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Helping Your Child Learn to Cope with Worries and Anxiety

Children and teens can worry about many different situations: academic responsibilities, teachers, friends, fitting in, new experiences, and/or being away from their parents. They may also experience anxiety. This can occur when worries remain unresolved or recur repeatedly without really going away. "Worry" comes and goes; and is often about a short term situation.

Anxiety on the other hand is experienced as a constant, low-lying unease that exists for days or weeks at a time. It is often heightened when normal stressful situations occur.

As parents, you can support your child by recognizing and coping with these discomforts in healthy ways.



Symptoms of Anxiety:

1. **Physical:** Stomach ache, sweating, heart racing, dizziness or lightheadedness.
2. **Mental:** What children say to themselves, e.g. "I am not good enough to ride the bike".
3. **Behavioural:** What children do, e.g. excuses to get out of a situation or activity.



Strategies for working through anxiety and worries:

- ❖ **Talk with your child:** Create safe ways to encourage your child to express concerns and feelings.
- ❖ **Educate:** Let your child know that they are not alone and that worries and anxiety can be part of life.
- ❖ **Build skills:** Create opportunities to coach (role play, plan ahead) your child so that they know how to cope with situations as they come up.
- ❖ **Focus on the positives:** Ask your child to talk about what went well today.
- ❖ **Be prepared:** Minimize anxiety provoking situations at home by planning ahead and informing your child of those plans.
- ❖ **Look after the basics:** Meet your child's nutritional needs; ensure they receive enough sleep, down-time and physical exercise.
- ❖ **Build in regular routines:** Bedtime, waking time, getting to school, family meals.
- ❖ **Model healthy coping strategies:** If appropriate, let your child know when you are worried or anxious about something and then share with them how you are coping in a healthy way.

Adapted from: Anxiety BC

Helpful Resources: www.anxietybc.com
www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/factsheets/back-to-school



BE MINDFUL & KEEP SAFE during the Holidays!

For more information please call the On-Call Nurse for the Child & Youth Team at 604-983-6714.

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