

INFORM&EMPOWER

Managing Anxiety & Other Big Feelings For Tweens

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Psychologist & Mum

**TOOLKIT FOR
PARENTS & CARERS**





PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

- ☑ There are no perfect parents
- ☑ Good enough is good enough
- ☑ Get into a curious headspace
- ☑ Celebrate the good stuff

All Feelings Matter

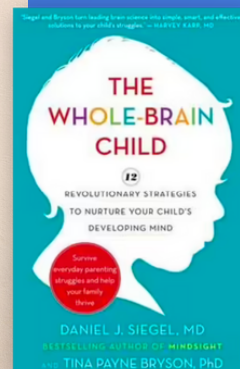
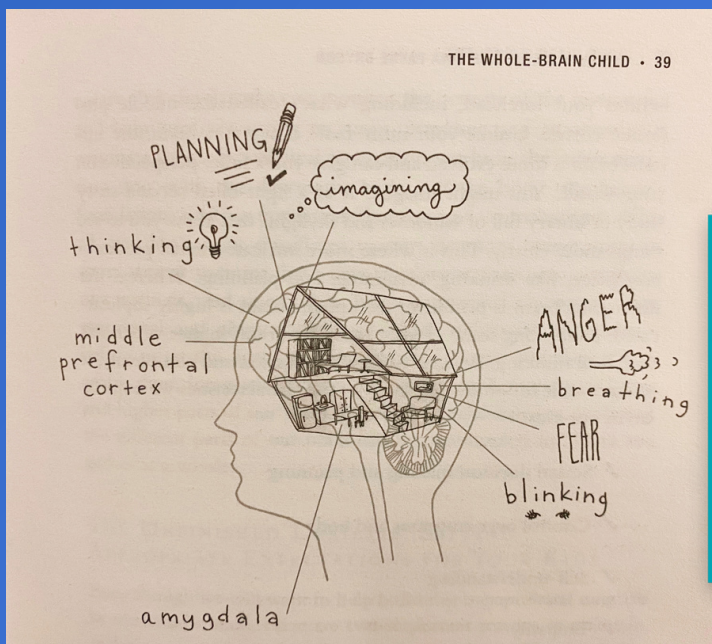




What is anxiety?

Anxiety is normal and healthy
but sometimes it's not

STRESS RESPONSE



What you might notice

More
"clingy"

School
refusal

Unhelpful
thinking
(What if...)

New
fears

Sleep
issues

Changes in
appetite

Anger and
irritability

Overly
sensitive

Physical
symptoms

Decrease
in academic
performance

Panic
attacks

Withdrawal
from
activities



Okay... so it's anxiety

EXPLAINING ANXIETY TO TWEENS

You know how you've...

- ...talked about lots of worries
- ...been getting much more angry than usual
- ...felt sick and not been wanting to go to school
- ...been finding it so hard to go to sleep
- ...been feeling scared about...



...There is a good reason for this.
Lot's of people experience it.
There's a name for it. Anxiety.



There's a part of your brain called the amygdala. It's a bit like a smoke detector...

The good news is that we know a lot about anxiety. There are ways to let your amygdala know that you are actually safe and then you will feel calmer. You can learn to tame this big feeling when it visits.



Why has my kid got anxiety?

- Genetics
- Trauma
- Stressful life events
- Personality factors
- Parents' mental health
- World events

When should I be concerned?

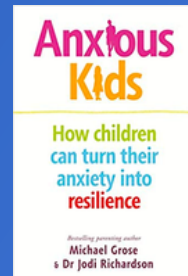
- if it goes on for a long time
- interferes with everyday life
- very intense or severe

Okay... so it's anxiety

NOW WHAT DO I DO?

How you are
BEING
matters most.

- S** Stop whatever you are doing
- O** Observe what is happening in your head/heart/body and in the situation around you
- B** Breathe in and breathe out
- E** Expand your perspective by looking at the options
- R** Respond in a mindful way



Respond in a mindful way...

Create a sense of safety

Remind yourself
"I don't need to fix this"

Empower them



- N** Name the feeling
- A** Acknowledge that "All feelings matter"
- T** Take a breath
- H** Hold your attention on...
- A** Assess your options
- N** Next step

No need to...

- ✗ fix
- ✗ problem solve
- ✗ give information
- ✗ shhh them
- ✗ threaten them
- ✗ remind them to be grateful

Just hold a space for them to express and tame their feeling.

Hold the space

Seems like the anxiety is a 10/10...would you like if we put on some music? Or did you want to walk to school?

It seems like anxiety is visiting again...hmmm let me know if you want help taming it...

Consider...

Over protective?

Role modelling



Hormones and puberty

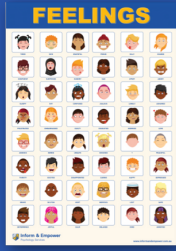
Screen Time & Green Time



Social media

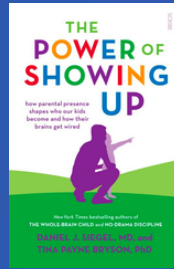
Extra curricular commitments

PRACTICAL TOOLS



Name "It"
Rate It
Write/Draw it

Share your P-E-A-C-E



Presence
Engagement
Affection
Calm
Empathy

Mantra

Catastrophe Scale

Get moving

Breathing

Laughing

Mindfulness

Tapping

Alphabet game

Monkey mind vs helpful thoughts

What if... Even If...

Comfort Object

Sleep

Sighing



Routines

Rituals

Rhythms



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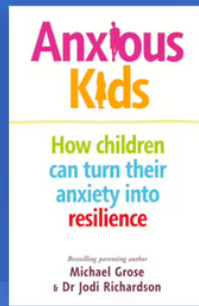
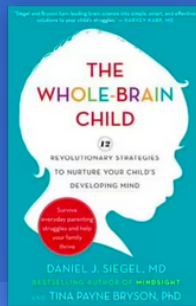
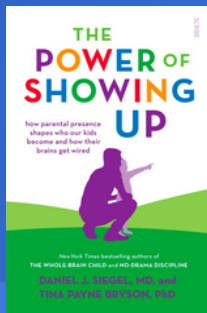
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