

5 Simple Things You Can Do to Help Manage a Child's Anxiety

Set aside time.

If you have a worrywart for a child, one effective strategy is to discuss why we worry and the fact that worrying is actually a good thing-it keeps us safe and sound. However, if we worry too much it can interfere with our happiness. One strategy is to set aside time for worrying-then tell our brains we will not worry at other times. At worry time, you can help your child to express his/her worries by drawing, writing in a journal or talking about it. If your child doesn't want to share allow them to keep their drawings or writings in a notebook that is only for them to see.

Take action.

If your child is worried about something and they can take action towards the eliminating the thing that is worrying them, do so in baby steps. In your child, for example is worried about talking in front of the class, set simple goals such as talking with one person, then with a small group. Encourage them to visualize doing whatever is worrying them successfully and notice how that feels.

Hold a stone.

Give your child a stone or other object they can put in their pocket and use as an anchor. When they feel the stone they should remember that you are there supporting them and helping them through their worry. Having an object to touch throughout the day can provide a subtle positive feeling that can help with anxiety.

Model

Children are always watching, learning from our behaviour. Model how you cope with anxiety. If you feel anxious tell your child, I'm feeling a bit anxious so I'm going to have a cup of tea to calm myself down or I'm going to go for a run to help myself feel better.



Deep breathing.

Deep Breathing is one of the best tools for combatting anxiety. Teach your child to breathe deeply and exhale in a long, strong fashion when they are feeling anxious. Good ways to encourage this are by blowing bubbles, blowing feathers or simply breathing in and out together.

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