

Techniques to manage Anxiety in Children

Children like adults suffer with anxiety and the symptoms often affect children at home, school, and in their peer relationships. Professional help is often needed in order to manage these symptoms, whether your child suffers from panic attacks, separation anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or generalized anxiety disorder. There are several easy to use techniques at home that you as a parent can use to help your child manage the symptoms of anxiety:

- 1.) The easiest method to lower anxiety to help your child is to simply try to make them laugh. Laughter relaxes tense muscles, lowers the heart rate, and even boosts the immune system. Tell a joke, make a funny face, do whatever you can think of to make your child laugh. Everyone has a sense of humor, albeit everyone thinks different things are funny, but everyone does need to laugh. Keep it light.
- 2.) Tell them to take a deep breath. Deep breathing techniques help people to relax. Breathe in deeply and slowly with them and do this several times to lower the heart rate and get their minds off of whatever is making them so anxious at the time. Begin by breathing in through the nose and count to five and breathe in deeply and then exhale while counting to five. Let the air escape through your mouth. Try doing this for a few minutes in order to allow held-in emotions to come to the surface. It really is one of the best techniques to relieve stress and relax your child.
- 3.) Visualize with your child some place happier. Find your child's happy place. When you see that your child's anxiety is "taking over" then you need to use visual imagery in order to help them relax. Visualize with them a scene, such as the beach, an amusement park, wherever they enjoy, in order to help them to relax and get them out of whatever stressful situation they are currently in at the time. This is usually done after your child has used some deep breathing techniques in order to lower the heart rate and get them more relaxed.

4.) Exercise, exercise, exercise. Physical activity is by far the best way to release tension and stress with a child that is very anxious. Have them do a neck roll in order to stretch the neck muscles and simply roll the neck side to side and do eight to ten of these, rolling the head side to side. Shrug the shoulders, or have them put their right hand up in the air and then their left hand up in the air in order to stretch out the upper body. Have them go play outside, any physical activity in order to get them moving. Sitting idly watching television or playing video games is not going to get their mind off of whatever they are stressing about or get them out of that “anxious place” that they are currently in.

Anxiety can be managed through professional counseling, medications, and through simple relaxation techniques. These techniques are often used in conjunction with cognitive-behavioral therapy in order to manage and eventually extinguish your child’s anxiety symptoms.

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