

ANXIETY

THIS KIT WILL WALK YOU THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

- defining anxiety
- knowing the signs in kids/teens and adults
- how to talk to kids about anxiety
- how to talk to friends or loved ones about anxiety
- how to be resilient
- how to manage anxiety now/long-term



ANXIETY



CHARACTER GUIDE

KIMBLE THE WHIPPET

KNOWING THE SIGNS

IN KIDS/TEENS:

Kids and teens may show signs such as worrying about an event in the future, avoiding typical activities, difficulty sleeping, asking “what if” questions about potential danger, constant need of reassurance from parents, excessive crying/anger/sadness, headaches or stomach pain, extreme negative response to an object or event, and irritability. Even a change in routine can cause anxiety.

IN ADULTS:

Signs in adults may include not being able to sit still, looking tired, frightened, nervous, tense, can't concentrate, avoiding social situations, and irritability.

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is when the worries just won't stop. It can bring up intense, excessive, and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations.



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A NOTE ABOUT SENSITIVITY

The information provided in these infographics are meant to help those who need guidance or more information. However, please note that these topics can be sensitive to some and should be approached gently.

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT IT

Accept the child's concerns and gently correct any misinformation. Don't avoid all the things that are causing them anxiety, otherwise this will teach them avoidance as a strategy. Don't make unrealistic promises, instead, express confidence in them and offer to help should they need it. Even if your child's emotions may seem out of control, don't make them feel bad for feeling those emotions. Acknowledging their feelings and offering to help can decrease outbursts. Instead of asking pointed questions that may spark their anxiety ("Are you nervous about that big test today?") try phrasing them in a neutral way ("How are you feeling about the test today?"). When adults show healthy ways of managing anxiety, kids see and learn to do the same. Letting kids know you go through something similar can help them feel connected and remind them they can get through it too.



HOW TO TALK TO A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE ABOUT IT

Let them know you're concerned and what you've been noticing. You can start with "I'm worried about you because you seem..." And follow up by asking "Do you want to talk about it or vent?" Keep their needs in mind and ask them first if they want help. Next, listen if they're willing to share their worries or fears. Try not to offer advice if they don't want it. Help them out with things that might relieve their anxiety; you can ask them what that may be by saying "What can I do to help?" Don't feel like you have to have all the answers; being there for them to let them talk or vent is already incredibly helpful.



EMPOWERNAUTS

ANXIETY

HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY NOW

Find a place to be by yourself. If you feel better by venting to a friend, ask them if you can talk with them for a moment. Take deep breaths. Go for a walk. Try a mini-meditation. Hydrate. Distract yourself; distractions work because your brain can't be in two places at once, and shifting your attention to any activity will interrupt a string of racing thoughts.

A NOTE ABOUT RESILIENCE

Kids are usually more resilient than we think, but only when treated with respect and care. See our **Resilience Guide** for more information.



HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY LONG-TERM

Practice relaxation techniques that work for you. This can decrease feelings of tension and increase feelings of well-being. Exercise with something as simple as a short 15-minute walk. Develop healthy sleep habits and work on reducing insomnia. Work healthier foods into your day. Take time to do things you personally enjoy. Medication can be part of the treatment process and doctors can recommend it only when needed. Taking medication isn't always long-term, but be sure to discuss options with your doctor to find what will work the best for you.

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RESOURCES

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1f8TD2089crh7Z5YskjMqADzeEl3miFZs/view> (CA Surgeon 2020)

<https://bornthisway.foundation/research/kindness-is-action/> (BTW "Kindness is Action")

<https://bornthisway.foundation/research/hard-conversations-dont-happen-when-young-people-fear-being-judged/> (BTW "Mental Health Online Diaries")

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/someone-close-to-me-has-lost-someone-to-suicide/> (JED Loss)

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/i-am-concerned-someone-i-care-about-may-be-overwhelmed-with-anxiety/> (JED Anxiety)

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/a-friend-of-mine-seems-really-down-and-may-be-depressed/#card=7> (JED Depression)

<https://www.jedfoundation.org/sleep/> (JED sleep)

<https://youngminds.org.uk/starting-a-conversation-with-your-child/starting-the-conversation/> (Conversation starters from Young Minds)

<https://www.onoursleeves.org/mental-wellness-tools-guides/help-kids-manage-anxiety/anxiety-activities-to-help-kids> (OOS Anxiety)

<https://www.onoursleeves.org/mental-wellness-tools-guides/dealing-with-loss> (OOS Loss)

<https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/children-trauma-update> (APA trauma)

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/nine_tips_for_talking_to_kids_about_trauma (Greater Good)

<https://www.headspace.com/articles/how-to-reduce-anxiety> (Headspace Anxiety)

<https://www.hcf.com.au/health-agenda/body-mind/mental-health/downsides-to-always-being-positive> (HCF)

<https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief> (Harvard Business Review)

https://www.ptsd.va.gov/family/how_help_grief.asp (VA)

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/signs-of-grief-in-children-and-how-to-help-them-cope-4174245> (Very Well Grief)

<https://www.verywellmind.com/physical-symptoms-of-grief-4065135> (Very Well Grief in adults)

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-emotions> (Kids Help Line)

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm> (Help Guide)

LOOK TO OUR EMPOWERNAUT GUIDES TO HELP YOU THROUGH YOUR MENTAL HEALTH JOURNEY



GRIEF/LOSS



TRAUMA/PTSD



DEPRESSION



ANXIETY

EMPOWERNAUTS