

Helping Children Cope with Anxiety in a Fast-Paced World
Lunch & Learn with Yasmine Schmid
November 7, 2018

Worry vs. Anxiety:

- Worry--
 - Specific to a situation and temporary (ex: first day of school)
 - May help one create a problem-solving plan of action
 - Doesn't impact one's personal or professional/academic life
 - Considered a normative psychological state
 - Can become generalized and lead to an aspect of anxiety
- Anxiety--
 - Diffuse and long-term (worry about things that *may* happen when...going to school, traveling, natural disasters, etc.)
 - Not necessarily productive; can lead to "circular thinking" and is overwhelming
 - Does impact one's personal and professional/academic life (ex: not being able to go on playdates)
 - Can be considered a mental disorder to be managed with talk therapy and/or medication
 - Can mistakenly be interpreted as oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), disrespectful behavior, or shyness

Signs of Anxiety:

- Physical symptoms--
 - Feelings of restlessness & difficulty relaxing
 - Difficulty falling asleep & staying asleep
 - Easily tired or tired all of the time
 - Headaches, stomach aches, muscle aches & unexplained aches/pains
 - Trembling or twitching
 - Feeling light-headed or out of breath
 - Sweating easily
- Mental & Emotional systems--
 - Worrying a great deal about typical/everyday things
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Easily startled
 - Feeling irritable & easily upset

Types of anxiety experienced by children & adolescents:

- Separation anxiety (average age of onset-11 years)
- Social anxiety (average age of onset-14 years, often linked to a specific event)
- Selective mutism
- Generalized anxiety
- Specific phobias (average age of onset-11 years; ex: fear of vomiting, as known as emetophobia)
- Panic disorder
- No longer classified as anxiety disorders: OCD & PTSD
- Anxiety disorders often co-morbid with medical conditions, such as asthma & allergies

Coping with Anxiety (in addition to talk therapy and/or medication):

- Boundaries--
 - Social media: limit if it seems to heighten anxiety
 - Saying “no” to social engagements & extracurricular activities, unless participating in them is part of one’s therapeutic treatment plan
- Self-care
 - Activities (group or individual) that foster a sense of wellbeing and calm and are helpful to the mind and body
 - Helpful to model self-care behaviors for children & adolescents
 - Helpful to create time in family schedule for self-care
- Mindfulness
 - Being aware of the present moment without judgment
 - Breathing exercises, meditation, movement, eating

Resources:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-squeaky-wheel/201603/10-crucial-differences-between-worry-and-anxiety>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad/index.shtml>

<https://childmind.org/our-impact/childrens-mental-health-report/2018report/>

Reid Wilson, PhD & Lynn Lyons, LICSW, *Anxious Kids Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous & Independent Children*

Wendy Mogel, PhD, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children*

Kim Frank, Ed.S, LPC, *The Handbook for Helping Kids with Anxiety & Stress*