



TALKING TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD

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Why me?

- **Pastoral ministry for almost 18 years**
- **MA Clinical and Mental Health Counseling; M.Div.**
- **Certificate in Trauma Counseling**
- **Two kids**
- **I'm anxious**



Course of the day

- **We will not “cure” your child!**
- **Understanding causes**
- **Understanding ineffective techniques**
- **Exploring effective techniques**
- **Questions**



Anxiety as a Disorder

- **Separation Anxiety Disorder**
- **Social Phobia Disorder**
- **Other Specific Phobia Disorder**
- **Fear of Death and Dying Disorder**
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder**

What Causes Anxiety

- **Performance Stress**
- **Unfamiliar situations**
- **Changes**
- **???**

What doesn't work?

- **Saying, “Calm down.”**
- **Yelling**
- **Arguing**
- **???**

What Works

- ❖ **Intentional conversations about this ie: peaks and valleys, highs and lows, etc**
- ❖ **Brainstorm how to work through it together : lead but don't do**
- ❖ **Answer questions and acknowledge and validate feelings**





What if it's me???

- **Build skills: What lesson do I want to teach right now? What is the best way to teach that?**
- **Connect and then redirect – understand root of anxiety then problem solve together**
- **Calm down zone**

Emotional Regulation

- **Life is a wave - teach you how to surf**
- **Where do we feel it in our body**
- **Any feeling or emotion is okay**
- **Constantly help your child come up with feelings or emotion words – state your own**



11 Words to teach your child

- **1. Lonely**
- **2. Frustrated**
- **3. Intimidated**
- **4. That's just not my thing**
- **5. Hangry (Chuck)**
- **6. Complicated**
- **7. Sad**
- **8. Concerned and worried**
- **9. Touched-out**
- **10. Overwhelmed**
- **11. May I please?**

5 Steps to Managing Big Emotions



Worry Exercises

- **Worries like a train**
- **Create box**
- **Set worry time with mom and dad**
- **Popsicle sticks**
- **Remind them of how they will survive**

A day of worry is
more exhausting
than a week of
work. ~John Lubbock

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Mindfulness

- **Present, letting thoughts slide by, non judgement thoughts, moments without distraction**
- **Mindful breathing**
- **5-4-3-2-1 Technique**
- **Mindful body**
- **Mindful listening**



Encourage breathing + talking

- **When child is elevated is not the time to try to discipline, explain, or teach**
- **Master breathing**
- **“You seem _____ and I can tell its really hard lets take a minute to calm down then we are going to talk about it”**
- **Set up a time once child is calm to discuss what happened, what the child was feeling, where they felt it in their body, how to react differently next time, and what can we do to help RIGHT now**
- **Examples: scribble, dunk, bury, break, run, nerf**

Questions

Resources

- The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson
- No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson
- The Connected Child: Bringing Hope and Healing to Your Adoptive Family by Karyn B. Purvis, David R. Cross, and Wendy Lyons Sunshine