



Identifying & Addressing Anxiety for Youth

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So glad to be here!



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Dr. Altman is a clinical psychologist who specializes in the treatment of anxiety and behavioral medicine using approaches like cognitive behavioral therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy. She is highly invested in increasing access to evidence-based behavioral health interventions for youth and their families.

Dr. Read has no actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to this program/presentation.



Identifying

anxiety

for youth

Normalizing anxiety and other big emotions



**Is your child
experiencing anxiety?**

Of course they are!

Normal anxiety: Your body's natural, internal alarm system. A normal, adaptive feeling, not something to get rid of

- ★ Think of a fire or smoke alarm - we have to have them!

Problematic anxiety: the alarm goes off when there is no smoke and no fire

- ★ **The goal:** We want to recalibrate the alarm, not remove the batteries


Flavors of anxiety

Anxiety is like ice cream: there are lots of different flavors

We eat them all the same way (the intervention is the same!)

Common Themes:

- Separating from primary caregivers or other safety figures
- Social situations
- Worry about grades or doing well enough
- Worry about health and safety, germs or contamination
- The unknown!
- Failure



What does anxiety look like?

Avoidance

- Not doing something!
- Overdoing something to avoid failure/uncertainty
- Angry outbursts in effort to avoid certain situations

Body reactions or complaints

- Frequent trips to the nurse, asks to go home, or complaints about illness that are unfounded

Sleep and eating difficulties

- Eating less at school or avoiding the cafeteria

Excessive reassurance seeking

- Checking in about rules or due dates that they typically remember and follow

Inattention, poor school performance

What can

we do

about it?

Talk it out!



Validate emotions: All feelings are okay

“You’re worried, I hear you”
“It seems like you’re feeling
angry/scared/sad”

Tie emotions to physical
experiences so they don’t
confuse this with being sick



Calm, open conversations

Model coping with emotions, not
mastery over them

Avoid abject reassurance

Instead, encourage with honesty



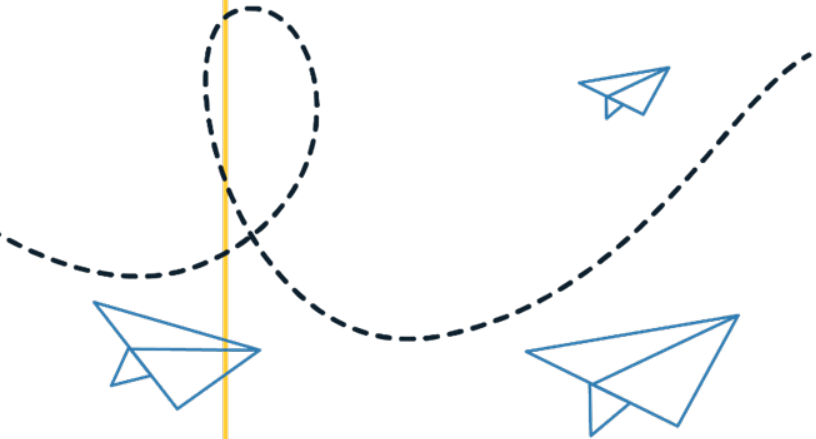
Thoughts to hold onto

Name anxiety when you hear
or see it

Help them be critical
consumers of their thoughts

What are helpful and true
thoughts to hold on to?

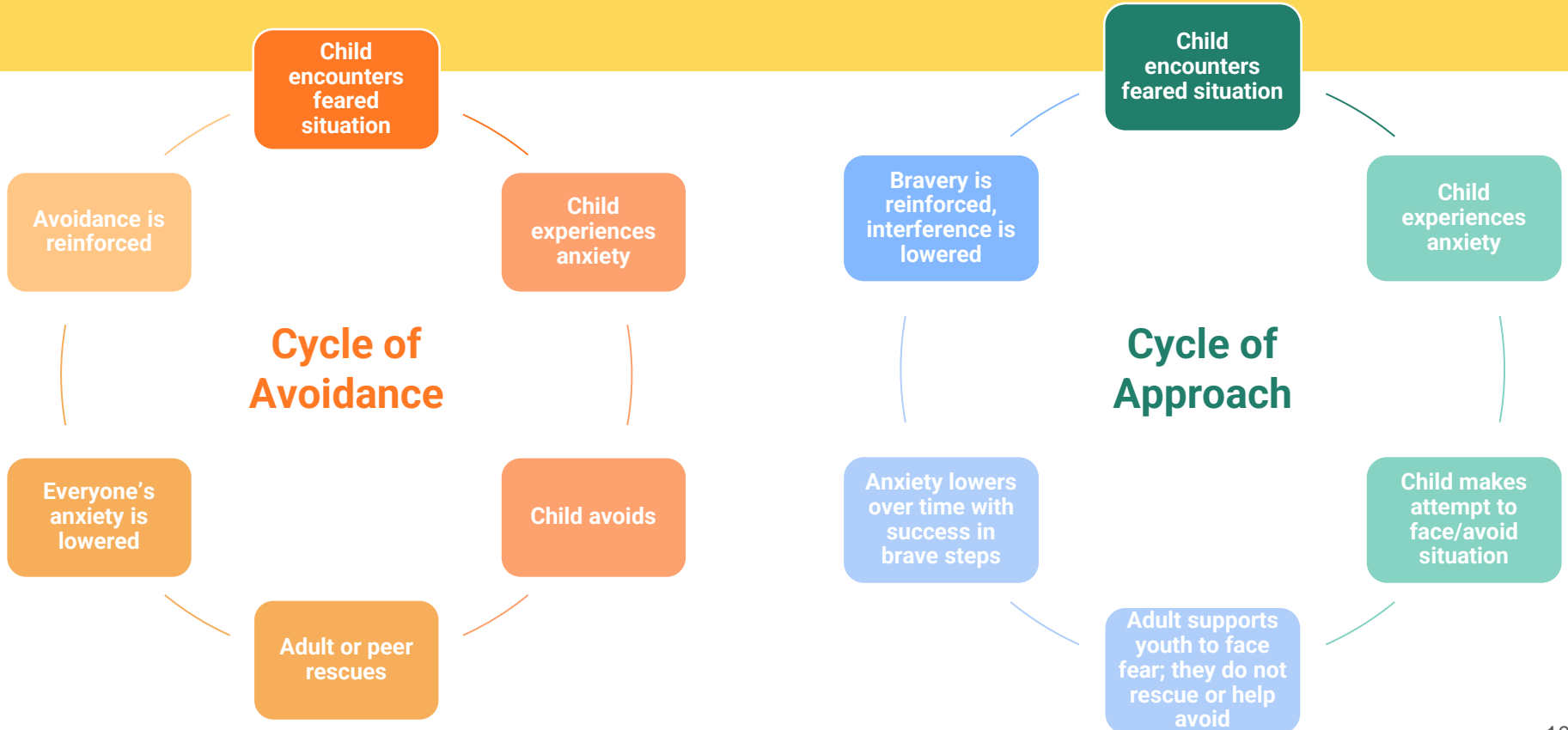
Most importantly: Help youth face their fears (called exposures)



Get creative!

- Getting answers wrong
- Asking a question in class
- Looking silly in public
- Watching videos of vaccines
- Sleeping independently
- Not checking the weather

Addressing anxiety: moving from avoidance to approach



Supporting Youth with Anxiety



Lebowitz, 2021

***“I know this is hard,
and I know you can
do it!”***



**Remember,
Caregivers:**

- **You set the tone**
 - How you talk about things in front of your child
 - What you model with your behavior
- **You are your child's mirror**
 - How dangerous the world is
 - Their ability to cope with hard things
- **When youth choose bravery over fear**
 - Praise
 - Reward
 - *The behavior you pay attention to is the one more likely to happen again*
- **This can be hard- take care of yourself!**

Get personalized support

1. Scan this QR code or visit helloworld.brightline.com

QR CODE
WILL BE
PROVIDED

The screen shows the 'Let's get started' registration form. It includes fields for 'Email*' and 'Create a password*' with a 'hide' icon. There is a 'See requirements' link and a checkbox for 'I agree to Brightline's Terms of Service'. A green 'Next' button is at the bottom. A footer note states: 'Brightline is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. Learn more about how your information is monitored and used.'

The screen asks 'Who provides your child's benefits?'. It includes a dropdown menu for 'Who is your child's insurance provider?' and a text field for 'Which employer* provides your child's benefits?'. A note says '*This also be a school, union, or other benefits provider.' A green 'Next' button and a 'Check coverage later' link are at the bottom.

The screen asks 'Tell us about your family' and notes that private information will not be shared outside Brightline. It features a 'Child 1' section with fields for 'Child's first name*', 'Child's last name*', and 'Child's date of birth*'. A '+ Add another child' button is below. A green 'Next' button is at the bottom.

The screen asks 'What's on your mind?' and prompts the user to select areas where their family could use support. It features several selectable options: 'Worries & anxiety', 'School', 'Sadness & depression', 'Sleep', 'Attention & ADHD', 'Autism', 'Self-esteem', 'Gender Identity', 'Sexual Identity', 'Sex & dating', and 'Racial & ethnic Identity'. A green 'Next' button is at the bottom.

2. Click 'Get started' or 'Sign up' to get to your account creation page

3. Enter your personal email and a password to create your account.

4. Enter your child's insurance and your employer information to confirm your Brightline coverage.

5. Tell us about your family by sharing your kids' names and ages

6. Share what's on your mind — we'll help you get the right support. Choose as many as apply to your family.



Questions