



Rifka Schönfeld **STRATEGIES**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

Yikes! How Anxious is Too Anxious!?!?

Dear Readers,
This week's newsletter will discuss the topic of anxiety and how it can affect a variety of ages.

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QUESTION:

All children are scared of separating from their parents and often afraid of the dark, but how do I know if my child is too anxious about things? How nervous is too nervous?



As your child grows and learns more about the world, it is natural for him to be hesitant or fearful of new circumstances. In some ways, it is good for your child is afraid – it will make him more cautious and careful. He will take fewer risks that could be potentially dangerous. However, too much anxiety can be debilitating and detrimental.

Because different fears are appropriate at different ages, a great way to assess the level of your child's anxiety is to be aware of the various ages and stages:

Preschool

Separation anxiety, or a child's difficulties with being apart from his parents, is not only typical, but developmentally normal for children in preschool. However, this is generally a transient experience and most children can be easily distracted from their anxiety.

Fear of the dark is natural once your child hits the age of two or three. Using night-lights or glow in the dark stars to brighten the room should help your child overcome this fear. If your child refuses to go to sleep or wakes in terror because of the dark, this might be a sign of a larger issue.

Kindergarten – Fifth Grade

Generalized anxiety can sometimes manifest itself in children during the intermediate ages of 9 and 12. A child who worries excessively and obsessively about school performance, the state of the world, his health, and the health of his family members could be exhibiting signs of generalized anxiety disorder. Pay attention to whether his anxiety is controlling him or whether he is controlling his anxiety.

Sixth Grade – High School

Social Phobia is an anxiety disorder that often emerges when children enter their teenage years. Often, children with social phobias will withdraw from social situations and refuse to participate in extracurricular activities. Sometimes, they will refuse to go to school and will only choose to speak to their parents or siblings. They may get very real headaches, stomachaches, or diarrhea on school days -- but the pain comes from their brains, not their bowels.

The Link Between Anxiety and Depression

There is a connection between childhood anxiety and teenage depression. Many doctors say that prior to puberty, the equivalent of depression in children is anxiety. The same biochemical issues that children who experience childhood depression deal with are mostly like to lead to depression once children enter puberty.

As a matter of fact, kids who have anxiety as children are more likely to have teen depression. About half of depressed teenagers had a childhood anxiety disorder and of those teens who suffer from anxiety disorders and depression, 85% of them had their anxiety disorder first.

The Bottom Line

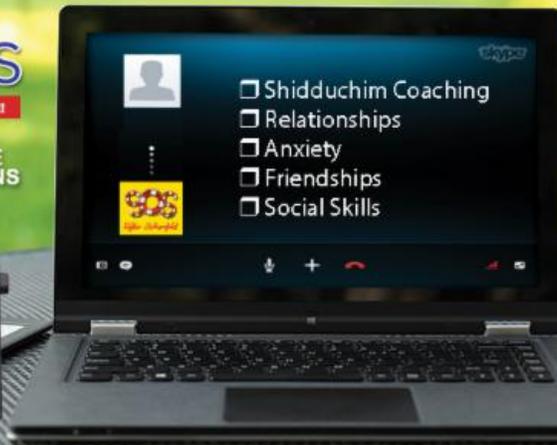
Are fears normal? Yes, and to a certain extent, they are beneficial. But, it is important to pay attention to your child if you feel that he has more anxiety than his peers. True anxiety disorders do not simply go away on their own – but can deepen and intensify with age. Recognizing them early and taking action can improve not only your child's quality of life, but yours as well!

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