



MBES

Counselor's Corner

Welcome to Medlock Bridge's Counselor Newsletter!

Childhood Anxiety

Anxiety can be a normal reaction to a tense situation that causes feelings of worry, fear, uneasiness or apprehension. A small amount of anxiety can help one cope. When anxiety becomes excessive it can turn into a disabling disorder (National Institute of Mental Health).

Certain anxieties are developmentally appropriate. For example, infants tend to be fearful of strangers. Toddlers may fear separation from their parents/caregivers. School aged children may worry about injury, death, and natural disasters. Pre-teens and teenagers may worry about school performance and social status.

Mild worry can serve as a motivator and help us perform more effectively. A certain degree of worry can also serve as a protection for children by helping them make good decisions in certain situations to keep them safe.

It's when worries persist, despite reassurance from others, that could cause impairment in a child's daily routine and functioning. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry there is no single cause of anxiety disorders. They state that anxiety disorders generally result from an interaction between

biological and environmental factors that are unique to each individual. Genetics play an important role in determining who will develop an anxiety disorder, as well as a child's temperament, or personality style.

Parents are usually the first to recognize any changes in their child's emotions and/or behaviors. The first step is to talk with your child about his/her feelings and worries. A child experiencing anxiety might display physical ailments (headaches, stomachaches). It is important to remember it is not your sole responsibility to "fix" your child's anxiety. Knowing when to seek a professional's help for support can be a difficult decision.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry suggests parents seek support if your child exhibits the following... poor grades despite strong efforts, refusal to attend school, refusal to go to sleep, persistent disobedience, aggression, or unexplained temper tantrums.

Some tips for home are the following (*these are not to be used in place of professional help if that is what your child needs*)...

Journaling – Drawing or writing down thoughts and worries. This helps get the big worries out on paper. It will also help you initiate conversations with your child.

Possibilities – Have your child voice his/her worries. Respond with "Yes, that's one possibility, but what's another?" Help your child think of additional possibilities. Have fun with this and come up with silly possibilities as well.

Muscle relaxation – Start at your head and work down to your toes. Tighten each muscle group and then relax. Pretend you are a sponge soaking up water and then squeezing it out!

For a list of professional counselors in our area please click on the link below.

[Parent Resources](#)

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