

CHILDHOOD ANXIETY

Presented by: Kate Vena, MS

Katie Vena, MS, Therapist and Clinical Liaison Representative



Katie Vena holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, and a Master's Degree in Education with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health. She has been with Midwest Center since 2010, and has worked as an Intake Specialist, Therapist, and Program Manager, providing Dialectical Behavioral Therapy to children and adolescents in a residential setting. In addition to her hands-on experience, Katie has extensive training in DBT, Trauma-Focused treatment, and treatment of eating disorders. She is also an experienced trainer, having presented to a variety of clinical audiences on topics including DBT, childhood anxiety, and understanding non-suicidal self-injury. Of her work, Katie says, "Midwest Center provides an ideal therapeutic environment where I can use DBT skills to lead my clients to deeper self-understanding and healing."

Overview

- ▣ What is Anxiety?
- ▣ Anxiety Disorders
- ▣ Causes of Anxiety
- ▣ Types of Anxiety
- ▣ Signs
- ▣ Symptoms
- ▣ Treatment and Interventions
- ▣ Questions and Answers



Childhood Anxiety

According to *Counseling Treatment for Children and Adolescents with DSM-IV-TR Disorders* (2008), anxiety disorders are the most common mental health condition reported in the child and adolescent population.

What is Anxiety?

- ▣ Anxiety: a feeling of worry, nervousness, or discomfort, typically about a forthcoming event with an uncertain outcome.
- ▣ Anxiety Disorder: a nervous disorder distinguished by a state of excessive nervousness and worry, typically with compulsive behavior or panic attacks.

(Chapman, A., Gratz, K., & Tull, M., 2011)

Cause of Anxiety

- ▣ The true cause for anxiety disorders is unknown.
- ▣ Development of anxiety disorders is due to genetics, environmental stressors, traumatic events, experience and learning, and uncertainty in life.

Development of Anxiety

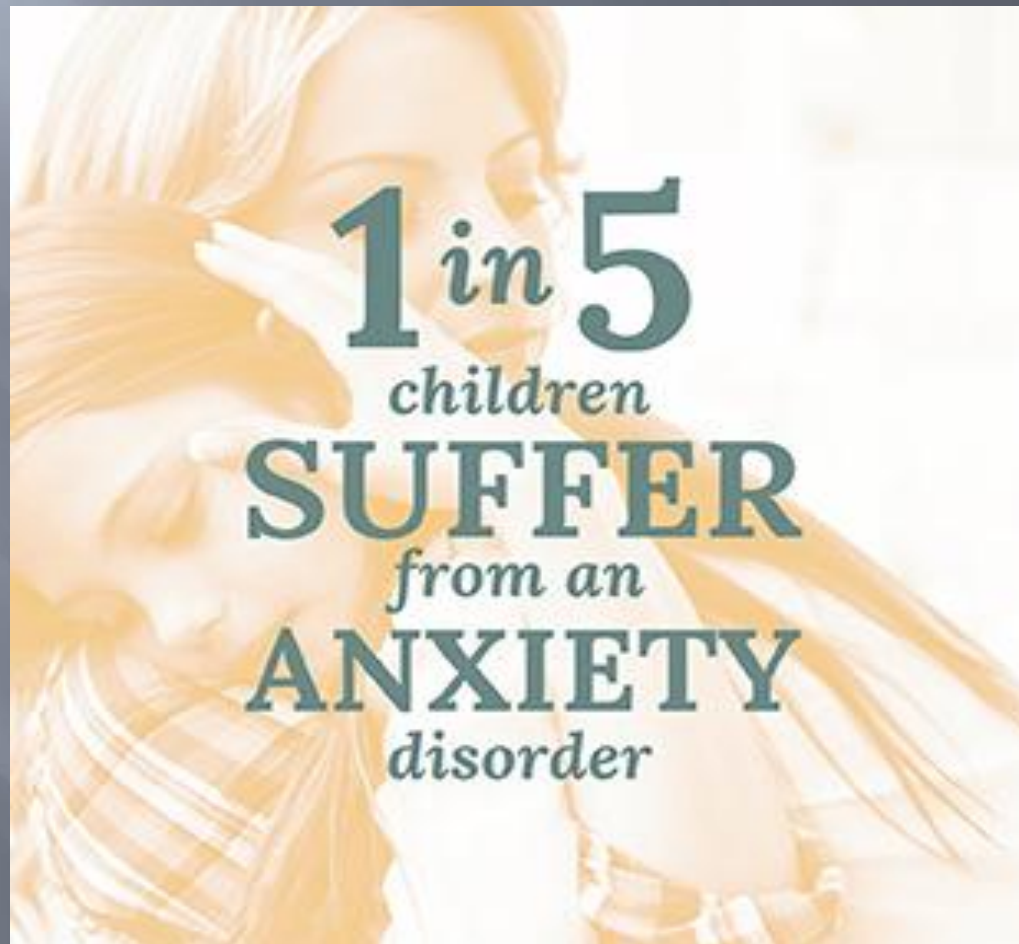
- ▣ Usually begin in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.
- ▣ According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 8% of adolescents have anxiety disorders, most of which begin in childhood at the age of 6.

▣ (National Alliance on Mental Health, 2015)

Development of Anxiety cont.

- ▣ Identifying the amount of fear and anxiety is as important as assessing anxiety.
- ▣ “Anxiety disorders often last at least 6 months, but anxiety disorders in very young children may not last as long.” (NAMI, 2015)

Development of Anxiety cont.



Development of Anxiety cont.

- ▣ Good news! Anxiety and anxiety disorders are preventable, manageable, and treatable!
- ▣ Try to understand anxiety before treating it.
Are you experiencing fear or anxiety?

Types of Anxiety

- ▣ **Situational:** characterized by nervousness and uneasiness caused by acute stress, events, or emotions.
- ▣ Examples: Flying, divorce, death of a loved one, taking an exam, etc.

Types of Anxiety cont.

- ▣ **Chronic:** anxiety that comes and goes over longer periods of time. More deep-rooted with emotions of fear.
- ▣ Four types of anxiety within this category.

Four Types of Chronic Anxiety

- ▣ **Spontaneous:** Occurs anywhere at anytime.
- ▣ **Situational/Phobic anxiety:** Extreme anxiety/panic that occurs with a specific circumstance.
- ▣ **Anticipatory:** Occurs because something negative may happen or might occur.
- ▣ **Involuntary:** “Out of the blue” anxiety that hasn’t been followed by a spontaneous or anticipatory anxiety.

Degrees of Anxiety

- ▣ **Early onset:** symptoms are just beginning. (Self-help material suggested)
- ▣ **Mild:** Anxiety that is intermittent and minimally affects an individual's life. (Self-help material suggested)



Degrees of Anxiety cont.

- ▣ **Moderate:** Anxiety symptoms are persistent and moderately affect an individual's lifestyle. (Medication may be introduced combined with self-help, and therapy)
- ▣ **Severe:** Anxiety symptoms that significantly affect and impair an individual's lifestyle. Symptoms vary and are intense at this level. (Medication, therapy and coaching suggested or already implemented)

Childhood Anxiety Disorders

- ▣ Specific Phobia
- ▣ Social Anxiety Disorder
- ▣ Separation Anxiety Disorder
- ▣ Panic Disorder
- ▣ Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- ▣ Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- ▣ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

(Chapman, A., Gratz, K., & Tull, M., 2011)

What Does Anxiety Look Like?



Signs and Symptoms

- ▣ Sweating
- ▣ Shortness of breathe or feeling like one cannot breathe
- ▣ Narrowing of vision
- ▣ Fainting feeling/ dizziness
- ▣ Muscle tension

Signs and Symptoms

- ▣ Hearing may become sensitive
- ▣ Increased heart rate (confusion with “heart attack”)
- ▣ Dry mouth
- ▣ Goosebumps/ tingling on arms and legs
- ▣ Racing thoughts (obsessive or compulsive)

Signs and Symptoms

- ▣ Difficulties concentrating
- ▣ Irritability
- ▣ Sleep disturbances
- ▣ Excessive worry
- ▣ Intense fear
- ▣ Avoidance of situations

Case Study Discussion

- ▣ Charlotte
- ▣ 10 year old
- ▣ Female
- ▣ Witnessed dog get hit by a car
- ▣ Experiencing PTSD symptoms now



Treatments and Interventions

- ▣ Children manifest anxiety differently than adults; therefore majority of interventions and treatments were adapted from adult therapy.

Let's Learn Some Easy Strategies to Aid in Childhood Anxiety!



Paradoxical Intention

- ▣ Founded by Viktor Frankl.
- ▣ Deliberate practice of thought in order to identify the panic/anxiety and remove it.
- ▣ Example: Brianne speaks about how she experiences severe anxiety. Therapist addresses this anxiety and requests for Brianne to trigger her anxiety. Therapist gives permission for Brianne to have anxiety.

Acceptance and Change

- ▣ Accept thoughts, feelings, and body sensations
- ▣ Observe, describe, and notice what you are experiencing
- ▣ Change emotions, thinking patterns, and situations

(Chapman, A., Gratz, K., Tull, M., 2011)

Acceptance and Change

- ▣ Example: “Matthew is an 8 year old boy who experiences intense anxiety about going to school. “
- ▣ Accept the thoughts and feelings of anxiety and fear of attending school (being bullied, classroom assignments, etc.), then change the focus onto something more positive rather than focusing on the bodily sensations. Do not focus on trying to escape them.

Opposite Action

- ▣ Using opposite action to face situations and circumstances you fear and avoid. Aids in gaining relief from the fear.
- ▣ Example: “Sarah struggles with eating lunch in front of others. It causes her fear that she will have no one to sit with. By utilizing opposite action, Sarah can find a classmate and sit with them during lunch.”

Four Square Breathing

- ▣ Breathe in for four seconds
- ▣ Hold the breathe for four seconds
- ▣ Breathe out for four seconds
- ▣ Repeat 4 times

Breathing Technique

- ▣ Blowing bubbles slows the heart rate and aids with breathing.



Self-Soothing

- ▣ Make a self-soothe or relaxation kit and place it in a “safe space” at home or book bag in school.
 - Sight: picture of pet, family, vacation, etc.
 - Sound: Blowing bubble gum, music, etc.
 - Smell: familiar aroma, fruit, etc.
 - Touch: silly putty, squishy ball, play-doh, etc.
 - Taste: sour candies, carrots, etc.



**What lingers from the
parent's individual past,
unresolved or incomplete,
often becomes part of her or
his irrational parenting.**

- Virginia Satir

Obtain Support!

- ▣ National Alliance on Mental Health offers additional support and information to families.
- ▣ 1-800-950-NAMI or info@nami.org

Midwest Center & South Shore

- ▣ If you or someone you know is looking for a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Residential treatment center, please contact us at:

- ▣ 888-629-3471

- ▣ Midwestcenterintake@uhsinc.com

- ▣ www.midwest-center.com

Questions & Answers

