

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

in Children

Anxiety is a normal emotion that everyone experiences. It becomes a problem when it starts to interfere with a child's daily life, wellbeing or confidence. Understanding anxiety is the first step in helping your child feel supported and less alone.



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is your child's brain trying to protect them from danger. When the brain thinks there might be a threat, it triggers the 'fight, flight or freeze' response.

This can cause:

- ✓ Worrying thoughts
- ✓ Physical symptoms (tummy aches, headaches, fast heartbeat)
- ✓ Avoiding certain situations
- ✓ Difficulty sleeping
- ✓ Feeling on edge or irritable



REMEMBER: Anxiety is not a choice and it is not a sign of weakness. With the right support, children can learn to manage it.



COMMON SIGNS IN CHILDREN

Every child is different, but signs of anxiety may include:

- ✓ Worrying more than usual
- ✓ Clinginess or not wanting to be apart from parents/carers
- ✓ Avoiding school or activities
- ✓ Changes in appetite
- ✓ Trouble sleeping or nightmares
- ✓ Stomach aches, headaches or feeling sick
- ✓ Irritability or mood swings
- ✓ Crying or becoming upset easily

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

Let your child talk about how they feel. Your calm presence helps them feel safe.



VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Let them know it's okay to feel anxious. Say: "I can see this is really hard for you."



TEACH CALMING STRATEGIES

Try deep breathing, grounding exercises or mindfulness activities together.



ENCOURAGE SMALL STEPS

Help them face worries gradually in a safe and positive way.



KEEP ROUTINES STEADY

Predictable routines give children a sense of security and control.



SEEK EXTRA SUPPORT

If anxiety is affecting daily life, don't hesitate to reach out for help.



You Are Not Alone

Anxiety can feel overwhelming, but with understanding, patience and the right support, your child can build confidence and resilience.

NEED FURTHER SUPPORT?

We offer assessments, resources and ongoing support for children and families.

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