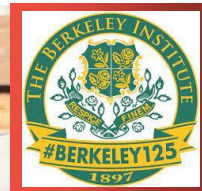


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November 2023 issue:

- *Anxiety disorders*
- *Coping strategies*
- *Local community mental health resources*



A monthly newsletter for Berkeley Institute parents promoting wellness & mental health

Healthy Mind



How can I help my child with anxiety?

- Encourage your child to practice deep breathing exercises 3 times a day. Try the 4-7-8 technique. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and then exhale slowly for 8 seconds.
- Encourage your child to try mindfulness to get back into the present moment. Use the 5-4-3-2-1 technique: notice 5 things you see, 4 things you feel physically, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste.
- Ensure your child is moving his or her body regularly and getting fresh air: walking, running, strength training, dance, yoga, etc. Join them for support!
- Remain objective and calm. Do not yell, judge, or invalidate. Challenge thinking: "Are you basing your anxious thoughts on facts or feelings?" "What makes your thoughts true & untrue?" Get your child to point out his / her strengths.



Anxiety statistics & types of anxiety disorders

Anxiety is a normal response to stress that we all experience. It is essentially a nervous system reaction that alerts us to danger or threat. For example, if we see a fast-moving car headed in our direction on a cross-walk, our heart rate will increase, our breathing may become shallower, and we are likely to run quickly to avoid the car hitting us. If your son or daughter has a test at school, he or she may feel a normal level of anxiety in the lead up to taking it, as it may be worth a high percentage of the overall grade. However, anxiety becomes problematic when it affects your child's day to day functioning, preventing enjoyment of school, participation in extra-curricular activities, or increasing avoidance of social settings.

Just prior to the pandemic in 2019, approximately 301 million people worldwide were living with a diagnosed anxiety disorder, among them 58 million children and adolescents. (1) People who have chronic anxiety experience symptoms that impair their daily functioning. These typically consist of excessive and frequent worrying, irrational fear, restlessness, stomach aches, digestive issues, difficulty focusing or going "blank", sleep disturbances, muscle tension, and fatigue. There are several types of anxiety disorders: generalized anxiety disorder (excessive worry or fear), panic disorder (panic attacks), social anxiety disorder (intense fear or worry when in social situations),

and separation anxiety disorder (excessive fear or worry about being separated from a loved one with whom there is a deep attachment and connection).

The World Health Organization has reported a 25% increase in anxiety and depression worldwide since the Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020 (2). This makes it all the more important to have regular check-ins with your children, listen attentively, and support them in their healing.

References:

- 1). Institute of Metrics & Evaluation. Global Health Data Exchange (GHDx) (<https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-results/>)
- 2.) <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>

What community & online resources can I use to help my child with anxiety?

- ❖ **The Family Center** – Free mental health programs, individual therapy, groups for youth, & family counseling. www.tfc.bm Call 232-1116 or e-mail: info@tfc.bm
- ❖ **Employee Assistance Program** (for government employees) - Free individual counseling for students and their families www.eap.bm Call 292-9000
- ❖ **TheraTails** – Dr. Laura Henagulph & Ms. Eileen Thorne use animal-assisted therapy to help children with anxiety, depression, trauma, & other issues. Held at SPCA & Windreach. www.sPCA.bm/theratails. Call 236-7333
- ❖ **The Anxiety Toolbox** – Pdf document by “Journey to Wellness” full of tools, exercises, & information to help your child better understand and manage anxiety. Cost to purchase is \$21.50 <https://www.journeytowellness.online/product-page/the-anxiety-toolbox>
- ❖ **Free mindfulness apps:** Google “Shining Mind”, “Insight Timer”, or “Mindfulness Coach” to download the app onto a smartphone. There are hundreds of meditations and / or breathing exercises.



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