

“Don’t let your heart become weary from the anxieties of daily life.”-Jesus

One very common thing that crosses my path as a counselor is children with anxiety. We live in such a fast paced society and it is hard to temper our own anxiety. Sometimes what we feel rolls down to our kids.

When your child tells you he is anxious, hear him out. Rather than say, “don’t worry about it”, acknowledge his feelings. “I can tell you are worried about that. What can we do about it?” Sometimes just the art of listening can be the key.

It is also helpful to offer a distraction. Make a list together of things to do when he/she begins to worry about something and doesn’t seem to be able to stop the worry. Sometimes just listening to a favorite song, reading a favorite old book that has always comforted (one of my favorites is *Goodnight Moon*), or playing a game to just distract. Let your child be part of the planning on how to deal with unwanted worries.

Exercise is always a key intervention to any kind of unwanted mood. Get the heart pumping to release the endorphins. Voila: MOOD ELEVATOR!!

Making sure your child has a reliable routine that is not overscheduled can help as well. Making sure in this routine that he/she is eating properly, getting enough sleep and just having free play (not video play, but imaginary play) needs to be part of the routine.

Be wary of how much your child sees or hears detrimental/sad/upsetting news information. Children are not equipped to understand all the information that is available. Everything from natural disasters to crime to politics can be anxiety-producing for us, so imagine how much so this is true for your child. They don’t need all that information.

Last but not least, be the **example** of stress management to your child. If you are anxious or wound tightly, you are modeling such to your child. The more calm your child’s environment, the more likely the child can be anxiety-free.

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The teaching never stops!