

TIPS for... TEACHERS

Managing Stress and Anxious Feelings in Children

We've all experienced stress or anxious feelings at some point in our lives. For children, these feelings may be the product of trauma or a real or perceived threat. It may also be the product of new experiences. However, children may not display stress and anxious feelings in the same way that adults would. Children may have temper tantrums, wet the bed, or may even get an upset stomach. While children's stressors are usually a consequence of unfamiliarity, new experiences, or fear, it is important to be able to know how to help children overcome these negative feelings.

Common Causes

- Fear of disappointing others
- Having to make friends and be liked by others
- Future (the unknown)
- Conflicts at home or with friends
- Abuse or neglect
- Problems at school: grades/bullying
- Death of a family member or friend
- Divorce
- Change - good or bad
- Illness
- Injury
- Hormones
- Uncertainty



Signs & Symptoms

● Trouble paying attention

● Regression

● Withdrawing from things they liked before

● Tummy hurting

● May use words like "worried" or "confused"

● Irritability/anger

Like accidents after being potty-trained or thumb sucking

● Troubles at school

● Rule breaking

● Separation anxiety

● Sleeping all the time

● Resistance

● Behaviours that differ between settings

Like being fine at home, but acting out during school

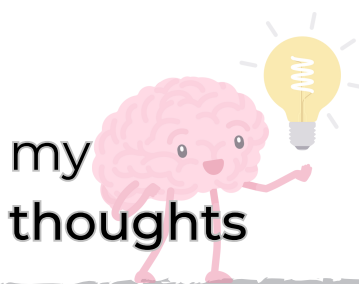


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Strategies to manage:

Here we list 4 domains in which you can help children manage their stress and anxious feelings



Some children find it helpful to examine and manage their thoughts. Helping children write down their thoughts and feelings is a good way to look for possible reasons and/or solutions for their stress. Keeping their mind occupied with things that make them happy, such as reading a book or drawing, can bring children back to a positive mindset.



Some children find that recognizing their emotions is the best way to manage stress and anxious feelings. Finding them a quiet place to calm down where they can express their emotions, reassures the child that their feelings are valid. Encourage children to breathe while they calm themselves. Sometimes we all just need to get it out before we can start to find solutions.



Some children may find that controlling who and what they surround themselves with helps with their stress and anxious feelings. Asking them if they want to talk to someone other than you, such as a friend, counsellor, or nurse may help resolve these feelings quicker. Surroundings can also include having some say in what and how much stuff is on the walls in a classroom.



Supporting children by doing activities they enjoy while they are at school. Listening to music, drawing, or playing an instrument is a way for children to decompress after completing a stressful task, like a math test. Incorporating outdoor time, exercise, and breathing activities as well as keeping a clean classroom and schedule can help children manage anxious feelings

