

# **Anxiety and Stress**

## *Tips for Pediatrics Patients and their Families*

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### **In General...**

- Anxiety is the most common psychiatric diagnosis;
- Treatment works best when using multiple strategies;
- Make time to do nothing every day;
- Important to get adequate sleep and exercise;
- Yoga, Mindfulness, Meditation very helpful. Breathing exercises appropriate any time/place;
- Social media can easily increase anxiety and should have limitations;
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is the most helpful therapy and always first line treatment;
- Medications can be helpful; dramatically more helpful when using therapy and other treatments as well.

### **Sleep Hygiene Suggestions**

- Stop screens at least 1 hour before bed;
- Complete homework at least 1 hour before bed;
- Get good exercise during the day;
- Have good “wind down” routine. (music, play instrument, shower, read enjoyable book (paper), dim the lights/light candle, lower speaking voices, stretch/yoga, tea, scented oils, journal, prepare lunch/backpack for next day, fold laundry, etc);
- Avoid other activities in bed besides sleep. (Reading, homework, music, talking on phone)
- Avoid vigorous exercise at least 1 hour before bed;
- Avoid highly charged conversations/books/movies before bed;
- Avoid heavy food, alcohol before bed;
- Go to bed when sleepy;
- Go to bed and get up at nearly the same time every day, including weekends/holidays;
- If you can't fall asleep in 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something that makes you feel sleepy. Then try again.

### **Apps for Helping with Anxiety/Stress. Tons are available. Try a few.**

- Mind Shift;
- Head Space;
- Positive Penguins (younger kids);
- Breath2Relax.

### **Books for Helping with Anxiety/Stress**

- *The Coping Cat Workbook* by Phillip Kendall/Kristina Hedtke (ages 7-13 anxiety)
- *Helping Your Anxious Child* by Rapee et al (ages 6-preteen)
- *The C.A.T. Project* by Kendall, et al (ages 14-17 anxiety)
- *The CBT Toolbox* by Jeff Rigenbach (teens/adults with anxiety, anger, depression)
- *Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life for Teens* by Sheri Van Dijk (teens depression, mood swings, interpersonal difficulties)
- *A Still Quiet Place for Teens* by Amy Saltzman (teens mindfulness workbook)
- *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life for Teens* by Ciarrochi et al (general coping skills for anxiety and depression)