Ohio Chapter
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American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

PRACTICE-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR ANXIETY IN PRE-TEENAGERS

SOME ANXIETY IS A GOOD THING

Small amounts of anxiety stop us from doing dangerous things or from getting in trouble at school. It can help motivate us to study so we do better in school. But, it is not a good thing when it makes our bodies feel badly and when it stops us from doing things we want to do or need to do.

INTERVENTIONS TO AID WITH ANXIETY IN PRE-TEENAGERS

- **Use Bibliotherapy.**
  - Examples:
    - *I am Stronger Than Anxiety* by Elizabeth Cole
    - *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* by Robert M. Sapolsky
- **Build routines to lead to fewer surprises.**
  - Write out routines to maintain consistency.
- **Practice effective sleep hygiene.**
  - Create a regular sleep schedule and stick to it, even when school is out.
  - Decrease intake of sugar, caffeine, and secondhand smoke for three hours before bedtime.
  - Use relaxation activities for 20 minutes before bedtime.
  - Create a routine of reading, and/or bathing before sleep.
  - Listening to quiet music may be helpful.
  - Avoid TV and video games for at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
  - Keep TV out of the bedroom.
- **Make healthy eating choices.**
  - Breakfast is essential.
  - Encourage a balanced diet with plenty of protein.
  - Encourage water, limit pop, juices, and other sweetened beverages.
  - Try to have at least one family meal every day.
  - Sit at the table and talk about the day without the TV.
- **Exercise**
  - Encourage exercise at least four days per week for at least 20 minutes.
  - Exercise together as a family.
  - Walk in place during TV commercials.
  - Consider using a step pedometer to give a measurement of actual exercise.
  - Set small, concrete goals that are achievable, and build from there.

TOOLS TO HELP MANAGE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- **Bubbles**
  - Encourage taking slow, deep breaths to get as many bubbles as possible.
  - Do this at least once a day, or as often as needed.
- **Play-Doh**
  - Knead, roll, pound, and shape the Play-Doh.
  - Do this at least once a day, or as often as needed.
- **Textured Cloths**
  - Corduroy and silky cloths work best.
  - Rub a material that feels soothing.
  - Can be kept in a pocket or attached to the top or bottom of a desk.
- **Lotion**
  - Give a squirt of lotion and ask the child to calm self.
  - Have child give themself a hand massage.
  - Parent can give a hand massage, also.
- **Music**
  - Have the child listen to soothing, relaxing, and meaningful music before a stressful situation, to calm after a stressful situation, or at the end of the day to relax and help get to sleep.

For more information, please visit:
https://tinyurl.com/29ta2dhr