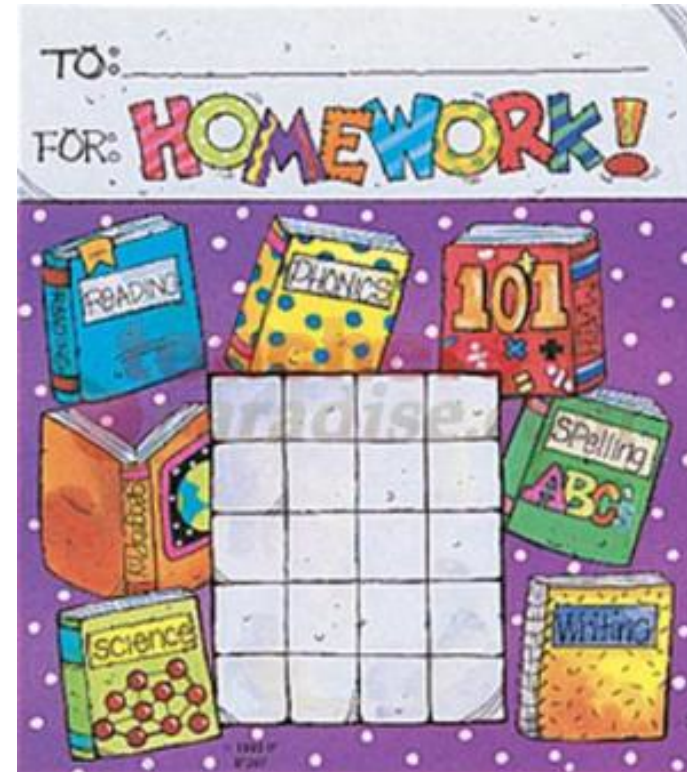
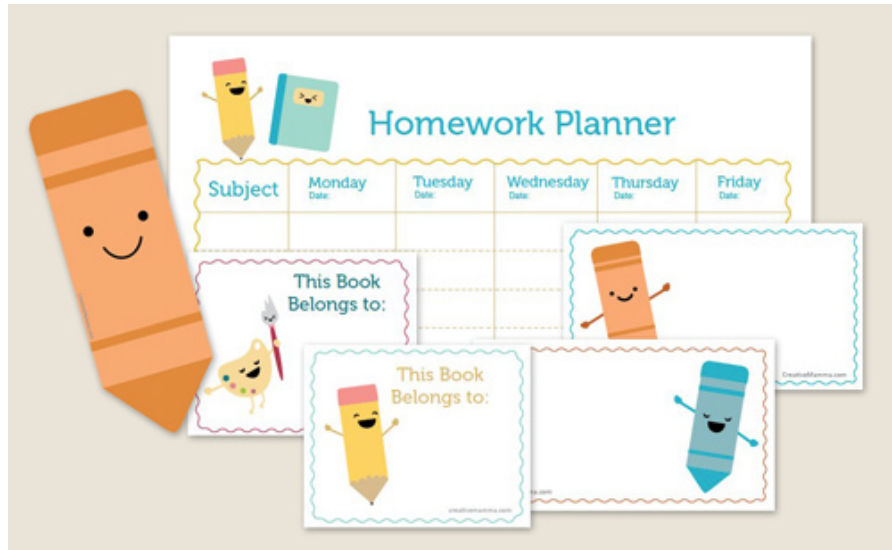
Tackling social anxiety in small steps

Example:
anxious about
making friends

STEPS	FEAR FACTOR
Ask classmate what they did at the weekend	1
Suggest a game to a class mate for the yard	2
Ask a classmate about homework	3
Ask classmate to eat lunch together	4
Join classmate in game in the yard	5
Invite classmate after school	6
Call classmate and invite to a movie	7
Arrange to meet classmate at the weekend	8
Go to classmates birthday party	9
Invite classmate over for a sleepover	10
Go to sleepover at classmates house	11

Praise and Reward each step

Acknowledge bravery
Praise and reward each step





Pause and Reflect

1. TALKING TO YOUR CHILD

Plan how you might set up a time to problem solve and talk to your child

- How will you help them open up?
- How will you help them think of solutions?

2. BREAKDOWN THE PROBLEM INTO SMALL STEPS

- What is the smallest step to tackle?
- How can you tackle it?

Pause Point

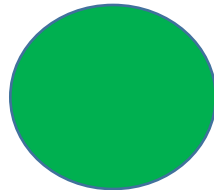
‘Problem Solve – Addressing the situation that causes the worry’



1. Think about how you might problem solve with your child about their anxiety.
2. What questions might you ask?

Small Groups of 5

 0-5 year olds

 6-11 year olds

 12+ year olds

Principle 3

‘Managing your own and your children’s feelings of anxiety’



Managing your own and your children's feelings of anxiety

- Body awareness
- Breathing and Relaxation
- Mindfulness and Meditation
- Physical exercise
- Body Relaxation (e.g. yoga, progressive muscular relaxation)



Encouraging Body Awareness

The Mind-Body Connection Worksheet

Body Part	Stressed/Anxious	Frightened	Angry
Top of head	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back of head	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Face	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back of neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left Shoulder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right shoulder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stomach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Center of back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower back	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reset Print

Breathing and Relaxation

The simplest way to relax is to become aware of your breath.....



Meditation and Mindfulness



Physical Exercise

In tackling anxiety, relaxation period **after** exercise is key.



Body Relaxation

e.g. Yoga, Progressive Muscular Relaxation



Managing your own and your children's feelings of anxiety

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Plan for next week



1. Make a plan in your notebook about what ideas you want to put into action this week?
2. Complete the feedback form – let me know if there is a particular issue you want covered next week - Next week we will look at a few case examples

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