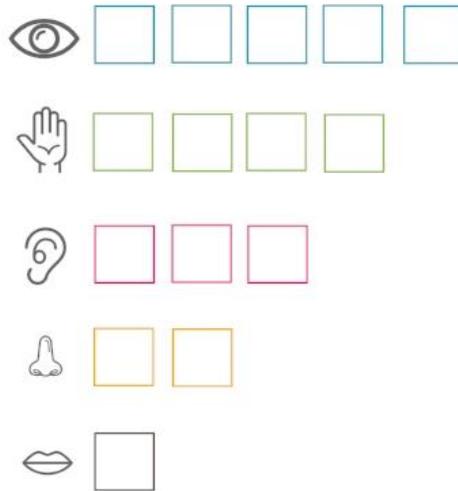


5,4,3,2,1 GROUNDING STRATEGY

5 4 3 2 1 Grounding Exercise



HOW TO DO IT:

This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

Take a deep belly breath to begin.

5 - LOOK: Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the picture frame.

4 - FEEL: Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel the hair on the back of my neck, or I feel the pillow I am sitting on.

3 - LISTEN: Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud.

2 - SMELL: Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favorite smells.

1 - TASTE: Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favorite thing to taste.

Take another deep belly breath to end.

Other Quick Ways to Calm Down

Sometimes you'll need a quick way to help your child calm down and you don't have much with you. Maybe it's when you're out at Target or stuck in traffic. These tips will come in handy at those times:

- Imagine your favorite place - it's like taking a mini vacation wherever you are
- Think of your favorite things
- Designated worry time ("talk time")
 - Set aside worries when they happen, assure children that they will have a designated time later to discuss anxieties.
- Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, cow, dog, etc...)
- Squeeze Something (play dough, clay, silly putty, your fists, a stress ball)
- Get a Cold Drink of Water
- Give yourself a hug - squeeze tight!
- Remember the words to a song you love
- Do a hook up
 - Put your arms straight out in front of you, palms facing out.
 - Put one hand over the other at the wrists and interlace your fingers.
 - Swoop your hands and arms toward your body and then place your interlaced hands on your chest.
 - Cross your feet at the ankles and put your tongue on the roof of your mouth.
 - Stay still for one minute.
- Recommendation: talk to pediatrician
- Front-load information (e.g., schedule changes, what to expect for events, allowing predictability)
- Consider making a checklist to prepare for an upcoming stressful event. Checking off preparations on the checklist can help children feel more prepared to confront the situation.
- Teach & model coping strategies/ways to calm down
- Create an "idea can" (cup with idea cards) or other collection of calm-down strategies that students can revisit when they're feeling worried
 - Calm-down strategies should focus more on actions that will help children calm down and less on avoidance activities (e.g. watching TV)
- Monitor your own meaningful, purposeful language when approaching anxiety
- Allow more down-time; Simplify
- Consistent meal/bed times

- Belly breathing, drawing breathing
- Counting
- Comfort item (e.g., stuffed animal)
- 3 Steps: stop, name your feeling, calm down
- MindUp (not taught as much/often as SecondStep)
 - Over-active amygdala
- Using language such as “your body needs to calm down” or “settle” rather than telling a child to “calm down”, which can sometimes be more upsetting

**ALTERNATIVES
TO THE
PHRASE
"CALM DOWN"**

1. I SEE THAT YOU ARE HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME, LET ME HELP YOU.
2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
3. IF YOU NEED TO HIT SOMETHING, HIT THIS PILLOW.
4. THAT CAN BE SO FRUSTRATING, LET'S FIGURE THIS OUT TOGETHER.
5. I SEE THAT YOU ARE MAD, HOW DOES THAT FEEL IN YOUR BODY?
6. COUNT TO 10.
7. WANT TO SQUEEZE MY HAND?
8. HOW ABOUT A BIG HUG.
9. LET'S FOCUS ON FIXING THE PROBLEM TOGETHER.
10. IF YOU ARE FEELING SAD, YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT IT.

Practical home strategies

Here are pointers for helping children escape the cycle of anxiety.

<http://lemonlimeadventures.com/what-to-say-to-calm-an-anxious-child/>

1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.

None of us wants to see a child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to remove stressors that trigger it. It's to help them learn to tolerate their anxiety and function as well as they can, even when they're anxious. And as a byproduct of that, the anxiety will decrease or fall away over time.

2. Don't avoid things just because they make a child anxious.

Helping children avoid the things they are afraid of will make them feel better in the short term, but it reinforces the anxiety over the long run. If a child in an uncomfortable situation gets upset, starts to cry—not to be manipulative, but just because that's how she feels—and her parents whisk her out of there, or remove the thing she's afraid of, she's learned that coping mechanism, and that cycle has the potential to repeat itself.

3. Express positive—but realistic—expectations.

You can't promise a child that her fears are unrealistic—that she won't fail a test, that she'll have fun ice skating, or that another child won't laugh at her during show & tell. But you can express confidence that she's going to be okay, she will be able to manage it, and that, as she faces her fears, the anxiety level will drop over time. This gives her confidence that your expectations are realistic, and that you're not going to ask her to do something she can't handle.

4. Respect her feelings, but don't empower them.

It's important to understand that validation doesn't always mean agreement. So if a child is terrified about going to the doctor because she's due for a shot, you don't want to belittle her fears, but you also don't want to amplify them. You want to listen and be empathetic, help her understand what she's anxious about, and encourage her to feel that she can face her fears. The message you want to send is, “I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this.”

5. Don't ask leading questions.

Encourage your child to talk about her feelings, but try not to ask leading questions— “Are you anxious about the big test? Are you worried about the science fair?” To avoid feeding the cycle of anxiety, just ask open-ended questions: “How are you feeling about the science fair?”

6. Don't reinforce the child's fears.

What you don't want to do is be saying, with your tone of voice or body language: "Maybe this is something that you should be afraid of." Let's say a child has had a negative experience with a dog. Next time she's around a dog, you might be anxious about how she will respond, and you might unintentionally send a message that she should, indeed, be worried.

7. Encourage the child to tolerate her anxiety.

Let your child know that you appreciate the work it takes to tolerate anxiety in order to do what she wants or needs to do. It's really encouraging her to engage in life and to let the anxiety take its natural curve. We call it the "habituation curve"—it will drop over time as she continues to have contact with the stressor. It might not drop to zero, it might not drop as quickly as you would like, but that's how we get over our fears.

8. Try to keep the anticipatory period short.

When we're afraid of something, the hardest time is really before we do it. So another rule of thumb for parents is to really try to eliminate or reduce the anticipatory period. If a child is nervous about going to a doctor's appointment, you don't want to launch into a discussion about it two hours before you go; that's likely to get your child more keyed up. So just try to shorten that period to a minimum.

9. Think things through with the child.

Sometimes it helps to talk through what would happen if a child's fear came true—how would she handle it? A child who's anxious about separating from her parents might worry about what would happen if they didn't come to pick her up. So we talk about that. If your mom doesn't come at the end of soccer practice, what would you do? "Well I would tell the coach my mom's not here." And what do you think the coach would do? "Well he would call my mom. Or he would wait with me." A child who's afraid that a stranger might be sent to pick her up can have a code word from her parents that anyone they sent would know. For some kids, having a plan can reduce the uncertainty in a healthy, effective way.

10. Try to model healthy ways of handling anxiety.

There are multiple ways you can help kids handle anxiety by letting them see how you cope with anxiety yourself. Kids are perceptive, and they're going to take it in if you keep complaining on the phone to a friend that you can't handle the stress or the anxiety. I'm not saying to pretend that you don't have stress and anxiety, but let kids hear or see you managing it calmly, tolerating it, feeling good about getting through it.

Books to Support Children with Anxiety

All are available on Amazon.com

[Is a Worry Worrying You](#) by Harriet May Savitz

Adults think of childhood as a carefree time, but the truth is that children worry, and worry a lot, especially in our highly pressurized era. This book addresses children's worries with humor and imagination, as hilarious scenarios teach kids the use of perspective and the art of creative problem-solving.

[David and the Worry Beast](#) by Anne Marie Guanci and Caroline Attia

Learning to deal with anxiety is an important step in a child's healthy emotional growth. Conquering fears, and not avoiding them, is the lesson imparted in this story. David could not stop thinking about the basket he had missed at the end of the big game. He was worried that he might do it again. He was worried that his teammates would be angry with him. He was worried that his parents would not be proud of him. He was also worried about an upcoming math test. In fact, David was worried a lot. "Should I quit the team?" he asked himself. "Should I be sick tomorrow and miss the math test?" Luckily, David finally confided in his parents and school nurse, both of whom gave him support and techniques for controlling the "worry beast" within him. Delightfully illustrated, it focuses on a very real and essential topic.

[Wemberly Worried](#) by Kevin Henkes

Wemberly worried about spilling her juice, about shrinking in the bathtub, even about snakes in the radiator. She worried morning, noon, and night. "Worry, worry, worry," her family said. "Too much worry." And Wemberly worried about one thing most of all: her first day of school. But when she meets a fellow worrywart in her class, Wemberly realizes that school is too much fun to waste time worrying!

[The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes](#) By Mark Pett

Beatrice Bottomwell has NEVER (not once!) made a mistake...

Meet Beatrice Bottomwell: a nine-year-old girl who has never (not once!) made a mistake. She never forgets her math homework, she never wears mismatched socks, and she ALWAYS wins the yearly talent show at school. In fact, Beatrice holds the record of perfection in her hometown, where she is known as The Girl Who Never Makes Mistakes. Life for Beatrice is sailing along pretty smoothly until she does the unthinkable—she makes her first mistake. And in a very public way!

[What If...?](#) By Anthony Browne

Young worriers will relate to — and be comforted by —this tale of a boy's anxiety as he heads to his first big party.

What if Joe doesn't like the party he's going to? What if he doesn't like the food or the games or the people? As Joe and his mom walk down the darkening street, Joe's imagination starts to run wild. And as they search for the right place, he wonders "what if . . ." at each house, peeking in to see some surprising sights. From the award-winning former British Children's Laureate Anthony Browne comes a picture book whose slyly bewitching setup unfolds to a reassuring ending.

[The Kissing Hand](#) by Audrey Penn

In this contemporary classic Chester Raccoon seeks love and reassurance from his mother as he ventures out into the world to attend his very first day of school.

[What To Do When You Worry Too Much](#) by Dawn Huebner

"What to Do When You Worry Too Much" is an interactive self-help book designed to guide 6-12 year olds and their parents through the cognitive-behavioral techniques most often used in the treatment of generalized anxiety. Engaging, encouraging, and easy to follow, this book educates, motivates, and empowers children to work towards change. It includes a note to parents by psychologist and author Dawn Huebner, PhD

*Book Summaries are from Amazon.com. Click on the book titles to link to each book on Amazon.