

Activities to support children through anxiety

Adapted from school counselling files.com

Paint Relaxation Stones

Using acrylic paints, paint designs or pictures of something they find calming on to pebbles or stones. Talk about why the pictures make them feel calm.



Make Mind Jars

The idea is that when your child is anxious, s/he flips the bottle upside down & back like a snow globe. As the glitter settles, the child watches it and practices deep breathing. To make the bottles, you need plastic jars or water bottles, glitter glue or hair gel (to make the liquid denser), food colouring, and glitter. Some people use small beads or other little objects as well. Fill the bottle halfway with warm water so the glitter doesn't clump. Add glitter and food colouring. In a separate bottle, mixed 5-6 tables spoons of hair gel with some warm water and shake it up to "melt" it before adding it to the mind jar. Hot-glue the cap onto the bottle.



Create a Worry Monster:

Children make a creature or contraption that will gobble up their worries.



Imagine Yourself as a Superhero



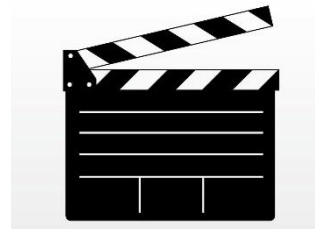
The superpowers that children wish they had can tell us a lot. Have them choose their favourite superpowers, then draw themselves and write a newspaper story about their debut.

Make a Video

With your iPad or tablet, there are lots of options here. They can record:

- a video with helpful tips for other anxious kids
- practice sessions of them facing a fear so they can watch themselves and get feedback
- Interviews with others discussing how they overcame being anxious or worried about something.

Of course, just be sure to have parent permission before filming.



Make a Collage

Have them make a collage with things or places they find calming. Travel magazines would be perfect for this.



Draw a Comic Strip

Who doesn't love a comic strip? And remembering something that made us laugh is good for reducing anxiety. Have children draw a comic strip about a funny moment in their lives. Again, there are a lot of ways to change this up. Templates available here:

<https://medialoot.com/blog/free-printable-comic-strip-templates/>



Happy Brain, Worry Brain

Use a torch to project each child's profile onto large paper, and trace it twice. Have your child collage things that make them happy in the "Happy Brain," and things they worry about in the "Worry Brain." This child's big worries are school and the fact that he doesn't really have any close friends. Children can of course write words or draw pictures for things they can't find a magazine cut-out for. Talk through what your child is putting where and why. Encourage them to char and use open questions to get them to expand on what they are saying/feeling? *Can you tell me about that? What does this mean?*



Make Stress Balls

Use a funnel to fill round balloons with corn flour, flour, or sand. Fold the neck of the balloon over, and put inside of another balloon that you've snipped the neck off of. Repeat with a third balloon for strength. Just double-check your child for allergies first.



Cosmic Kids Zen Den

A great site or yoga, meditation and breathing. *Youtube: Zen Den*. It includes videos about managing emotions, concentration and calming activities.



Comfort Boxes/ Jars of Happiness

Decorate a small box and fill it full or messages to read when your child is feeling low or anxious. These messages can be written by anyone in the family or the child. The messages must be positive and will uplift in times of sadness. Can also be done with a jar.



Make a List

When talking about a situation that produces anxiety (Like school closing due to COVID-19), divide a paper in two and label one side "What I Know" and the other "What I Don't Know." Help him/her fill in things in each column.

The list can be revisited in future weeks, and items moved from the "Don't Know" to the "Know" column, which helps give a sense of progress. This is from therapist Pam Dyson.

Colour My Life



Give children a blank piece of paper and a selection of coloured pencils or crayons. On one side of the paper, make a "key" where they pick one colour to represent the different feelings they've had in their lifetimes (you

can either give them a set list of a few basic feelings, or let them make their own list). The other side of the paper represents their life. Since we have feelings all the time, s/he is to fill up the entire paper, creating an abstract design using the colours s/he has chosen. S/He needs to use all the colours from the key in whatever proportion he has felt them in his life. If s/he chooses yellow for happy and feels like he's been mostly happy in his life, then the majority of the finished design should be yellow. To make this a little less abstract, you can give them the outline of a body and have them fill their body instead of the whole paper.