

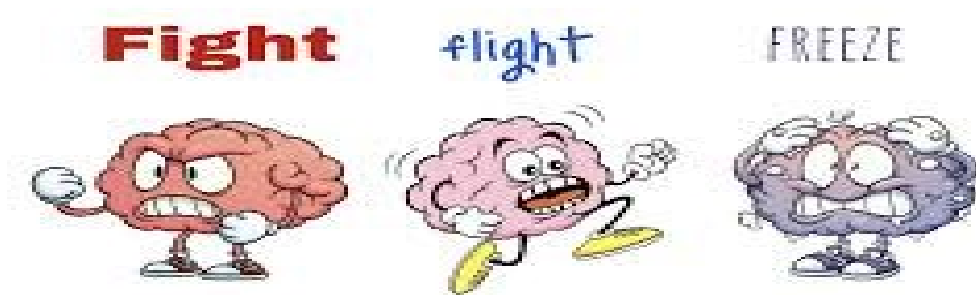
Anxiety

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is normal and it is part of being human! Anxiety is when we feel nervous, worried, or when our body feels all out of whack. We can have anxiety for many reasons, and it feels different for everyone. Anxiety can happen in the morning before school, when trying to make new friends, or when being away from our parents and anxiety can feel like having trouble shutting our minds off, feeling butterflies in our tummies, or being nervous or scared.

Why Do I Feel Anxious?

Our brain is a powerful tool, and it can sometimes trick us and our bodies into thinking that we are in danger, even when we are not. We can begin to have a lot of worries, thoughts, or fears and we may begin to have strong emotions which may make us feel nervous. When this happens, our bodies try to protect us by going into survival mode which can make our body feel all out of whack. While our bodies protect us, we also may go into fight, flight, or freeze mode as we react to our anxiety and we may even do things that we do not usually do like being quiet, feeling angry, or not wanting to go places or running away.



How to Manage Anxiety:

List your triggers and warning signs: The more we learn about our anxiety, the easier it will be to make ourselves feel better!

- Warning signs are things that show us or tell us that we are beginning to feel strong feelings.
 - Changes in your thoughts, your feelings, your body, or your behavior when you begin to feel anxious.
- Triggers are things that make us feel strong feelings.
 - Things, people, places, and/or experiences that cause anxiety.

Mindfulness: Adding tools to your toolbox that help you calm down and practicing these tools can help you feel better!

- Muscle relaxation: squeezing your muscles one muscle at a time from your toes and feet to your neck and face, squeezing a few seconds, and then letting go.
- Breathing exercises: these can be fun!
 - Rainbow breathing: with your arms, make a rainbow and breathe in through your nose like you are smelling flowers and out through your mouth like you are blowing bubbles.



- Grounding techniques: using your 5 senses to help calm down your body and mind and become more present in the here-and-now.
 - Name 5 things you can see, four things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
 - Go to your happy place by choosing any place in the world that makes you feel calm and relaxed and think of all the details of that place until you make it come alive! (What does it look like, what does it smell like, who is there, what do you do in your happy place, etc.)
- Distractions: doing fun things that you enjoy!

- Playing outside, coloring, singing, dancing, practicing a hobby, playing with Legos, playing video games, etc.
- Using fidgets such as fidget spinners, pop-its, fidget cubes, stress balls, etc.

Recommended Reading Materials & Apps

Books for Children:

- “Ruby Finds a Worry” by Tom Percival
- “Wemberly Worried” by Kevin Henkes
- “The Don’t Worry Book” by Todd Parr
- “The Whatifs” by Emily Kilgore
- “Sometimes I’m Anxious: A Child’s Guide to Overcoming Anxiety” by Poppy O’Neill
- “A Little Spot of Anxiety: A Story About Calming Your Worries” by Diane Alber

Apps for Children (All Have Free Versions):

- Mindfulness for Children
- Relax Melodies
- The Calm App
- Recolor - Coloring Book for Kids

References:

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