

ADOLESCENT ANXIETY

An action guide for parents

The information presented is intended for educational purposes only and should not replace the advice of your physician. If you have questions about your health or the health of your child, speak with your physician.

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- Originally from Detroit, MI
- Attended medical school before deciding to continue my medical training at a naturopathic university.
- Graduated from Bastyr University
- Licensed naturopathic physician in state of Washington
- Published research scientist in field of sleep medicine
- Specialize in ADHD and anxiety disorders in children, adolescents, and adults
- Mom of three: ages 7, 12, and 15

It is estimated that **10-30% of children** in the U.S. suffer from anxiety disorders

PURPOSE

- How do you know when your child is experiencing anxiety?
- How do you know that what they are experiencing needs your intervention?
- What are some things you can do to help your child?
- When do you need to get help from a professional?
- What types of interventions might these professionals use?

IS IT ANXIETY?

- Avoidance of school and/or social activities
- Stomachaches, headaches, dizziness
- Refusing/unable to sleep
- Changes in eating patterns (more/less)
- Refusing to be alone
- Weepiness
- Outbursts/anger/oppositional behavior
- Poor grades/inattention/difficulty starting or completing tasks

DAY-TO-DAY DRAMA AND SUPPORT

- Adolescence is rough
- Hormone fluctuations
- Neurobiology- changes during adolescence
- Genetics- changes during adolescence
- Interpersonal relationships
- Work/life balance

DAY-TO-DAY DRAMA AND SUPPORT

- Talk, but mostly listen
 - *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*
by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
- Be a good model
- Allow independence within boundaries

Adolescents with an anxiety disorder are as much as 2-3 times more likely to suffer from an anxiety disorder or depressive disorder as an adult

TARGETED SUPPORT

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Processing
- Connection
- Exercise

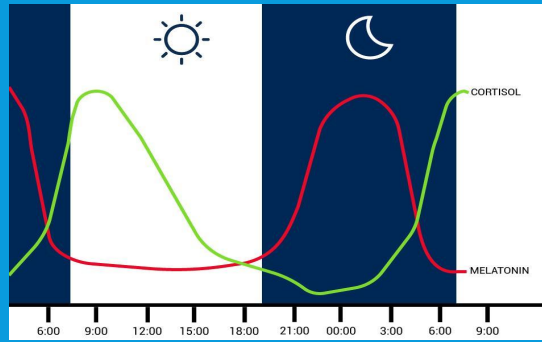
FIRST AND FOREMOST

Talk to your kid
Give what they are feeling a name
Evolutionary helpful
Normalize without dismissing
Sympathize
Empathize if possible
You are a team

SLEEP

Easier said than done
Usually requires "retraining" the brain

CIRCADIAN RHYTHM CORTISOL AND MELATONIN



RETRAINING THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

- Light from awakening until after dinner
- Meals are circadian cues- keep mealtime regular
- Morning routine- even weekends!
- Morning activity in AM can be helpful for some

RETRAINING THE CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

Dark 30 min before sleep

- Screens/blue light
- Room darkening blinds/shades

Avoid "exciting" activities 3 hours before bedtime

Pajamas vs. daytime clothes

Bedtime routine

NUTRITION

Regular meals

Avoid caffeine- coffee, energy drinks, soda, some tea

Goal: keep blood sugar stable

- Focus on ADDING healthy foods
- Educate- your kid is smart and wants to feel better
- If simple carbs, add protein
- Prep a healthy snack and set it out

Food sensitivities, additives, artificial sweeteners, etc.

PROCESSING

Talk, but mostly listen
Prioritize “down time”

Journal

Mindfulness

- Names the feeling
- Trains brain to acknowledge without reacting
- Focuses on the “now”

UCLA MINDFULNESS AWARENESS RESEARCH CENTER

<http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations>

The screenshot shows the UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center website. The main heading is "Free Guided Meditations". Below this, there is a section titled "Free Guided Meditations" with a description: "For an introduction to mindfulness meditation that you can practice on your own, visit our online resources and join our Free Guided Meditations and our available on-line, On-Demand Classes. For a more in-depth class experience, take the 8-Week Online Classes." Below the text is a table of meditations:

Meditation	Play	Download	Print
Guiding Meditation (3 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Search, Sound, Body Meditation (2 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Complex Meditation Instruction (9 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Meditation for Working with Difficulties (7 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Living Presence Meditation (9 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Body and Sound Meditation (2 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Body Scan Meditation (3 mins)	Play	Download	Print
Brain Scan for Sleep (3 mins)	Play	Download	Print

MINDFULNESS APPS- HEADSPACE

The screenshot shows the Headspace website. The main heading is "HEADSPACE – YOUR GYM MEMBERSHIP FOR THE MIND™". Below this, there is a section titled "SIGN UP FOR FREE" with a description: "Find some extra calm and clarity with our FREE 10 day programme - just 10 minutes a day." Below the text is a "SIGN UP FOR FREE" button.

BREATHING

Belly breathing (diaphragmatic breathing)

- Shifts body toward parasympathetic nervous system “rest and digest”
 - Away from sympathetic nervous system “fight or flight”
- Let’s try it!
- Practice 5-7 times per day (when not stressed or anxious)
- Helpful when feeling anxious

CONNECTION

Encourage positive connections with peers

Family time- dinner, game night, tea time

Spend leisure time outdoors- hike, neighborhood walk

EXERCISE

- Increases endorphins
- Increases serotonin
- Creates new connections in hippocampus
- Decreases reactivity of "fight or flight" system
- Physical symptoms of anxiety → paired with feeling good

SIGNS THAT IT IS BECOMING OVERWHELMING

Frequency/duration

Significantly impacting quality of life- friendships, family relationships, grades, other

Concerning weight loss/gain

Panic attacks

WHEN YOU NEED MORE HELP

Primary care doctor (MD)

- Other medical conditions may be playing a role
 - ADHD, depression, thyroid disorder, adrenal gland issues, PMDD, other
- Resource for referrals
- Prescription medication

Psychiatrist (MD)

- Prescribe and manage medications

WHEN YOU NEED MORE HELP

School counselor

- Support during school time
- Referrals, other resources (support groups, etc.)

Therapist (LPC, LMSW, LLP, LMFT)

- Mindfulness
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Music therapy
- Other

Psychologist (PhD, PsyD, LP)

- Assessments for ADHD, learning disabilities

WHEN YOU NEED MORE HELP

Naturopath

- Evaluate potential of other medical conditions
- Evaluate lab values- vit D, magnesium, methylation, other
- Further investigation of diet
- Evaluate benefit of nutritional supplements (magnesium, B vitamins, amino acids)
- Consider support with herbs that are anxiolytic
- Make personalized recommendations to improve sleep
- Walkthrough breathing exercises/meditations that may be helpful
- Act as counselor- cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, other
- Prescription medications

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

School

- School counselor
- Teachers
 - Student-teacher relationship is vital
- 504 may be helpful

TO SUMMARIZE

Talk to your kid

Retrain the brain's circadian rhythm→ sleep

Stabilize blood sugar, remove caffeine

Allow down time, encourage connection

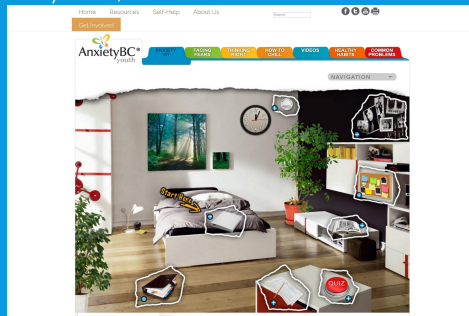
Listen

Practice belly breathing, mindfulness

Get outside support

ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://youth.anxietybc.com/>



QUESTIONS?

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