

The Assessment of Anxiety in Children and the Types of Anxiety Disorders

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About the study

Anxiety disorders are defined and classified in diagnostic systems like the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM, currently version IV-TR, American Psychiatric Association) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICDS) (ICD, currently version 10, World Health Organization). Many anxiety disorders have clinical aspects across multiple systems, such as high levels of anxiety, physiological anxiety symptoms, and behavioural problems such as severe avoidance of fearful situations, and related discomfort or impairment. However, there are distinctions, and it's worth noting that narrowly classified anxiety disorders like panic disorder, agoraphobia, and subtypes of certain phobias have a lot of phenotypic variety or heterogeneity.

From time to time, all children have worries and fears. However, anxiety in children can sometimes cross the line from normal everyday concerns to a disorder that prevents them from doing the things they need to do. It may even prevent them from properly understanding life.

How do we determine whether the child's worries and fears are more than just passing thoughts? Here are a few questions to ponder:

- Do they express fear or anxiety on a regular basis, for weeks at a time?
- Is it difficult for them to sleep at night? Do they seem abnormally drowsy or exhausted during the day?
- Is it difficult for them to concentrate?
- Do they seem angry or easily irritated?

Anxiety disorders can manifest itself in a variety of ways in children. Some of the most common are:

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

GAD children are overly concerned about a variety of things, including school, their own safety and health, the health of family members and friends, money, and the security of their families. The list could go on indefinitely. A child suffering from GAD may

constantly imagine the worst-case circumstance. These anxieties may induce physical symptoms in children with GAD, such as headaches and stomach-aches. Because they are so burdened by their fears, your child may isolate themselves, avoiding school and friends.

Panic disorder

A panic attack is a sudden, acute experience of worry that occurs for no particular reason. The child's heart may race, and he or she may be out of breath. The child may have tremors, dizziness, or numbness. (If the child is hyperventilating, encourage them to breathe gently and deeply.) Breathing through a brown paper bag can be beneficial.) Panic disorder is diagnosed when the child has experienced two or more of these episodes and is preoccupied with fears of them happening again.

Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD)

Separation anxiety affects all children to some extent. It's a normal developmental stage for babies and toddlers. Even older children, especially in new situations, may become clingy with their parents or caretakers. Separation anxiety disorder may affect older children who become especially upset when leaving a parent or another close relative, who have difficulty calming down after saying goodbye, or who become highly homesick and disturbed when away from home at school, camp.

Social phobia

In typical, everyday social circumstances, a child with social phobia experiences extreme anxiety and self-consciousness. This isn't just a case of timidity. When talking with classmates, answering a question in class, or doing other common activities that require interacting with people, the socially anxious child is afraid of embarrassing themselves. This fear may prevent your child from attending school and participating in extracurricular activities. In severe instances, young children may even be unable to speak.

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Received: 09 December, 2021; Accepted: 23 December, 2021; Published: 30 December, 2021

These are the type of anxiety disorders and their assessments on the children, to be considered by the parents, and treat their children accordingly.

How to cite this article: Beesdo,Susanne. "The Assessment of Anxiety in Children and the Types of Anxiety Disorders ." *J Child Adolesc Behav* 9 (2021) : e020.