



Parent Alert Bulletin

January 2018

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a natural human emotion and a normal reaction to life's stresses. However, when the worry and fear associated with anxiety interferes with a child's usual activities, he or she may have an anxiety disorder.

Anxiety becomes a problem (disorder) when it last for a long time each time, and is so intense that it interferes with a child's ability to function socially, academically, physically, and emotionally.

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Symptoms of Anxiety

- Changes in mood
- Difficulty concentrating or being easily distracted
- Avoidance or feared situations, withdrawal or trouble relaxing
- Difficulty sleeping and multiple physical complaints
- Symptoms are present more than 6 months

What is Stress?

Stress is the way our bodies and minds react to particular challenge or situation. By recognizing the signs and symptoms of stress, you can help your child learn to manage his or her responses in a healthier way.

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Good Stress is a normal part of healthy development. A student may feel anxious about giving a class presentation, but that "good" stress can be used to inspire him or her to focus and prepare for the challenge.

Bad Stress is when a child feels so overwhelmed with a problem at home or at school that it interferes with his or her ability to function normally. In these situations, the body activates a "fight or flight" response, resulting in heightened focus, strength and alertness.

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Signs of too much Stress

- Nightmares
- Increased aggression
- Hyperactive behavior
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Overreactions to minor problems

Understanding the difference between stress and real anxiety

Although stress and anxiety are often paired together there are real differences between the two. Children/Teens are handling a variety of stressors, everyday but not all are suffering from anxiety. Anxiety symptoms are more consistent and long term rather than sporadic. Children/Teens learn and grow from handling stress and this is a good thing. However, if the stressors are overwhelming or hindering the child's ability to cope, it's too much.

How Parents Can Help Your Child Handle Stress and Anxiety

- Encourage your child to face his/her fears, not run away from them
- Tell your child it is okay to be imperfect
- Focus on positives
- Maintain daily routines and order in the home
- Help your child problem solve
- Encourage your child get an appropriate amount of sleep
- Encouraged your child to eat well-balanced diet
- Make expectations for your child clear and reasonable
- Reward child's effort and success
- Plan relaxing activities
- Help create a "I can" mantra
- Help prepare your child for new experiences and changes

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