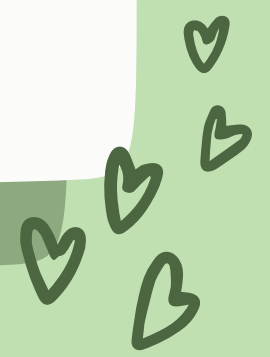




UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY:

Helping an Anxious Child



WHAT IS ANXIETY?

It is normal to worry about things, especially when we are faced with challenging situations. Anxiety is the physical response we experience as a result of our worries, and it can interfere with our daily life.

As parents, witnessing an anxious child can make us feel helpless and frustrated.

There are three main tips on how to help an anxious child 'in the moment'.



1. BREATHE

Encourage your child to breathe slower – they may need a bit of help using a fun distraction in order for this to happen.

Try blowing bubbles, a ping pong ball, a feather or a crumpled up piece of paper at a target to encourage slow deliberate breathing.



2. MOVE

Create a safe space that allows them to get out all of their adrenaline.

This can be done through playing a sport, taking a trip to the park, or playing out in the garden.



3. LISTEN

Be your child's rock when they are venting to you. Remember that they are reacting to chemicals such as cortisol and adrenaline that have been pumped into their body.

You can't stop the emotion – so it is important to just keep them safe and let them know that in time it will pass, and that you are there for them.





3. EMPATHISE

When your child feels anxious, it's natural to want to fix the problem. However, it's more helpful to respond in a way that makes them feel heard and understood. This approach encourages them to open up and explore their worries with you. We call these 'open door' responses.

Instead of saying:
"Don't worry."

Try saying:
"We'll get through this together."

By using open door responses, you create a safe space for your child to share their feelings, which is a crucial step in managing anxiety.



HOW WE CAN HELP



If you are worried about supporting an anxious child and need any advice or ideas for coping strategies, visit our website where we have resources, courses and sessions to explore and book.



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