



## TIPS AND TRICKS FOR IDENTIFYING AND INTERVENING IN YOUR CHILD'S ANXIETY

### What Is Anxiety?

At the root of all anxieties, the mind believes that something horrible is going happen. For example, the mind may fear ultimate social embarrassment, public shame or ridicule, making a mistake, failure, feeling out of control, harm to self or others, or even death.

### Types Of Anxiety:

- **Generalized Anxiety:** A chronic state of worry and questions of “What if..?” are constant.
- **Social Anxiety:** A pervasive fear of being judged, receiving negative feedback, feeling silly/inferior to others that prevents typical interactions.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress:** Worries, fears, nightmares, hypervigilance following a traumatic event in your life.
- **Phobias:** Specific fears that lead to avoidance of certain things such as bugs, water, heights, public speaking, vomit, etc.
- **Panic:** A feeling that something is horribly wrong and includes racing heart, trouble breathing, sweating, change in vision, loss of balance, and fainting.

### What You Can Do:

- Take deep belly breaths to calm your nervous system. Breathe in through your nose, filling your belly with air, while counting until 8, then blow all the air out through your mouth while counting to 8.
- Use calming self-talk such as “I am okay,” “I can figure this out!”
- Ask yourself “What am I afraid of?” and “What would I do if this occurred?”
- Consider the probability that your worst fear will occur. Consider how many times this action is taken by yourself in the past, and by others, without the fear occurring.
- Look for evidence as to why this worry is unlikely to occur.
- Attempt to distract yourself by doing something different.
- Tell yourself that you can think of the worry later but right now you have to focus on another specific activity.
- Do something to change how your body feels, for example take a bath or shower, walk in the grass without shoes on, do progressive muscle relaxation, force a smile for 10 seconds, etc.
- Remember that anxiety passes and will not harm you.
- Keep a worry journal where you can write down your worries each day and then decide how likely they are to occur, what would happen if they did, and what you would do.

### Resources:

- The Child Anxiety Network – [www.childanxiety.net](http://www.childanxiety.net)
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America – [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)
- WorryWiseKids.Org – [www.worrywisekids.org](http://www.worrywisekids.org)
- Anxiety BC – [www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com)
- *Freeing Your Child From Anxiety* (2004) by Tamar Chansky
- *What to do When Your Child has Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder* by Aureen Pinto Wagner, Ph.D.