

Anxiety Disorders Information Guide

What is an anxiety disorder?

Anxiety disorders occur when worries and fears become so strong and persistent that they interfere with daily life at home, school, or with friends. While all children worry sometimes, anxiety disorders are when these feelings don't go away, get worse over time, and make it hard for kids to do regular activities. It's treatable, and with proper support, young people can feel better and thrive.

Want to Learn More?

Watch:

- What is Anxiety?
(<https://www.anxietycanada.com/about-anxiety-with-mark-antczak/>)
- Anxiety Explained for Teens (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpolpKTWrp4>)

Listen:

- Your Anxious Child
(<https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/your-anxious-child/id937022377>)
- Mental Health & Wellness Podcasts for Kids & Teens
(<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/lists/best-mental-health-and-wellness-podcasts-for-kids-tweens-and-teens>)

Read/Learn:

- School Mental Health Ontario
(<https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/navigating-childhood-anxiety-strategies-for-understanding-and-support/>)
- Anxiety in Children
(<https://www.anxietycanada.com/learn-about-anxiety/anxiety-in-children/>)
- Caring for Kids
(<https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mentalhealth/anxiety-and-anxiety-disorders>)

Online Tools & Apps

- Anxiety Canada (<https://www.anxietycanada.com/>): Self-help resources
- Mind Your Mind (<https://mindyourmind.ca/>): Interactive tools for youth mental health
- Head Space for Kids (<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>): Mindfulness and meditation for children and youth

- Worry Time Technique (<https://www.worry-tree.com/blog/how-to-use-worry-time>): Set aside 15 minutes daily for worrying
- Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame (<http://apps.apple.com/us/app/breathe-think-do-with-sesame/id721853597>): Mindfulness for younger children
- Mindfulness for Teens (<https://www.mindfulnessforteens.com/>): Free mindfulness activities for adolescents

Get Help

Agencies:

Help Ahead (<https://helpahead.ca/>) is the centralized phone line to access mental health and well-being resources in Toronto (1-866-585-6486).

Other agencies include:

- Lumenus (<https://www.lumenus.ca/>)
- Strides (<https://stridesotoronto.ca/>)
- George Hull Centre (<https://georgehullcentre.ca/services>)
- CAMH (<https://www.camh.ca/en/patients-and-families/programs-and-services/mood-anxiety-for-children-youth-service>)
- Michael Garron Hospital ([https://www.tehn.ca/programs-services/mental-health-addiction/child-adolescent-mental-0#:~:text=Michael%20Garron%20Hospital%20\(MGH\)%20Anxiety,up%20and%20computer%2Dbased%20interventions](https://www.tehn.ca/programs-services/mental-health-addiction/child-adolescent-mental-health/child-adolescent-mental-0#:~:text=Michael%20Garron%20Hospital%20(MGH)%20Anxiety,up%20and%20computer%2Dbased%20interventions))
- Hospital for Sick Children (<https://sickkidscmh.ca/>)

In person/online counselling resources:

- OneStopTalk (<https://onestoptalk.ca/>): free, confidential service for kids/youth to get immediate support with a therapist
- What's Up Walk In Clinics (<https://www.whatsupwalkin.ca/>): free in person and virtual mental health counselling
- Connex Ontario (<https://connexontario.ca/our-services/mental-health-treatment/>): free and confidential, 24/7 support to adults experiencing mental health concerns
- BounceBack Ontario (<https://bouncebackontario.ca/>): free skill-building program to help adults and youth 15+ manage anxiety

Find resources:

- Canadian Mental Health Association (<https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/understanding-and-finding-help-for-anxiety/>)

- CAMH list of resources
(<https://www.camh.ca/en/professionals/treating-conditions-and-disorders/anxiety-disorders/anxiety--resources-and-references>)
- School Mental Health Ontario (<https://smho-smso.ca/>)

Develop healthy habits:

- Create Healthy Habits at Home
(https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/healthy_habits_home.pdf)
- What to Do/Not to Do When Children are Anxious
(<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/>)
- Diet and Exercise for Kids (<https://www.apa.org/topics/children/healthy-eating>)
- Helping Children Manage Anxiety
(<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/9-tools-for-helping-your-child-manage-anxiety>)
- Teens and Social Media Use
(<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teen-s-and-social-media-use/art-20474437>)

Treatment Approaches

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (<https://www.anxietycanada.com/cbt/>): Most effective treatment; helps children understand thoughts, feelings, and behaviours
- Exposure Therapy
(<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-minute-helping-kids-with-anxiety-through-exposure-therapy/>): Gradual, safe exposure to fears
- Family Therapy
(<https://childmind.org/article/treating-anxiety-in-kids-by-working-with-parents/>): Includes parents in treatment
- Group Therapy
(<https://childmind.org/care/areas-of-expertise/anxiety-disorders-center/social-anxiety-groups/?filter%5Bbio-type%5D=239>): Peer support with other children
- Medication
(https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mentalhealth/using_ssris_to_treat_depression_and_anxiety_in_children_and_youth): May be considered for severe anxiety with therapy (speak to your family doctor or pediatrician)
- Parenting Strategies
(<https://childmind.org/article/10-tips-for-parenting-anxious-kids/>): Validate feelings, create routines, practice breathing exercises, encourage gradual exposure to fears.

Crisis Support

988 Suicide Crisis Line: Call or text anytime, anywhere in Canada

Kids Help Phone: Call 1-800-668-6868, text CONNECT to 686868

Good2Talk: Post-secondary students, 1-866-925-5454

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-4357

Other Supports & Resources

For more information, visit:

- TDSB Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources
(<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/Supporting-You/Mental-Health-and-Well-Being-Professional-Support-Staff-PSS>)
- Psychological Services Google Site
(<https://sites.google.com/tdsb.on.ca/psychologicalservices/home>)

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