



# Parent Workshop for Anxiety with Adolescence

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# Introduction



# What is Anxiety?

- Described as feelings of fear, worry, nervousness
- Experience of anxiety is very similar to the experience of fear— main difference is that anxiety can occur in the **absence of real danger**.
- Normal function of being human and can be adaptive and necessary for survival for body to respond to threat or danger— can motivate getting to school/work on time, meeting demands, remaining aware of surroundings
- However, **body responds with anxiety whether danger is real or imagined and if anxiety is too great/lasts too long it can overwhelm instead of being functional**
- May lead to changes in brain structures/activity, body functions, hormones



## Statistics on Mental Health (NAMI, 2004)

- $\frac{1}{5}$  children experience mental health disorder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  of all chronic mental illness begins by 14
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of students with mental health condition at age 14 or older dropout of school
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of social phobia manifests by age 15
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of separation anxiety disorder manifests by age 10



# What is Anxiety?

- Fight/Flight/Freeze response affects body's physical, cognitive, and behavioral systems
  - Physical: increase in heart rate and strength of beat, increase in rate and depth of breathing, increase in sweating, widening of the pupils of the eyes, decrease in digestion, muscle tension—> shortness of breath, choking sensation, tightness in chest, lightheadedness, hot flushes, dizziness, blurred vision, confusion, headache, stomachache, nausea
  - Cognitive: attention shifts to scanning for potential threat—> concentration difficulties, feeling “wound up” or “on edge,” self-conscious
  - Behavioral: urge to fight, flee, or freeze—> restlessness (e.g., foot tapping, pacing), irritability (e.g., snapping at people), feeling like can't move
- Other symptoms of anxiety:
  - Difficulty sleeping
  - Fatigue



# Normal Anxiety Versus An Anxiety Disorder

- Experiencing anxiety does not necessarily imply an anxiety disorder
- Anxiety becomes problematic when anxiety symptoms become so intense, occur so frequently, or last so long that the individual cannot function normally and/or feels very distressed
- Some signs of problematic anxiety:
  - Attacks of intense fear
  - Inability to relax
  - Chronic sleep problems
  - Difficulty controlling worry
  - Avoidance of places or people due to worry

# Normal Teenage Behavior vs. Problems to Address



- Staying up late and sleeping in
- Being moody, frustrated, irritable from time to time
- Stressing about grades— impact on future, as well as task avoidance due to the nature of the school work
- Small amounts of defiance
- Experimentation with alcohol and marijuana
- Keeping things from parents, especially day-to-day decisions

- Isolating themselves
- Failing to get up for school
- Inability to sleep or sleeping too much
- Mood is constantly escalating
- Inability to cope, low frustration tolerance
- Inability to bring themselves to study or complete work despite consequences
- Inability to regulate emotions about school
- Rebelling that leads to breaking laws or delinquent behavior
- Binging on drugs or alcohol
- Pathological lying, especially regarding risky or dangerous behaviors



# Types of Anxiety Disorders

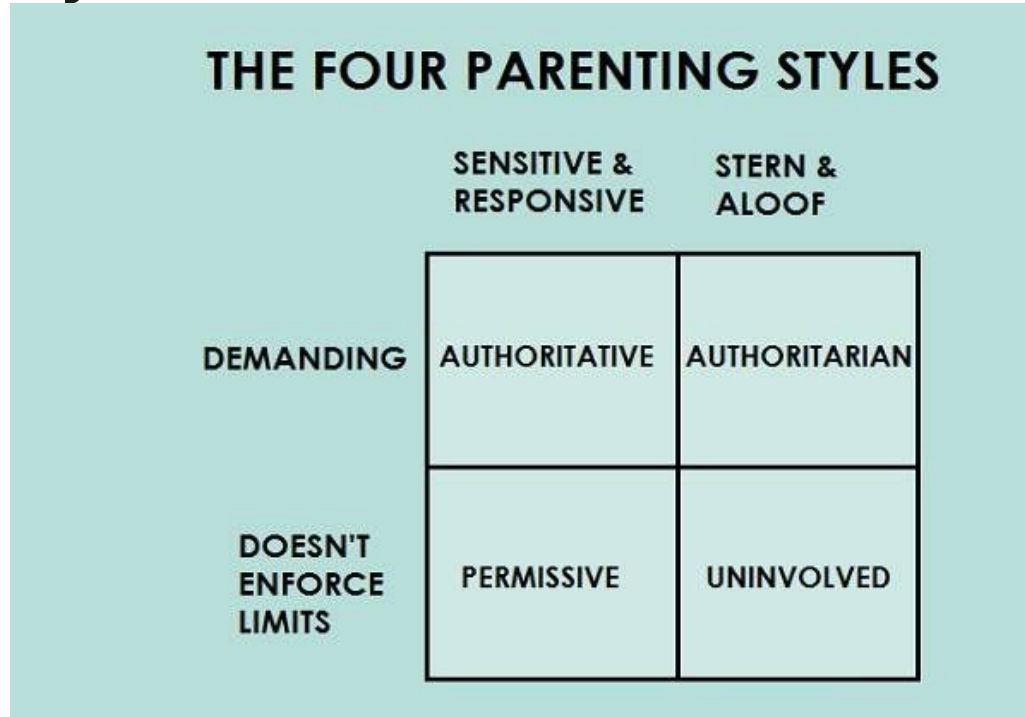
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Social Phobia Disorder



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# Parenting Skills

# Parenting Styles





# Authoritarian vs. Authoritative

- Parents are often thought of as disciplinarians
  - Strict discipline style with little negotiation possible, punishment is common
  - Communication is one way, from parent to child and rules are not explained
  - Less nurturing from parents
  - Expectations are high with limited flexibility
- Highly reasonable and nurturing, with clear and high expectations
  - Children will become more self-disciplined and think for themselves, shown to be the best style for children
  - Rules are clear and reasons behind them explained, goals and expectations are high, children may have input on goals
  - Communication is frequent and appropriate to child's level of understanding

# Conversational Techniques

- Talk to child about their anxiety
  - Approach with curiosity, calm, patience, empathy, and positivity— modeling to them how to adaptively respond to anxiety
- Provide Active Listening:
  - Deep level of listening and engaging
  - Giving full attention to child; eye contact
  - Using Reflective Statements: “It sounds like you are feeling...” “What I’m hearing is that you...”



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# Demonstration: Active Listening Do's and Don'ts

# Conversational Techniques: What to Say/Not to Say In Response to Anxious Child



## Unhelpful Response:

- Don't worry.
- It's no big deal
- You'll be fine
- There's nothing to be afraid of
- You just need more sleep
- I'll do it
- It's all in your head
- Stop thinking about it
- I don't know what you need.

## Helpful Response:

- Can you tell me more about your worries?
- I can see that you are feeling very anxious; let's do some deep breathing together.
- I am here to help you
- Let's talk about what you are afraid of.
- Let's do a meditation app together before bed to help us relax into sleep.
- I know you feel anxious but I know you can do this. I am here to support you.
- It sounds like your worry brain is really loud right now, let's take a walk together and calm that worry brain down.
- Let's talk back to that worry brain by telling it positive stuff!
- Let's brainstorm ways to calm your mind.

# Behavioral Techniques

- Relaxation Technique
  - Diaphragmatic breathing
  - Progressive muscle relaxation
  - Guided Imagery
- Grounding Technique

**5 ★ 4 ★ 3 ★ 2 ★ 1**  
**SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN**  
*FIRST OFF – TAKE 3 SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS!*

**5** List 5 things you can SEE 

**4** List 4 things you can FEEL 

**3** List 3 things you can HEAR 

**2** List 2 things you can SMELL 

**1** List something positive about yourself 😊 

*MAKE today COUNT*

FINISHED? NOW – TAKE 3 MORE SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS ☺

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# Demonstration: Grounding, PMR, Diaphragmatic Breathing





# Other Ways to Support Anxious Child

- Provide support in doing things they fear
  - Avoiding fears tends to maintain and increase fears over time
- Practice and encourage child to practice techniques
- If problems persist, seek help from professionals (i.e., mental health, school counselors)

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# Questions/Practice



# Resources

Helpful apps for managing anxiety:

- MindShift
- MoodKit

- National Suicide Hotline
  - 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line
  - Text “HOME” to 741741
- Pepperdine West Los Angeles Community Counseling Center
  - 1-310-568-5752
- Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
  - 1-888-807-7250
- Airport Marina Counseling Services
  - 1-310-670-1410