

# 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**



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## CHARACTER GUIDE

### KIMBLE THE WHIPPET

#### 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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## KNOWING THE SIGNS IN KIDS/TEENS:

- 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
- Irritability

## KNOWING THE SIGNS IN ADULTS:

- Not being able to sit still
- Looking tired
- Looking frightened
- Looking nervous
- Looking tense
- Can't concentrate
- Avoiding social situations
- Irritability.



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## 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 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.

## A NOTE ABOUT SENSITIVITY

The information provided is meant to help those who need guidance and resources. However, please note that these topics can be sensitive to some and should be approached gently.



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## HOW TO TALK TO A FRIEND/LOVED ONE ABOUT IT

- **Let them know you're concerned and what you've been noticing.**
- 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.**

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## 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.



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## 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.

## 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.

