



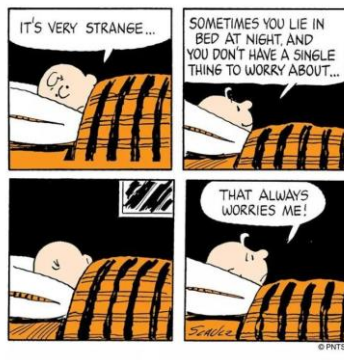
Psyched Express

April, 2020

Psyched Express is the official newsletter of
Dr. Kathryn Keithly, LEP and Carol Murphy, MA, CCC-SLP

Y.E.T. – Youth Evaluation and Therapy

Make Your Child Resilient!



Anxiety, Learning & Covid19

Charlie Brown is anxious, probably worried about not going to school and this funny thing he has to stay home for, Covid 19. What is that? Over the last several months and especially the past weeks, I have received many inquiries about children who are anxious. So many parents have called in fact that anxiety seemed to be needed as a whole newsletter topic. So here goes.....

Children and teens can be *normally* anxious about many things. They might experience some anxiety in various forms: worry, apprehension, dread, fear or distress or occasional nervousness. Intermittent anxieties can happen when a child is first faced with an unfamiliar or trying situation.

BUT, WHEN HAS ANXIETY PASSED THE BOUNDARIES OF NORMAL?

“ANXIETY IS CONSIDERED A DISORDER NOT BASED ON WHAT A CHILD IS WORRYING ABOUT, BUT RATHER HOW THAT WORRY IS IMPACTING A CHILD'S FUNCTIONING.

Anxiety and Covid19

Let's face it, we are all worried- When will this end? When can my child go back to school? When can I go back to work? Is my child abnormally worried? Will this impact his/her learning?

Look at the Red Flags on the right and read on for more help.

ANXIETY RED FLAGS

- Easily distressed, or agitated when in a stressful situation
- Repetitive reassurance questions, "what if" concerns, inconsolable, won't respond to logical arguments
- Headaches, stomachaches, regularly too sick to go to school
- Anticipatory anxiety, worrying hours, days, weeks ahead
- Disruptions of sleep with difficulty falling asleep, frequent nightmares, difficulty sleeping alone
- Perfectionism, self-critical, very high standards that make nothing good enough
- Overly-responsible, people pleasing, excessive concern that others are upset with him or her, unnecessary apologizing
- Demonstrating excessive avoidance, refuses to participate in expected activities, refusal to attend school
- Disruption of child or family functioning, difficulty with going to school, friend's houses, religious activities, family gatherings, errands, vacations
- Excessive time spent consoling child about distress with ordinary situations, excessive time coaxing child to do normal activities-homework, hygiene, meals



Resist the urge to panic. That's hard, especially when we're facing an epidemic that has already shut down the world's second-largest economy. But no matter how old or young your kids may be, your panic will become their panic. And that's not a place you want your kids — or, for that matter, yourself — to be.



- Be fully present. Put the phone down (or, better yet, leave it in a different room) and turn off the news.
- Listen to what they say, without trying to debate or contest it, acknowledge how they feel, and be honest about the limits of your own knowledge.
- Put a positive focus on the discussion by focusing on proactive steps your kids can take like proper handwashing, sneezing or coughing in their elbow and strengthening their immune systems with eating healthy food and lots of sleep.
- Model composure. Children watch their parents every day in a multitude of situations.
- Limit news exposure on the coronavirus. The news can have strong language and visuals that may be scary to a young child or lead to anxiety in an older child.
- Try to catch when your child is looking for reassurance. Try to answer their questions in a consistent and calm manner without bringing up that they have asked this “a thousand times.”
- Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.
- Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
- Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.
- Be honest and keep it simple.
- Make the conversation solutions driven. Focus on the things the family is doing (such as washing hands) as well as the things the community and the government are doing and explain how those things are going to keep people safe.
- Reach out for help if you think your kid continues to have a hard time with coping.
- (Sources: Nancy Kislin, LCSW, MFT; Laura Keys, LCSW; CDC; Dr. Rebecca Berry, PhD)



ASK DR. KATY
Please Email your Questions
to Dr. Katy. She will do her
best to answer them.
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