

## **Tips for helping your child cope with his/her anxieties**

### **Gather information about childhood anxiety.**

Educate yourself about childhood anxiety so that you can understand more about your child's anxiety and empathize with what your child is going through.

### **Respond to your child's anxiety with a listening ear.**

Listening to your child's thoughts and feelings first without any interruption allows your child to feel that you are concerned about him/her and what he/she is going through. This will encourage your child to reveal more about his/her fears.

### **Avoid giving excessive reassurances.**

Resist giving reassurances repeatedly as it may become a form of positive attention for the child, which may encourage the child to exhibit more anxious behaviors.

### **Calmly react to your child's anxiety.**

By responding to your child's anxiety in a calm manner, you reduce your child's perception of his/her fears as being threatening, model a productive, positive way of coping with anxiety, and allow your child to learn how to cope with anxiety calmly.

### **Educate your child on anxiety**

Let your child know that his/her anxiety and the physical symptoms of anxiety that he/she is experiencing is normal, harmless and temporary.

Let your child know that **he**/she is not alone in feeling anxious and that most children have anxiety problems at some point in their lives.

### **Furnish your child with relaxation strategies**

Teach your child how to stay calm and reduce his/her physical symptoms of anxiety through deep-breathing and muscle relaxation exercises.

For information on how to do deep-breathing and muscle relaxation exercise, please refer to [http://anxietybc.com/parent/pdfs/howto/calm\\_breathing.pdf](http://anxietybc.com/parent/pdfs/howto/calm_breathing.pdf) and <http://anxietybc.com/parent/pdfs/howto/MuscleRelaxation.pdf>

### **Use cognitive strategies such as coping statements and realistic thinking**

For younger children, you may like to develop coping statements together with your child to replace his/her anxious thoughts (Please refer to [http://anxietybc.com/parent/pdfs/howto/Healthy\\_Thinking\\_for\\_Younger\\_Children.pdf](http://anxietybc.com/parent/pdfs/howto/Healthy_Thinking_for_Younger_Children.pdf) for more information).

For older children, you can teach your child to challenge his/**her** anxious or negative thoughts and change them to more realistic ones (Please refer to <http://anxietybc.com/parent/pdfs/howto/RealisticThinking.pdf> for more information)

Let your child face his/her fear gradually

Encourage your child to use his/her relaxation exercises and/or cognitive strategies to overcome his/her fears or anxieties.

Start with a situation that the child feels little anxious about. After the child gains confidence that he/she can manage his/her anxiety in that situation, then proceed gradually to more anxiety-provoking situations.

Give your child lots of praise for trying to overcome his/her anxiety.

