

## *Notes: Untangling Anxiety For Parents and Caregivers*

*Anxiety is the system all people have to alert to them to danger, help them to avoid it and, when necessary, takes steps to escape from it.*

### **Giving Information Versus Accommodating Reassurance Seeking:**

There are things we know and things we don't know.

We know: \_\_\_\_\_

We don't know: \_\_\_\_\_

And we can handle not knowing everything. Make the unfamiliar familiar AND teach about tolerating the unknown

### **Emotional Granularity:**

I notice that \_\_\_\_ describe the behaviour \_\_\_\_\_ and I wonder if (Worry, Fear, Frustration) is showing up?

I know you're saying you're bored and I believe you and I also wonder if Worry is showing up too?

I know you're saying you don't like going to Karate and I believe you and I also wonder if some Fear is showing up too?

### **Emotional Literacy:**

Try to get granular about feelings. Is this excitement? Worry? Let's talk about it. You know your own body and mind. Big Idea: Big Feelings Come and Go

1. Use the language of parts

2. Say "of course you feel \_\_\_\_"

3. Say "Hello" to the feeling and hang around with it.

4. Feelings are internal and biological and using externalizing language helps process them.

Nervous means new. Nervous doesn't mean bad. We don't want to show our kids, verbally or non-verbally, that we are afraid of some of the harder emotions. You don't have to make your kid feel not nervous or not anything. Just acceptance.

"There's something about \_\_\_\_\_ that doesn't feel good to you. And I believe you."

### **Make it fun!**

- Roses and Thorns
- Two truths and a lie
- Magical storytelling
- Weird thing of the day
- Joy and Gratitude Practices
- Acts of Kindness

**Practical Talking Points: When Mild Worry Shows Up:**

"If you are a human, you have a brain, if you have a brain you worry. It's actually something that the brain does to protect you. That's a good thing. Your brain was built to handle worry."

"We all worry and even get anxious sometimes. Even moms and dads worry sometimes. Even Taylor Swift worries."

"No matter what feelings show up, even worry, your parents can handle it, you can handle it and you are a great kid (with great caregivers)."

**Practical Talking Points in Moments of Higher Anxiety:**

Supportive Statements = Empathy Plus Confidence

"I hear that you are nervous about \_\_\_\_\_. I believe you. I am 100% sure you can handle it."

"You don't want to go to \_\_\_\_\_ I get it. I believe you. I also know that you can do this. Let's talk about what you're going to say and do on the first day. Let's role play."

"The idea of \_\_\_\_\_ is really scary for you. I believe you. I also believe that you can handle it. Every person has to go through uncomfortable moments. Let's step in, feel uncomfortable and get through it. The more you do it, the easier it gets."

**Self-care: Strategies to Cope with Your Own Anxiety**

- Hot Cocoa Breathing
- Stop when you notice emotions arising
- Take a step back
- Observe what's happening
- Proceed to mindfully appraise the situation in a new way
- Acknowledge "I notice I am thinking about/ feeling \_\_\_\_"
- Validate "It makes sense that \_\_\_\_\_"
- Permit "I give myself permission to \_\_\_\_\_"

**Self-Compassion:**

- Self-compassion is related to happiness, well being, a decrease in stress, depression and an increase in connection with others.
- Take 3 steps towards self-compassion – notice feelings, remind yourself that raising children is a big job, and be kind to yourself.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_3ybiY\\_Do8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_3ybiY_Do8) – (Dr. Becky and Dr. Neff)

**Resources:**

- FamilySmart - <https://familysmart.ca/>
- Kelty Mental Health - <https://keltymentalhealth.ca/>
- Anxiety Canada - <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>
- Greater Good Magazine - <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

**Podcasts:**

- Flusterclux. (Dr. Lynn Lyons)
- Ask Lisa (Dr. Lisa Damour)
- Good inside With Dr. Becky (Dr. Becky Kennedy)

