The Development of Three Anxiety Manuals That Will Benefit Parents, Children and Facilitators Participating in Anxiety Groups

by

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The procedures in these training manuals are meant to be used by parents, children, and agency staff as part of participation in parent and children anxiety groups provided by the agency.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the amazing team of individuals at Child and Youth Counselling Services. You have all helped shape my thesis and have been truly supportive throughout this journey. To each and every one of you, I extend my deepest appreciation.
The ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Your Anxious Child’, the ‘Kid Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Anxiety’, and the ‘Facilitators Guide’ were developed by the researcher to be used by parents, children and facilitators involved in anxiety treatment groups at a mental health agency. Included in these manuals is an assortment of empirically supported best practices for decreasing anxiety in children. The manuals promote user-friendliness to the strategies, tools, and activities used to decrease a child’s anxious symptoms. Furthermore, a study was conducted to evaluate parental satisfaction on the ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Your Anxious Child’ using a satisfaction survey. The manual was provided to five parents who were involved in an anxiety group in the first session, and the satisfaction survey was completed following group completion. The manual was evaluated on topics such as aesthetics, relevant information and techniques corresponding with the parenting group, and manual characteristics in the form of recommendations for improvements. Results revealed high user satisfaction with the manual and the understanding that the manual is a helpful tool for parents to use. Further research is essential in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the manual over a longer period of time.
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Chapter I – Introduction

In the past decade, there has been mounting awareness of the difficulty that childhood anxiety presents. Epidemiological studies show that between 6% and 15% of the child population experience an anxiety disorder at any one time (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). In relation to the quantity of child referrals submitted to mental health agencies, anxiety disorders are the most widespread mental health problems experienced by children and youth (Costello & Angold, 2005, as cited in Velting, Setzer, & Albano, 2004). In a current review by Cartwright-Hatton, McNicol, and Doubleday (2006), anxiety was discovered to be a common psychological disorder that is diagnosed during childhood, surpassing depression and behaviour disorders. Furthermore, at one time anxiety was believed to be an “ordinary” part of growing up; nevertheless, professionals now recognize anxiety as being a challenging condition with long-term effects (Velting et al., 2004).

Anxious children are at an increased risk of developing social and academic problems (Wood, 2006), becoming anxious adults (Gallagher & Cartwright-Hatton, 2009), and developing additional psychological disorders, such as depression (Kendall, Safford, Flannery-Schroeder, & Webb, 2004). If untreated, anxiety can significantly affect a child’s life (Velting et al., 2004). For example, children may have trouble attending and performing in school, have difficulty creating and sustaining friendships, and have elevated levels of familial conflict. Factors such as these may lead to the development and continuation of anxiety disorders in children (Sauter, Heyne, & Westenberg, 2009), which highlights the significant importance of early intervention (Barmish & Kendall, 2005).

There is a growing body of literature suggesting that parents play an important role in the development and continuation of childhood anxiety disorders. In support, a 2001 study by Eley (as cited in Wood, McLeod, Sigman, Hwang, & Chu, 2003) suggested that the parenting environment might account for a child’s anxious symptoms. As well, some studies have also found a linkage between parenting behaviour and childhood anxiety (Wood et al., 2003). Given the significance of parental involvement in the course of their child’s development of anxiety, research suggests that parental and family dynamics are linked to the likelihood of efficacious treatment. Therefore, involving parents during the course of their child’s anxiety management has been found helpful by having parents participate in treatment (Cobham, Dadds, Spence, & McDermott, 2010). Often, this consists of parents taking part in a treatment group with other parents. This is maintained by studies that indicate that parents who are most likely to join and attend parenting groups frequently see them as a chance to meet other parents who share similar experiences (Gross, Julion, & Fogg, 2001).

Hypothesis

The purpose of this study was to construct three manuals. First, a parent-friendly manual was developed to aid in the parenting of an anxious child. The manual was created to correspond with the content discussed during the group ‘Parenting An Anxious
Child’, which would assist in the maintenance and generalization of improvements made throughout the parenting group. Second, a kid-friendly manual was developed to help children manage their own anxiety. The manual was created to correspond with the content discussed during the children’s group ‘Let’s Manage Anxiety’. Lastly, a facilitators’ guide for the children’s group was developed to standardize facilitation from group to group and make the group replicable in the future. Three manuals were developed to provide the parent, child and agency with concrete tools to help assist in facilitation of the parenting and children’s group.

As well, the present study measured parents’ satisfaction, in the form of a satisfaction feedback questionnaire, based solely on the parenting manual following group completion and how well the manual corresponded with the modules of the parenting group. It was hypothesized that parents would find the ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’ a valuable, interesting, and enjoyable tool that would aid them in learning information on childhood anxiety, parenting techniques and assist in the maintenance and generalization of improvements made during the parenting group.

Overview

The current study provides an overview of childhood anxiety, the best practices within Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to reduce anxiety during an anxiety-provoking situation, and parental psychopathology and family dynamics that contribute to childhood anxiety. This study was developed in two parts, the ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’, the ‘Kid Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Anxiety’, and the Facilitators Guide (all summarized in the method section), and the ‘Satisfaction Feedback Questionnaire’ (also summarized in the method section). The satisfaction questionnaire evaluated parents’ satisfaction regarding the parent manual and how well it corresponded to the group. The participants completed the satisfaction questionnaire following completion of group, and the results are summarized in the results section. As well, strengths, limitations, and further research are outlined in the discussion section.
Chapter II - Literature Review

Overview of Childhood Anxiety

For many children, numerous fears occur as a common aspect of childhood development. However, these fears may increase and continue over time for some children, which inhibit the child from appreciating and engaging in age-appropriate activities (Barrett, Dadds, & Rapee, 1996). For example, young children are expected to fear the dark, separation from their parents and some animals (Albano & Kendall, 2002). Fears of the doctor, lightning and thunder may occur during elementary school, while school performance and social fears may occur throughout adolescence. However, if these fears remain after the normal developmental level, significant short-term or long-term risks may occur, resulting in an anxiety disorder (Barrett et al., 1996).

The aetiology of childhood anxiety disorders can be associated with numerous influences, including parent-child attachment, temperament, psychosocial factors and parenting styles (Maid, Smokowski, & Baccallao, 2008). The past 20 years have seen an increase in individuals’ understanding of psychopathology, development and disability linked with anxiety disorders in children and adolescents (Velting et al., 2004), demonstrating that early intervention is beneficial. In support, Newman et al. (1996) found an age-related rise of anxiety disorders, rising from 7.5% at 11 years of age to 20.3% at 21 years of age, demonstrating that treating anxiety during childhood may be very beneficial in order to avoid greater distress later in life.

If untreated, anxiety may continue and interrupt emotional development and overall daily performance, which can lead to emotional problems, poor school performance and familial conflict (Velting et al., 2004). For example, a study conducted by Wood (2006) found that an increase of anxious symptoms in a child could lead to a decrease in effective school performance. Anxiety disorders tend to be constant over time and commonly precede the development of additional problems, such as depression (Creswell et al., 2010). The above studies suggest that an anxiety disorder in childhood has the potential to have significant short and long-term risks. Thus, the increasing prevalence, persistence and risks related to anxiety disorders in childhood emphasize the need for effective and deliverable interventions.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

In terms of treatment, a consensus is developing that cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is successful in treating anxiety in children (Cartwright-Hatton, Roberts, Chitsabesan, Fothergill, & Harrington, 2004). Over the past two decades, CBT has been successful in treating childhood anxiety disorders, such as social phobia, separation anxiety, and generalized anxiety disorder (Hirshfeld-Becker et al, 2010). CBT represents a combination of cognitive, behavioural, emotional, and social strategies for change (Barmish & Kendall, 2005). This model utilizes a multidimensional approach to anxiety in children, including cognitive biases regarding threats, avoidant behaviour, and resulting bodily responses such as stomach pains and rapid breathing. CBT assists children in: understanding what anxiety is, acknowledging anxious feelings and bodily...
responses to anxiety, becoming aware of self-talk in anxiety-provoking situations, developing coping plans, and administering self-reinforcement when appropriate.

Psychoeducation offers the family and child an understanding of the development of anxiety, the method in which unnecessary stages of anxiety are acquired and sustained, and the rationale for different treatment methods (Velting et al., 2004). During this time, it is important to communicate to parents that anxiety will never be gone completely, since it is an essential and useful emotion. Counsellors should stress that CBT aims to teach the entire family productive ways to respond and support their child (Maid et al., 2008). Delivering education on anxiety to parents allows them to focus on their child becoming proactive in dealing with everyday difficulties (Velting et al., 2004).

Coping strategies, an element of CBT, represent both behavioural and cognitive efforts that assist youth in confronting stressful situations (Yahav & Cohen, 2008). A variety of coping strategies such as relaxation techniques, self-talk, problem solving, and cognitive restructuring can be used to educate children on ways to ease the effects of stress. Relaxation training can be useful in managing anxiety and is frequently an element of anxiety management programs for children (Nassau, 2007). Relaxation training is frequently used to improve the coping behaviour of children (Lohaus & Klein-Hessling, 2003) and contains a set of “exercises” designed to provide a distraction from anxious thoughts and feelings while, simultaneously, altering a child’s physiology in a way that will increase their relaxed state (Nassau, 2007).

Children must be well aware that relaxation techniques are skills that take practice and time to develop, which may be hard to accept. Teaching relaxation skills, such as progressive muscle relaxation and diaphragmatic breathing, may be helpful when the child recognizes internal and environmental situations that trigger stress and emotional stimulation (Silverman, Pina, & Viswesvaran, 2008). In support, Lohaus, Klein-Hessling, Vogele, and Kuhn-Hennighausen (2001) found that relaxation techniques are successful in decreasing autonomic arousal, such as heart rate and body temperature. Additionally, children are challenged with numerous problems that may not seem manageable to them (Lohaus & Klein-Hessling, 2003). Various circumstances, within the school or family, are primarily under the control of adults, and children must manage the emotions prompted by these situations. Therefore, relaxation may assist children to cope with their emotional and bodily reactions in such situations.

Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique frequently used with children to decrease anxiety. Cobham, Dadds, Spence, and McDermott (2010) describe progressive muscle relaxation exercises as “muscle groups [being] relaxed through tension release exercises” (p. 418). Children tense each muscle group, hold for a duration of 5 seconds, and then relax the muscle group while noticing a relaxed sensation (Nassau, 2007). The child or youth will then characterize bodily tension as an indicator to relax (Cobham et al, 2010). Progressive muscle relaxation has also been shown to be effective in 6 and 7-year-old children, as shown in an unpublished study by Weisman (cited in Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000).
Diaphragmatic breathing also can be included into the child’s relaxation routine, delivering a successful substitute when in public locations (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). Diaphragmatic breathing includes taking a deep breath in through the nose, while focusing on pushing the stomach out (Nassau, 2007). The breath is held for a second, and then let out through the mouth as the stomach goes back to its normal position. This technique reduces the use of chest muscles when breathing, and urges the use of deeper and relaxed breathing.

The process of changing faulty cognitions, permitting the individual to replace their maladaptive thoughts with more suitable ones is termed cognitive restructuring, another technique used within CBT (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). Prior to cognitive restructuring, the therapist assists the child in identifying his/her self-talk, the thoughts that run through the child’s head automatically. Following the identification of the child’s self-talk; the therapist assists the child in changing their maladaptive thoughts with more adaptive ones.

Problem solving is also used within CBT to assist children in recognizing that their problems are not unmanageable or catastrophic (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). In a 1991 study by Spirito and Stark (cited in Lohaus, Klein-Hessling, Vogele & Kuhn-Hennighausen, 2001), children aged 6 to 9 primarily used problem solving strategies when dealing with their anxious symptoms. Problem solving urges the child to concentrate on and assess multiple explanations to their problem (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). This involves a multi-step system that includes: describing major goals, developing multiple solutions, evaluating how the child will achieve these goals, selecting the best strategies to use, and lastly, evaluating the outcome. The therapist’s primary goal is to emphasize problem solving rather than plainly ‘winning’.

Noteworthy development has transpired within the realm of CBT for anxiety disorders in children and youth (Velting et al., 2004). The Coping Cat programme was possibly the first manual-based and empirically supported treatment approach that provided children and youth with strategies for handling the bodily, cognitive and behavioural dynamics of anxiety. The Coping Cat programme, developed by Kendall and colleagues, taught children and youth several cognitive and behavioural approaches such as coping skills, in vivo exposure, role-play, and relaxation techniques, as well as reinforcement (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). There is substantial empirical support for the programme from a multiple baseline study by Kane and Kendall in 1989 (cited in Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000) and a randomized clinical trial by Kendall and Sugarman in 1997 (cited in Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2000). The outcomes from both these studies suggest that the programme was efficacious in improving anxiety in children and youth.

However, CBT is a complex treatment (Creswell & Cartwright-Hatton, 2007). CBT involves consistent use of complex material, and a 2004 study by Grave & Blissett (cited in Creswell & Cartwright-Hatton, 2007) suggested that it might be difficult to use CBT without adapting it directly for children. So the main question is, “How efficacious are initial attempts of CBT with anxious children?” A systemic examination of the
literature by Cartwright-Hatton et al. (2004), encompassing 10 randomized controlled trials of CBT, noted that 57.5% of children and adolescents receiving CBT developed a clinically significant decrease in anxious symptoms by the end of treatment. A meta-analysis by Norton & Price in 2007 (cited in Sauter et al., 2009) also supports the success of CBT for childhood anxiety, and several current reviews determine that there is growing evidence for the short- and long-term success of CBT for children and adolescents with anxiety (Cartwright-Hatton et al., 2004).

**Parental Involvement**

Parents also play a pertinent role in the life, developmental course, and treatment of their child. In a 2006 study conducted by Bogels and Brechman-Toussaint (cited in Sauter et al., 2009), it was found that both parent and familial factors are connected to the growth and continuation of anxiety disorders in children. Berman, Weems, Silverman, and Kurtines (2000) discovered that child reports of family dysfunction and parental irritation prior to treatment were noteworthy predictors of treatment outcome.

Treatment outcome research in the field of psychology has addressed the effectiveness of including parents of anxious children in treatment (Cobham, Dadds, & Spence, 1998) by combining child programs with family oriented programs, resulting in superior intervention (Barrett et al., 1996). In a study by Bogels and Siqueland (cited in Sauter et al., 2009) and a study by Wood, Pacentiniti, Southam-Gerow, Chu, and Sigman (2006), positive outcomes showed that by including parents in CBT practices, benefits might be provided.

On the opposite side of the discussion, some studies, such as one by Nauta, Scholing, Emmelkamp, and Minderaa (2001), have been unsuccessful in determining the positive value of parental involvement and found child-focused interventions to be somewhat more valuable. They found no effect of parental involvement, contrary to the study by Cobham et al. (1998) that found a significant impact on involving the parent during treatment. Cobham et al. discussed the beneficial effects that parent training had on parents who reported anxiety problems themselves. No predictors related to parent psychopathology were included in the study by Nauta et al. Future research would be required to focus on the differential effects between both studies. Although mixed, these findings suggest that there is some evidence that focusing on parental psychopathology and family factors during treatment has the probability to lead to enhanced treatment outcomes.

**Does being anxious affect parenting?**

Level of parental anxiety is significant and relevant when treating an anxious child (Barmish & Kendall, 2005). Evidence suggests that anxiety runs in families; for instance, children of adults diagnosed with an anxiety disorder are considerably more prone to obtain a diagnosis themselves (Gallagher & Cartwright-Hatton, 2009). For example, the study by Ginsburg & Schlossberg (2002) found that 60% of children whose parents were diagnosed with an anxiety disorder met the criteria for an anxiety disorder.
themselves. Elevated levels of anxiety in the parent tend to affect the development of their coping skills, which may lead to certain anxiety-enhancing child-rearing behaviours. This suggests that parents who engage in anxiety-enhancing parenting behaviours, due to their own anxiety, may hinder their child’s emotional and social development.

Interventions that target a parent’s anxiety-enhancing behaviours may possibly enhance the treatment for child anxiety. A study by Barmish and Kendall (2005) coached parents on strategies to increase understanding of their own anxious responses during anxiety-provoking situations. Therapists coached parents in the areas of problem solving and cognitive restructuring and taught them how to participate appropriately in response to stressful situations. This study showed children did well in treatment when their parents were actively engaged in treatment. Parent factors that hinder the child facing their own fears should be addressed in treatment with parental involvement. As well, Kendall, Hudson, Gosch, Flannery-Schroeder, and Suveg (2008) found that family-focused CBT was more successful than child-focused CBT when both parents had an anxiety disorder.

**Family dynamics.**

In the past decade, numerous studies exploring the relationship between parenting style or behaviour and childhood anxiety have concentrated on three parenting dimensions: acceptance, control, and modeling of anxious behaviours (Wood et al., 2003). The first category, parental acceptance, is a parenting style that is expressed as affection and responsiveness towards children while being involved in a child’s life. Wood et al. (2003) found that if parents can demonstrate traits of kind-heartedness and acceptance towards undesirable distress conveyed by their child, they are increasing the probability that the child will begin to accept these undesirable feelings. However, if parents disapprove and minimize their child’s anxiety, their child may be more prone to experience anxiety. The literature on parent-child attachment highlights the significant of parental acceptance in relation to childhood development (Maid et al., 2008). A 2003 study by Crowell (2003) found that the most significant factor that differentiates between a secure or insecure attachment concentrates on how the parent responds when the child tackles a stressful or fearful situation.

The second parenting category, control, is expressed as the quantity of control a parent has over the child’s life, such as their activities or routines (Wood et al., 2003). This control has an influence on the development of anxiety. A parent who exerts more control will have a child who will become reliant on their parents, resulting in the child becoming more anxious when asked to participate in their own tasks (Maid et al., 2008). It is essential to note that parental control is debated more than parental acceptance or modelling. This is due to the observation that parental control has diverse dynamics and outcomes across multiple ethnic groups.

The final category, modelling, focuses on how parents connect to their children when they encounter a difficulty or struggle (Wood et al., 2003). Children are more likely to decipher their problems as being impossible to solve and catastrophic if their parents
act in this way. Basically, if parents cannot solve their own problems in constructive ways, children do not acquire successful coping skills, and their anxiety is likely to increase in challenging circumstances.

Current parenting behaviours must also be contemplated when generating conclusions about the nature of parental participation throughout treatment for childhood anxiety. Parenting behaviour, such as being overly involved or un-involved, is a factor that may maintain a child’s anxiety disorder (Barmish & Kendall, 2005). The study by Wood et al. (2003) determined that if the parent is overly involved, the tendency to rescue the child from anxiety-provoking situations might happen frequently, resulting in the child developing fewer opportunities to deal with the situation on their own. However, if the parent is un-involved then there may be lack of support and guidance that the child may need to conquer the anxiety-provoking situation. This study found that a balance between overly involved parenting and under involved parenting is most desirable when dealing with an anxious child.

Lack of acceptance, over-control, modelling anxious behaviours, and type of parental involvement are examples that may negatively impact homeostasis within the home. As a result of this parental influence, it is important to include parents in treatment to change relationship dynamics and to focus on the family, which will help the child develop effective ways to decrease their anxiety.

**Rationale for incorporating parents in treatment.**

The above findings suggest that parental and family dynamics are correlated with the likelihood of efficacious treatment. It is reasonable to theorize that increasing parental involvement in treatment, addressing parental psychopathology and parenting behaviours, is a logical step. One advantage of incorporating parents into treatment is generalizability (Barmish & Kendall, 2005). Parents will be more prepared to make use of topics and techniques from therapy to home. A second advantage of parental involvement includes maintenance. Parents will be able to support the continuation of gains made prior to the termination of therapy. Taken together, it is important to understand that children are reliant on the family and incorporating interventions at the family level rather than the individual level is important (Ginsburg & Schlossberg, 2002).

**Helpfulness of Manuals for Parents and Children**

Manuals that are developed to generalize information from therapy to home may have many benefits. Effective manuals include various information and activities to maximize family engagement, minimize resistance, and provide information on problem-solving and tips to use when things do not go according to plan (Scott & Dadds, 2009). Manuals that correspond with treatment document treatment contents, guide the therapist and client, and support commitment (Langer, McLeod, & Weisz, 2011). Manuals can be a positive influence on treatment by helping to create a clear agenda, to include appropriate activities for treatment, to generalizing from therapy to home, and to clarify the purpose and procedures for parents and their children.
Concerns about manualized treatment in regards to children and youth highlight the question of whether or not manuals detract from a therapeutic alliance. The therapeutic alliance plays an important role in therapy because children and youth rarely self-refer and may not engage in treatment (Langer, McLeod, & Weisz, 2011). Manuals create a clear agenda and a clear list of activities used within treatment, which will simplify the purpose and method of treatment for children and youth. Manuals also provide children with structure and predictability, thereby promoting confidence and trust in the child’s therapist. The 2011 study by Langer, McLeod, and Weisz determined that using manuals will support a stronger therapeutic alliance early in treatment and as treatment progresses. These results suggest that children do respond well to structure and clear agendas of manualized treatment. Manuals must be adapted for children by having therapists become flexible, creative, and taking the needs of the child into consideration (Kingery et al. 2006). Manuals must also include creative strategies for engaging children in treatment, and CBT must be modified to fit a child’s developmental level.

The Present Study

The ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ group was developed specifically for parents with children showing characteristics of anxiety. Parents were involved in group since family dynamics are important to a child’s anxiety development (Barmish & Kendall, 2005). The group focused on a wide range of information regarding anxiety and multiple issues parents may have while parenting their anxious child. It covered a variety of topics, including facts on anxiety, normal developmental stages of anxiety in children, symptoms of anxiety, anxiety triggers, parenting tips, information on self-talk, relaxation techniques, and self care. The program tried to relieve some stress and address issues parents might have when parenting their anxious child. The purpose of the present study was to create a manual called the ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Your Anxious Child’ that corresponded with the group. The rationale for creating a manual was due to the limited amount of research significant to using parent-friendly manuals within a group setting. The manual was developed to help generalize information discussed during group to home, which is important by maximising parental gains and minimising parental resistance (Scott & Dadds, 2009).

The ‘Let’s Manage Anxiety’ group for children was developed specifically for children showing characteristics of anxiety. Children were involved in a group setting since group therapy provides normalization, reinforcement and modelling from peers (De Groot, Cobham, Leong, & McDermott, 2007). The group focused on a wide range of information regarding anxiety and included multiple techniques and activities children can use alone or with a parent. It covered a variety of topics, including information on anxiety, anxiety triggers, information on self-talk, relaxation training, and self care. The program tried to assist children in helpful ways to manage their own anxiety and promote an understanding that there are many children with anxiety.

The facilitators’ guide was developed specifically to assist future facilitators in running the children’s group. The facilitators’ guide included agendas for each session,
important information regarding each topic, activities, and materials needed. The guide provides future facilitators with guidelines for facilitation. The rationale for creating a manual to assist future facilitators was due to the agency’s request for standardizing facilitation of the children’s group. The manual was developed to assist facilitators in understanding the best practices to use with the children and how important it is to refer to the children’s manual and the parents’ manual.

Additionally, a satisfaction questionnaire was developed to determine parents’ satisfaction exclusively in regard to the parent manual. It was developed to determine whether the manual met their needs by corresponding with information discussed during the parenting group. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the manual would be a valuable and enjoyable tool for parents that would help generalize information from group to home.
Chapter III: Method

Description of Setting and Services

Child and Youth Counselling Services (CYCS) is a community based mental health program that provides children and youth, between the ages of birth to 18, assessment, therapy, support, counselling and consultation. CYCS offers three different types of services: office based services, intensive child and family services, and early years mental health services. Office based services provide counselling and support directly from the CYCS office for children and youth ages 6 to 18. Intensive child and family services provide counselling at the home, school, and within the community for children and youth from ages 7 to 18. Early years mental health services provide services to families with young children, from birth to age 6, in the home, day-care, school and community. Early years service provides prevention, early intervention, community education, and treatment.

CYCS offered a parenting group called ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ that was developed for parents who have a child with anxiety. The parenting group discussed topics such as psychoeducation on anxiety, anxiety triggers, parenting helpers (tips), self care for parents and children, and relaxation techniques including diaphragmatic breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. The parenting group ran once a week, every six weeks for two hours and was facilitated by a mental health counsellor and a registered social worker.

CYCS also offered a children’s anxiety support group that was developed for children who have symptoms of anxiety. The children’s group discussed topics such as psychoeducation on anxiety, anxiety triggers, helpful and unhelpful self-talk, relaxation techniques, and self care. The children’s group corresponded with the parenting group; however, it was adapted specifically for children. The children’s group ran simultaneously with the parenting group and was facilitated by the student from St. Lawrence College and a mental health counsellor.

Prior to the commencement of the parenting group, CYCS sent out a form to their mental health counsellors stating that a parenting group for parents with anxious children would be taking place. Counsellors with clients who presented symptoms of anxiety referred the client’s parents to the parenting group. Prior to the commencement of the parenting group, all parents signed a consent form from CYCS for their participation within the group. Parents also signed a consent form from CYCS for their child’s participation within the children’s group.

The Current Study – Part 1 (Development of Manuals)


The ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’ was developed in conjunction with the facilitators of the parenting group at CYCS.
The manual was designed specifically for parents of children displaying symptoms of anxiety. In order to develop the manual, the present researcher surveyed best practices, examined what the group leaders were using, and found corresponding material that would be beneficial to the parenting group. The information was then incorporated into the development of the parenting manual. The manual was created using plain language at a grade 9 reading level to ensure comprehension from parents since all previous parents in the parenting group performed at that reading level. Four readers were used to confirm appropriate reading level. The manual corresponded with the modules being discussed throughout the parenting group which included: information regarding anxiety, triggers that may occur, parenting tips, parental self-care, and techniques that have been shown to be successful in reducing and/or eliminating anxious behaviour, such as diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and positive thinking. The manual consisted of discussions parents can have with their children, family activities, and relaxation activities that are accompanied by the Mind Masters (Orlick, 2002) compact disc, along with multiple worksheets. The relaxation activities discussed during group were presented separately along with instructions on how to administer each technique. The manual was developed as a reference tool to generalize information from the parenting group to “real-life”.


The ‘Kid Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Anxiety’ was developed in conjunction with the facilitators of the parenting group at CYCS. The manual was designed specifically for children displaying symptoms of anxiety. In order to develop the manual, the researcher surveyed best practices for children and assembled similar resources used for the parenting group. The resources were adapted, made more ‘kid-friendly’ and then incorporated in the development of the children’s manual. The manual was created using plain language at a grade 5 reading level since the majority of children involved in the parenting group are around the age of 10. The manual corresponded with the modules being discussed throughout the parenting group as noted above. However, the manual differed from the parenting manual by offering the children activities they could do with their parents and allowed the children to practice the techniques discussed, such as relaxation. The manual also included relaxation activities from the Mind Masters program (Orlick, 2002) that were taught during the children’s group and the corresponding relaxation activity sheets. The manual was developed as a reference tool to generalize information from the children’s group to “real-life”.

Development of the Facilitators’ Guide.

The Facilitators’ Guide was developed in conjunction with the facilitators of the parenting group and children’s group at CYCS. The facilitators’ guide was developed specifically for the children’s group. In order to develop the manual, the researcher gathered all the resources used within the children’s group. Each section within the manual included an agenda for each session, accompanying activities and worksheets, and tools that were used. The facilitators’ guide was developed as a reference tool for
future facilitators in order to organize and standardize the facilitation from group to
group. It was also created to make the group replicable in the future.

The Current Study – Part 2 (Satisfaction Feedback Questionnaire)

In order to examine satisfaction and use of the parents’ manual, a satisfaction
feedback questionnaire was developed. The satisfaction feedback questionnaire was
developed specifically for the parent manual. The satisfaction feedback questionnaire was
provided to the parents to assess if the parent manual was addressing the needs of its
demographic.

Participants

The participants involved in the current study were parents of children aged 7-12
who were referred to the parenting group by a counsellor at CYCS. Five parents were
involved in the parenting group and signed the consent form for the study (Appendix A)
during the initial parenting group session, regarding feedback on the parenting manual in
the form of a satisfaction feedback questionnaire (Appendix B). The parents were also
informed that a 4th year student in the Behavioural Psychology Program at St. Lawrence
College would be using the information obtained from the satisfaction questionnaire for a
project and applied thesis. The parents were given the opportunity to ask the researcher
questions regarding the project, thesis, and satisfaction questionnaire. The parents were
informed that no identifying information would be needed for the satisfaction
questionnaire and the questionnaires would be sealed in an envelope following
completion.

Measure

The satisfaction feedback questionnaire was developed and incorporated at the
end of the parent-friendly manual. This was designed to provide CYCS information
concerning the manual’s overall effectiveness and to ensure the manual was serving its
intended purpose and demographic. It also rated readability and comprehension of the
techniques introduced. The satisfaction feedback questionnaire asked parents to comment
and rate their experience using ‘The Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents
Manage Their Anxious Child’. The satisfaction feedback questionnaire consisted of 14
questions rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 as “strongly disagree” and 5 as “strongly
agree”. The questions evaluated user satisfaction on topics such as aesthetics, relevant
information and techniques corresponding to the parenting group, and manual
characteristics in the form of recommendations for improvements.

Procedures

The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire during the final session
of the parenting group. All participants had provided informed consent to provide this
feedback after signing the St. Lawrence College consent form at the beginning of the first
parenting group session. The participants had approximately 10 to 15 minutes to
complete the satisfaction feedback questionnaire. They were instructed to direct any questions to the facilitators or researcher. The participant’s names were not to be put on the satisfaction questionnaire to ensure confidentiality, and following completion of the questionnaire, it was sealed in an envelope. The questionnaires were given to the researcher for analysis. All of the participants completed the questionnaires, which were stored in a locked cabinet at CYCS per agency and St. Lawrence College Research Ethics Board standards. (It is important to note that the researcher did not participate in the parenting group.)
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Part 1

‘The Parent Companion – A Manual To Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’ can be found in Appendix C. Table 1 provides an outline of each section and corresponding information, activities, and skills. The manual was created using cognitive-behavioural techniques, relaxation methods, and deep breathing procedures. The manual was developed as a reference tool for parents. This would allow them to generalize the information from group to home.

Table 1.
*The Parent Companion – A Manual To Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Main Topic</th>
<th>Information/Activities/Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Introduction to Anxiety</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Facts about Anxiety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What Is Anxiety?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Levels of Anxiety – The difference between a Fear and a Phobia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Statistics of Anxiety in Children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Normal’ Developmental Stages of Anxiety in Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Symptoms of Anxiety Activities/Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Chester the Cat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How Do You Feel Anxiety in Your Body?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Anxiety Triggers</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Anxiety Triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Common Anxiety Triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stages of Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How To Talk To Your Child About Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Parenting Helpers</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parenting Helpers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tips for Parenting An Anxious Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Anxiety and How We Think</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Coping Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Relaxation Techniques For Your Children</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relaxation Activities/Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Basic Spaghetti Toes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Jelly Belly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Special Place Relaxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Umbalakiki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Muscle Relaxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One Breath Relaxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six</th>
<th>Parental Self-Care</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Four Dimensions of Self-Care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven</th>
<th>Wrap-Up</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How Friends and Family Can Help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How To Prevent A Relapse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tips for Preventing A Lapse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘The Kid Companion – A Manual To Help Manage Anxiety’ can be found in Appendix D. Table 2 provides an outline of each section and corresponding information, activities, and skills. The manual was created using cognitive-behavioural techniques and relaxation training. The manual was adapted in a way that would be more child-friendly and provide them with a clear understanding of anxiety. The manual was developed as a reference tool for children that they could take with them from one place to another. The manual could assist them in explaining their symptoms and triggers to their parents.

Table 2.
*The Kid Companion – A Manual To Help Manage Anxiety*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Main Topic</th>
<th>Information/Activities/Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Information On Anxiety</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What Is Anxiety?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The difference between a Fear and a Phobia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Symptoms of Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities/Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chester the Cat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How Do You Feel Anxiety in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two  Anxiety Triggers

- What Are Anxiety Triggers?
- Common Anxiety Triggers
- Steps of Anxiety

Three  Anxiety and How We Think

- Self-Talk
- Coping Statements
- Do you know what Optimism is?

Activities/Skills
- Coping Cards

Four  Relaxation Training

- What is Relaxation Training?
- Relaxation Techniques

Activities/Skills
- Basic Spaghetti Toes
- Jelly Belly
- Special Place Relaxation
- Umbalakiki
- Muscle Relaxation
- One Breath Relaxation

Five  Self-Care

- What is Self-Care?

The Facilitator’s Guide can be found in Appendix E. Table 3 outlines each section and corresponding information, activities, and skills that can be taught or used. The guide was developed to assist future facilitators in running the children’s group and provides the agency with assistance in standardization, organization, and replication.

Table 3. *The Facilitators’ Guide*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Main Topic</th>
<th>Information/Activities/Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| One     | Children's Anxiety Group Agenda Week 1 | Information
<p>|         |                                     | • How to create an anxiety fighting tool box |
|         |                                     | • How to create group rules               |
|         |                                     | • Using the Parent Manual and             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children’s Anxiety Group</th>
<th>Agenda Week</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Fear, Phobia &amp; Anxiety Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When Meeting with the Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Catch-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Worry Tree Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Coping Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When Meeting with the Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>• Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Relaxation Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When Meeting with the Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of the Kid Companion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• When Meeting with the Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>• Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part 2**

The satisfaction feedback questionnaire was used to measure parental satisfaction regarding ‘The Parent Companion – A Manual To Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’. Specifically, 14 questions were developed to investigate parents’ satisfaction with the manual and determine if it was a valuable resource for them to use. A raw data table can be found in Appendix F discussing each individual’s responses for each question. Table 4 depicts the frequency of participants’ responses to each individual question.
Table 4
Frequency of Five Participants’ Answers to Each Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The manual is visually appealing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual was easy to navigate through (i.e. properly organized, properly laid out)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information regarding anxiety was presented in a manner that was easy to understand.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual includes pictures and charts that relate to information being presented.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information was relevant to what was being discussed during the parenting group ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ and the needs of your child.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructions on the relaxation techniques (i.e. deep breathing, self talk) were clear and concise.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual was designed in a way that made it easier for me to use these techniques with my child.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual assisted me in generalizing the tips for parenting a child with anxiety from group to home.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements should be made within the ‘Education on Anxiety’ section of this manual.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements should be made in the ‘Common Triggers of Anxiety’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Your Child’ section.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements should be made in the ‘Tips for Parenting an Anxious Child’ section.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements should be made in the ‘Techniques to Assist with Anxiety’ section.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements should be made in the ‘Parental and Child Self-Care’ section.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I enjoyed using this manual.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In almost all cases, most subjects had very positive reviews of the manual. They found it to be visually appealing, easy to navigate, easy to understand, and that it corresponded well to the modules and parenting group. However, two subjects felt that there should be improvements made on certain sections. Their comments included: increasing the amount of ‘facts’ regarding childhood anxiety and increasing the amount of ‘tips’ on parenting an anxious child. Additional comments and suggestions discussed by subjects can be found in Appendix F. Question number 14 (the last) depicted users’ overall satisfaction with the manual. Question number 14 showed favourable results since all five participants strongly agreed that they enjoyed using the manual.
Chapter V: Discussion

Overview

The purpose of the present study was to construct a parent-friendly manual, a child-friendly manual, and a facilitators’ guide to provide parents, children, and facilitators a helpful and interesting tool to assist in the education about anxiety and its management. The manuals were designed to correspond with the parenting group ‘Parenting An Anxious Child’ and the children’s group ‘Let’s Manage Anxiety’. The development of these manuals was based on the evidence of best practices found in the research. The researcher then gathered tools and techniques from best practices and incorporated these into the manual. The facilitators’ guide was developed to assist future facilitators in effectively running the children’s group.

Furthermore, a satisfaction feedback questionnaire was developed to evaluate user satisfaction regarding the ‘Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’s’ overall effectiveness and readability and to ensure it was serving its intended purpose. The questionnaire evaluated satisfaction on topics including aesthetics, relevant information, and recommendations for improvement. It was hypothesized that the subjects would find the manual to be a valuable and resource-filled tool to use when parenting an anxious child. Results from the questionnaire indicated high satisfaction with the manual since all subjects answered agree to strongly agree on most questions. The questionnaire also indicated that subjects suggested few improvements that should be made to the manual. In addition, the questionnaire determined that the subjects enjoyed using the manual overall. Finally, the parents verbalized that their children had been using the ‘Kid Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Anxiety’ to address some of their own concerns and explain to their parents how and what they were feeling when faced with an anxiety-provoking situation.

Strengths

‘The Parent Companion – A Manual To Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’, ‘The Kid Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Anxiety’, and the Facilitators’ Guide were developed to correspond with the parent and children’s group. Developing manuals to correspond with groups will help both parents and children fully understand the information being taught and allow them to have a concrete item to take home. The manuals will assist subjects in generalizing the information discussed during group to home. The three manuals allow the parenting and the children’s group to become replicable in the future by providing structure and organization to both groups. At the same time, the facilitators’ guide helps to guide the facilitator throughout the children’s group process. The facilitators’ guide also promotes consistency from one group to another. As well, the satisfaction feedback questionnaire confirmed the hypothesis of this study by providing the parents and children with concrete and valuable skills that could be a reference tool. The manuals promoted generalizability and maintenance of the tools and information that could be used following the completion of the parents’ and children’s group.
Limitations

The manuals were developed by researching best practices, gathering multiple resources, and organizing resources used by the facilitators. Researching additional resources and increasing the amount of information used may have been more beneficial for the subjects within this study. Subjects did state that increasing the amount of information in certain areas would be more helpful and beneficial to their understanding of anxiety. Another limitation was the limited time frame for parents to use the manual and then complete the satisfaction feedback questionnaire. This study provided the subjects with only six weeks of group, which may have made it difficult for them to use the manual and benefit from the activities and information. Most of the parents within the group were receiving counselling from the agency, and that may have impacted their results. The questionnaire was also completed during the final session of group, and parents may have had an increased anxiety because the group was coming to an end.

An important limitation in regard to this study was the small amount of research done on the effectiveness of manuals. Future research would be helpful in this area to determine if using a manual along with counselling is beneficial. A final limitation would be the number of participants within the study. Having more participants would provide an increase of validity to the study and may provide the study with a wider range of comments.

Contributions to Behavioural Psychology Field

This study contributes to the behavioural psychology field by providing further evidence that using a manual along with a group can benefit both the facilitator and the participants. This could be determined by the comments regarding positive experiences when using the manual from the parents. Providing both parents and children with similar manuals helps to assist in the generalization of information learned. This study is an important contribution because it provides support that including parents in the management of a child’s anxiety is beneficial. The study was an original contribution to the behavioural psychology field by providing children and parents a concrete and useful tool to help manage anxiety.

Multilevel Challenges

There are many challenges to cope with when developing a manual about anxiety and working with children diagnosed or showing symptoms of anxiety. At the client level, many children and their parents who show symptoms of anxiety may not work well within a group setting. Therefore, they may not attend group and will not benefit from the corresponding manual provided. At the program level, a challenge was to develop a structured setting and structured activities within the manual. Another challenge at the program level may be proper communication between the facilitators of the group session and the participants. It is important to assess all needs of the group and construct a proper session around each individual's needs. It is essential to allow for proper therapeutic
alliance between the facilitator and the participant so a healthy therapeutic relationship develops. At the organization level, the mental health agency may not allow additional staff to facilitate the groups and provide them with funds and locations for the group to take place. Finally, the challenges at the societal level include determining whether or not manualized treatment would be as effective as individual psychotherapy. As well, the societal level plays an important role in challenging individuals with anxiety and generalizing what they learned during group to the ‘real world’. It may be difficult for individuals to use the techniques they learned outside of group.

Recommendations for Future Research

In addition to the parenting manual, a frequency checklist for the parents should also be included to ensure that parents are using the manual. The frequency checklist should be developed so parents can check off each time they used a tool, used an activity, or used a resource that was included in the manual. This will allow facilitators to see which tools, activities, and resources are used most often. A satisfaction questionnaire should also be developed for the children’s manual and the facilitator’s guide along with a frequency of use checklist. Creating satisfaction questionnaires for the other two manuals will ensure that these manuals are serving their intended purpose and reaching the needs of the demographic. It would also be beneficial for future researchers to use a control group with the experimental group. The experimental group would be provided with the manual and the control group would not. This would determine whether or not manualized treatment would be effective in therapy.

The satisfaction questionnaire showed high satisfaction in most aspects of the manual. Subjects appeared to enjoy using the manual and were able to generalize the information from group to home. However, due to the short time frame, this may have skewed the results. The satisfaction of the manual should be tracked during a longer period of time.

Increasing the number of participants who receive the manual will also be beneficial for future researchers, which will provide them with a larger representative sample. It may also be beneficial to increase the length of the anxiety groups and spend more time on each session. In addition, it will be significant to consider in future studies whether the addition of “booster/maintenance sessions” may improve the outcome for parents and children receiving these manuals.

Word Count Literature Review – 3,479

Final Word Count – 8,148
References


STUDENT: Kaitlyn Villeneuve

SUPERVISOR: Susan Meyers

Dear Family,

My name is Kaitlyn Villeneuve, and I am a student in the Bachelors Degree Behavioural Psychology program at St. Lawrence College in Kingston, Ontario. Currently, I am on placement at Child and Youth Counselling Services (CYCS). I will be completing an Applied Thesis, which involves the development and implementation of a project and I am asking for your assistance to complete this project. The information in this form is intended to help you understand my project so that you can decide whether or not you would like to participate. Please read the following information carefully and feel free to ask all questions you may have before deciding whether or not to participate.

My project includes the development of a parent-friendly manual that includes education on parenting an anxious child, parenting tips, parental self-care, and multiple techniques that can assist your children in reducing their anxious behaviour. These techniques will be presented separately with instructions on how you can assist in these techniques. The manual will be used in conjunction with the parenting group “Parenting an Anxious Child” that will be facilitated by Kim Burns and Robert Billard, counsellors at CYCS. This manual will assist in the maintenance and generalization of the skills discussed within the group.

A satisfaction feedback questionnaire will be provided at the back of the manual which will provide myself (Kaitlyn) and CYCS with information regarding the overall satisfaction and usefulness the manual provided you. This questionnaire will provide feedback for refining and revising the manual. This form will rate your satisfaction on how visually pleasing the manual is (e.g. easy to read, layout), whether or not the techniques included were easy to understand and use with your child, and how helpful the manual was observed to be in assisting you in parenting an anxious child. This parent-friendly manual has been developed with Kim and Robert to meet the needs of the parenting group. Following the completion of the parenting group you will be requested
to fill out the satisfaction questionnaire, which will take no longer than 5 minutes and submit it to either Kim or Robert.

Participating in using this manual and completing the satisfaction questionnaire can benefit you in learning tips and tricks on parenting an anxious child, as well as fully understanding childhood anxiety. Future users can also benefit from you using the manual to determine if the manual achieved its intended purposes and if there are areas in need of improvement or changes that should be made. Possible risks to completing the satisfactions questionnaires are minimal; however, they may include feelings of discomfort from being completely honest on the feedback that will be interpreted by CYCS and myself. Feelings of frustration and boredom may occur while filling out the questionnaire. Should you feel harm (physical, emotional, psychological) at any time while reading the manual, or while completing the satisfaction survey, you may request additional services or withdraw your participation in this project with no penalty and without experiencing bias to future or current treatment.

If you do decide to take part in this project, you will be asked to sign this consent form. All information collected from the questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential; however, confidentiality will be breached if you disclose intended harm on self or others, and when required by law. Information will be stored in a locked cabinet in the filing room at CYCS, as well as in a password protected computer file, and retained for a duration of 7-years. Individuals who will have access to your information will include myself, my college supervisor, Kim Burns and Robert Billard from CYCS. Upon request, we will share with you a brief summary of the data collected from the satisfaction questionnaire.

Please complete the following form and return it to me as soon as possible if you agree to participate in the completion of this project. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records.

I sincerely appreciate your cooperation and the time you have taken from your day to read this consent form. If you have any questions/concerns or would like to receive more information about the project, please contact my College Supervisor, Susan Meyers, at (613) 329-1046 or smeyers@kos.net.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Villeneuve, St. Lawrence College Student
CONSENT

If you agree to participate in this project, please complete the following form and return it to me as soon as possible. A copy of this signed document will be given to you for your own records. An additional copy of your consent will be retained at the agency.

By signing this form, I agree that:

- The study has been explained to me.
- All my questions were answered.
- Possible harm and discomforts and possible benefits (if any) of this study have been explained to me.
- I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.
- I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study.
- I have been told that my personal information will be kept confidential.
- I understand that no information that would identify me will be released or printed without asking me first.
- I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

I hereby consent to participate.

Participant/Parent/Guardian Printed Name: ____________________________

Age of Participant (If Under 18): ______________

Signature: _______________________________    Date: ________
Appendix B: Satisfaction Feedback Questionnaire

Satisfaction Feedback Questionnaire


Dear Parents,

The items on this questionnaire require you to comment on your experience using this manual. The information collected from this questionnaire is strictly confidential. Your name is not required to complete this questionnaire. This questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Upon completion, please return the questionnaire to Kim Burns or Robert Billard. Please be completely honest when filling out this form. Your comments will assist in refining this manual to benefit future users. Your time and participation has been greatly appreciated and I thank you for filling out this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Villeneuve, Placement Student

Directions:

Please check the response that best corresponds to your opinions or views on this manual.

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1: Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>2: Disagree</th>
<th>3: Undecided</th>
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4. The manual includes pictures and charts that relate to information being presented.

5. The information was relevant to what was being discussed during the parenting group ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ and the needs of your child.

6. The instructions on the relaxation techniques (i.e. deep breathing, self talk.) were clear and concise.

7. The manual was designed in a way that made it easier for me to use these techniques with my child.

8. The manual assisted me in generalizing the tips for parenting a child with anxiety from group to home.

9. Improvements should be made within the ‘Education on Anxiety’ section of this manual.

10. Improvements should be made in the ‘Common Triggers of Anxiety in Your Child’ section.

11. Improvements should be made in the ‘Tips for Parenting an Anxious
12. Improvements should be made in the ‘Techniques to Assist with Anxiety’ section.

13. Improvements should be made in the ‘Parental and Child Self-Care’ section


Please use the following space provided for comments or suggestions that could improve this manual. Or leave comments that you feel could benefit this project.

Comments and Suggestions for Manual Improvement

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank you so much for your participation
The parent companion

- A manual to help parents
  Manage their anxious
  Child.

Created and written: Kaitlyn Villeneuve
In consultation with child and youth counselling services of Cornwall, Ontario
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Introduction

The ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ group is designed to assist parents in developing skills and strengths to deal with their anxious child. It encompasses a variety of information on anxiety, anxiety triggers, parental self-care, tips to assist in parenting, and relaxation techniques. The main focus of this manual is to teach parents skills to assist them in parenting their child with anxiety. The group allows parents to understand that they are not alone and there are ways to assist in decreasing or eliminating their child’s anxiety. The manual ‘The Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’ works along side the parenting group to generalize information and techniques taught to the home.

Background

Robert Billard and Kim Burns developed the group ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ after many years of seeing multiple families with the central issue: anxiety. Every year they were seeing approximately eight to ten families who had children with anxiety. Rob and Kim decided that developing a group directed towards parents was essential because they were using the same techniques within their individual counselling sessions. They believed that an advantage to the group was to make parents aware that they are not alone in this situation, to keep parents who have a child with anxiety connected to one another, and to allow parents to share resources. They believe that with the resources given within the group parents will have the opportunity to take care of themselves and provide parents with the support they need.
Dear Parents,

Let’s face it: parenting an anxious child takes a unique set of skills and strengths and the realities of parenting and family life can be difficult. Since children and families do not come with a manual, ‘The Parent Companion – A Manual to Help Parents Manage Their Anxious Child’ may be able to help assist you in using these skills and strengths that you already possess. This manual is designed in conjunction with Child and Youth Counselling Services (C.Y.C.S), a community based program sponsored by Cornwall Community Hospital, to assist you in parenting your anxious child. The manual is designed to correspond with the modules taught during the parenting group ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’, which includes: education on parenting an anxious child, parenting tips, suggestions about parental self-care, and multiple techniques that can assist your child in reducing their anxious behaviour. I hope this manual provides you with a better understanding of how anxiety can affect your child, provide you with useful tips on parenting, and easy techniques to use by yourself or along side your child.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Villeneuve

St. Lawrence College Student

B.A.A Behavioural Psychology
SECTION 1: INFORMATION ON ANXIETY
Facts About Anxiety

- Anxiety disorders are the most common type of mental health problem.
- 1 in 4 people will be affected by anxiety during their lifetime.
- Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive fear, anxiety, and distress.
- Anxiety disorders can interfere with daily life by impacting work, school, family, and relationships.

What is Anxiety?

All children experience some form of anxiety. Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about an event that makes children hesitant to do things. Children may have reoccurring thoughts when a situation is perceived as potentially harmful. These thoughts are not directly produced by the situation but by how children perceive the situation.

Feeling anxiety is a normal experience that every child encounters. Anxiety, in the form of ‘fear’, is a survival instinct and its ultimate purpose is to protect us from dangerous situations. Anxiety can also be experienced in non-threatening situations. Anxiety in the right situations is a good thing because it can assist children to get ready for challenges and cope with dangers; however, it can cause problems if it occurs in situations that stop people living life to the fullest.

**GOAL:** Learn to assist in managing your child’s anxiety, not eliminate it.

Levels of Anxiety – The Difference Between A Fear And A Phobia

Anxiety can be experienced in different ways and it may be helpful to understand the different levels of anxiety.

**FEAR**

Children’s fears are often natural, and begin during specific times in their development. Children may develop fears from traumatic events (e.g. getting bit by a dog) but for some children, there is no clear even that causes these fears.
PHOBIA

When children’s fears persist beyond the age when they are deemed age appropriate, and begin to interfere with their daily functioning, they are named phobias. Phobias are described as an intense form of anxiety, and tend to be a reaction to an immediate/specific situation or object.

Statistics of Anxiety in Children

Anxiety difficulties are among the most common psychological problems reported by children, which affect approximately 12% to 20% of the child population (Barmish & Kendall, 2000).

Anxiety Disorders affect 1 in 8 children.

Your child is not alone.

‘Normal’ Developmental Stages of Anxiety in Children

- Children ages 18 months to 2 years old may have ‘stranger anxiety’. This type of anxiety may lead children to cling to their parents. They may fear loud noises, large objects, and separation from their parents.
- Children ages 2 to 6 years old may fear make-believe things, such as monsters, and ghosts. They also may fear the dark, storms, and sleeping alone.
- Children ages 7 to 12 may fear things that could potentially happen to them, such as getting hurt, their health, death, poor school performance, and peer rejection.

These situations are normal, and many children will experience these worries. However, some children experience other types of anxiety that may impact their ability to function in certain situations and prevent them from doing certain activities, this is then termed anxiety disorder.
Common Symptoms of Anxiety in Children:

**Physical/Bodily Sensations**
- Decreased Energy
- Poor Concentration
- Sore Stomach
- Dry Mouth
- Increased Heart Rate
- Shortness of Breath
- Dizziness
- Frequent Urination

**Psychological/Emotional Symptoms**
- Lack of Sleep
- Irritability or Anger
- Lack of Concentration
- Fear of ‘losing control’

**Behavioural**
- Cling to parents
- Temper Tantrums
- School Refusal
- Withdrawing from friends/family
- Avoidance of objects/situations
- Perfectionism
- Shyness

**See the ‘Work Sheet’ Section for activities to do with your child regarding anxiety symptoms.**

1) Chester the Cat
2) How do you feel about anxiety in your body?
SECTION 2:
ANXIETY TRIGGERS
Anxiety Triggers

Childhood anxiety can occur for a variety of reasons and can cause a child to feel overwhelmed, nervous, and terrified of certain situations. Anxiety may occur in children due to a specific fear that has developed. Some events that cause ‘anxiety’ are obvious and some are not. Even the smallest event can lead to anxiety and panic. Situations that seem safe and uneventful could cause anxiety within children. For example, if expectations placed on a child are very high, they may worry about how they perform. Children may become stressed when they have to assert themselves or act independently. Some individuals can build-up their stress for weeks, months, or even years to reach its highest point. When this happens, anxiety can progress into a significant problem that can cause trouble in a child’s life.

It is important to understand what exactly about the ‘fear’ (object, situation) is causing the child to experience anxiety. Is it the noise? The way it moves? Is it the fear of being trapped? Of being left alone?

Common Anxiety Triggers

Some common triggering events for children include:

- Separation from a parent
- Social fears (e.g. making friends at school, meeting new people)
- Bullying or teasing
- Having too much to do
- Performance anxiety (e.g. speaking in front of the class, writing tests or exams)
- Worrying about things that ‘could’ happen (e.g. always thinking ‘what if’)


Steps of Anxiety

Anxiety occurs in different stages. Understanding how anxiety occurs will help you understand what your child is going through.


1. **Triggering Event**

   Anxiety usually starts after some triggering event

   *For Example:* A child is waiting to be picked up by a parent after school, but the parent is late.

2. **Thoughts**

   Next comes the ‘worry thoughts’. These are thoughts that may be running through the individual’s head.

   *For Example:* The child may be thinking, “My mom is late, there must have been a horrible accident. I can’t deal with this”

3. **Feelings**

   Anxious thoughts lead to anxious feelings. These feelings range from mild worrying to absolute panic.

   *For Example:* The child may start to get a sore stomach, may start to breath heavier, or may start to shake.

4. **Behaviours**

   Normally, when someone is feeling a bit anxious the easiest response is to run away from the situation or object. Unfortunately, if someone keeps avoiding their fear this only adds to the problem and may cause long-term anxiety.

- Being hurried from one event to another
- Fighting with parents or siblings
- Fear of dogs or the dark
- Health problems
- Having a lot of school work to do
- Not getting along with friends
- Moving to a new home
- Moving to a new school
- Death of a parent or grandparent
- High expectations from self or from others
- Being left alone at home
- Being hurried from one activity to another
For Example: The child may start to get very upset whenever his/her parents leave. They may begin to cling to their parents and avoid certain situations.

** See the worksheet section for the ‘Fear Thermometer’: When your child comes in contact with a fearful situation take out the fear thermometer. Use this to see how fearful they are towards a situation or object.

**HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ANXIETY**

So now that you understand what anxiety is and what may trigger your child’s anxiety, you are probably wondering ‘how can I talk to my children about anxiety?’ During the corresponding children’s group your child will begin to learn what anxiety is and how it may affect them. However, it is important to keep all family members involved in this process and to communicate with your anxious child.

How to do it:

Step 1: **Encourage your child to open up about any fears, worries, or emotions that they may have.**

Talk to your child about situations where you may have been scared or any fears you had growing up. Ask them if they have any similar fears but make sure you tell your child that you have gotten over these fears and how you overcame them. Ask your child what worries him/her the most. If you are specific this may assist your child in sorting out their fears and feelings. Make sure you offer reassurance by saying that having those feelings are okay and that they are normal.

**REMEMBER: Your child will take cues from you – show them empathy. This will increase your chances of having your child open up to you.**

Step 2: **Keep the lines of communication open – teach your child about anxiety and what you learned to ‘refresh’ their memory.**

Two important points to discuss with your child.

1. Anxiety is normal – Everyone experiences anxiety.
2. Anxiety is not dangerous – It may feel uncomfortable but it does not last long. By learning to identify your child’s symptoms will make it a lot easier for them to understand this.

Use the smoke alarm analogy: “A smoke alarm can protect us when there is a fire but sometimes a smoke alarm can go off when there isn’t a fire (e.g. burning food on the stove). Anxiety is helpful – but when there is no real danger it would be good to find some solutions.

Step 3: Help your child recognize anxiety

Discuss with your child their symptoms of anxiety. Try to find out how your child experiences anxiety: their physical symptoms, anxious feelings, and behaviours.

Have your child show you on a teddy bear where they feel their anxiety the most – this puts your child in the role of the observe and gives them a sense of control.

YOU HAVE NOW PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN HELPING YOUR ANXIOUS CHILD!
SECTION 3:
PARENTING HELPERS
Watching a child struggle with anxiety can be very challenging for parents. Parents may feel that if they say the wrong thing they may push their child over the edge. Therefore, parents may give in to what their child wants, parents might respond with anger, or parents might withdraw all together. Many parents find it beneficial to keep track of their child’s achievements and abilities so that they do not begin to see their child as being unable to accomplish certain activities because of their anxiety. Instead parents can focus on what abilities or tools their child has that will assist them in coping with anxiety.

Anxious children wish to have a sense of control over their lifestyle and do not cope well with a chaotic family style. Most children feel calmer when:

- They have a strict schedule.
- They understand what is expected of them.
- They understand what the consequences are of their actions.

So, how can a parent make their child’s lifestyle more predictable?

The answer to this question is simple: setting limits and creating routines.

- **Setting Limits:**
  - Setting limits is defined as a logical way for parents to teach their children what actions are acceptable, and lays the foundation for accountability and consequences.
  - If limits are recurring and implemented your child may feel more content and their behaviour may improve. Make sure your child knows what is expected of them and what will happen if they do not comply.
  - If you set and maintain limits, your child will learn from your positive discipline and develop his/her own sense of right and wrong.
  - For example: Parents may set limits for what chores are expected by the child or when the child can go outside and blow off some steam.

- **Creating Routines:**
  - Creating routines is defined as a set course of procedures or activities that are followed regularly. Routines help us cut down on chaos by organizing our lives.
  - The most important thing about creating routines for your child is to help them build confidence. When a child has a routine established and knows what is expected out of them and how long they have to get the job done it will help them to manage their time and behaviour.
  - Anxiety tends to interrupt routines so parents need to work hard to build family routines. It is essential to plan these routines in advance and
include your child in the development of these routines. Introduce your routine gradually and create a schedule to place on the fridge or somewhere in the home. This provides your child with a concrete reminder of what is expected of them and provides them with a sense of control.

- For example: Parents can create bedtime routines, homework routines, or after school routines.

**Reminder: Routines may take several weeks to establish – but in the end it will be worth it.**

There are many things that parents can do to help their anxious child. These include:

**Reducing Stress** – Stress and strain in the home can have an undesirable effect on your child. Look for ways that can reduce stress and be fun for your child. It is also essential to deal with familial conflict between family members when the problem arises (by having family meetings).

**Working Together** – It is important that everyone in the family works together to help manage your child’s anxiety. Everyone needs to be consistent because inconsistency can become very confusing for your child. If family members have different expectations for your child then this can become confusing as well.

**Using Consequences** – Although your child has anxiety it does not give them the right for inappropriate behaviour. It is imperative to set expectations for your child, and follow through on consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Children are much happier when there are rules in place and they know what happens when they break these rules.

**Reminder: Provide rewards and praise when your child is following rules.**

**Being Supportive** – Parents should not minimize their child’s fears, instead they should explain to their child that having fears are an ordinary part of life. It is important to listen to your child. This will send them the message that it is okay to talk about their feelings. Make sure your child knows that you understand what they are saying and how they are feeling. **Refer back to section above ‘Talking to Your Child About Anxiety**

**Encouraging Independence** – It is tempting to do things for your child when they are afraid, nervous, or upset. However, it is essential as a parent, to let children do things for themselves. Encouraging your child to do things on their own does not mean that you
cannot be supportive. It just means that you should not do everything for your child. Encourage your child to take gradually larger steps toward independence.

Building Self-Confidence – Praise your child for his or her accomplishments and for facing their fears. Give your child responsibilities around the house or find activities that can help your child feel proud of their work. Focus on what your child CAN do and build gradually on those successes.

Remember: It is important to set goals with your child. Start with small goals and work towards bigger ones.

The following are tips and suggestions that may be useful in addressing your child’s anxiety or fears.

- Your child may experience physical symptoms when he or she is stressed. Do not overreact.
- Explain new situations in advance and in a simple manner. Try role-playing to prepare for future situations.
- Establish clear and regular morning and bedtime routines. Make sure you stick with them. Children feel more comfortable with a well-structured and predictable routine.
- Assess whether television or video game violence may be contributing to your child’s fears. Television and video games might make your child scared even if they say it does not bother them.
- Go to the library and take out books to read to your child that addresses specific fears and fearful situations.
- Be open and explain stressors on the family (e.g. a future move, problems with a sibling) to your child in a way that is easy for them to understand. Reassure them that the adults in the family will take care of the situation. Children can become sensitive to adult anxiety and may exaggerate situations that are not explained to them.
- Try to avoid extremes (e.g. being too rigid, too permissive, too overprotective).

Reminder: Refer to self-care section for tips parents can use to help take care of themselves.
SECTION 4: ANXIETY AND HOW WE THINK
Self-Talk

Most of the time stress is caused by how children perceive a situation and what they say to themselves about the situation. Parents and children have both helpful and unhelpful ways of talking to themselves (both out loud and in their head). It is unfortunate that the unhelpful thoughts overpower and occur quite frequently for anxious children. If children think unhelpfully on a regular basis they may become discouraged and feel quite powerless.

Reminder: Listen to your children become aware of their helpful thoughts. Encourage them to voice these thoughts to you and themselves. This may make them more confident and optimistic.

Self-talk is what individuals say to themselves when confronted with an anxiety-provoking situation. How we interpret a situation is affected by what we think and what we say to ourselves. Everyone engages in self-talk since we communicate with ourselves all the time. There are two different types of self-talk: helpful self-talk and unhelpful self-talk.

**Helpful self-talk** is when we speak pleasantly and positively to ourselves and about ourselves. Helpful self-talk helps to decrease your child’s stress, helps them stay calm, emphasizes their strengths, and encourages what they are capable of. For example: I can overcome my anxiety or I am awesome.

**Unhelpful self-talk** is when we concentrate on qualities that we dislike about ourselves. Unhelpful self-talk involves labels that are upsetting and children may hear these labels from others around them (e.g. at school, at home). Children internalize these labels and believe that they are true. Unhelpful self-talk affects children in two ways: their behaviour and how children view themselves. In regards to their behaviour, negative self-talk makes a child’s anxiety much worse. Unhelpful self-talk may generate feelings of anxiety and vulnerability that inhibit a child from using normal coping skills. In regards to how children view themselves, unhelpful self-talk overpowers the child’s confidence level. Children may begin to believe the labels they are putting on themselves. For example: I can’t do this or I am not smart enough.

Reminder: Unhelpful self-talk might not completely go away. You can help your child by assisting them to practice their positive self-talk more regularly.
Example:

SITUATION: See a clown

THOUGHT: The clown is silly

FEELING: Calm or Happy

THOUGHT: The clown is going to hurt me

FEELING: Scared or Anxious

This shows children that what they think affects how they feel.

Coping Statements

A trick to help your kids think more positively is by using ‘Coping Statements’. Coping statements are positive announcements that children can say to themselves when they are feeling anxious or stressed. Coping statements boost self-confidence, increase positivity, and decrease the level of negative self-talk.

Some examples of coping statements are:

“This situation may scare me but I know some tools that can help me deal with it.”

“I can handle these symptoms I am feeling – they are just a part of my anxiety.”

“I can get through this – I am bigger than my anxiety – I am more powerful.”

“I am the boss – get out of my way anxiety.”

“Anxiety is just a bully.”

“Deep breathing can help me at a time like this.”

“I am thinking of my happy place <insert happy place>”

“I can ask Mom to help me with my anxiety – I know she will help me and support me”

Reminder: OPTIMISM IS IMPORTANT. IF YOU ARE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH ANXIETY THEY WILL BE TOO.
** Ask your child to take out the coping cards made during group – they can keep these in their anxiety fighting toolbox, their book bag, or their pocket for easy access.

** Family Activity – make coping cards together as a family.

Instructions:

1. Cut some coloured paper in half to make coping cards.
2. Think of some positive statements that make you feel good about yourself. See above for some examples.
3. Write these down on your coping cards.
4. Decorate them with markers and stickers.
5. Keep these in your anxiety fighting toolbox, your book bag or your pocket for easy access.
SECTION 5: RELAXATION TECHNIQUES FOR YOUR CHILDREN
Relaxation

**What is Relaxation Training?**

Relaxation is a type of activity that helps your child relax or achieve a state of calmness. Relaxation training can help decrease stress, anxiety, or anger in your child. Relaxation training can decrease stiff muscles, slow your child’s heart rate, and slow your child’s breathing.

**Relaxation Techniques**

Relaxation techniques are activities that can teach your children how to relax, when to relax, and why to relax. Once your child learns these skills they can practice them everywhere, at home, in the classroom, out in public, and when they have to perform in front of people. As a parent, you can assist them with these activities. These relaxation techniques can be a fun family activity. These activities include: deep breathing and muscle relaxation, positive imagery, positive thinking, and stress control.

**Positive imagery** helps your child focus their attention and use their imagination in creative ways. Positive imagery helps your child imagine doing great things that they would like to do and going to a special place that they would like to go.

**Positive thinking** helps your child learn how to be positive with themselves and with others and why being positive is important. Your child can use positive thinking everywhere – at school, at recess, during playtime, during sports, with peers, with family, and whenever they need to feel better about a situation.

**Stress control** helps your child identify and cope with stress, and when to use these coping skills and why they are important. Your child can use these skills when they are tense, worried, or stressed.

The relaxation techniques, positive imagery, stress control, and positive thinking activities come from the MindMasters program\(^1\) by Terry Orlick, used with permission. Included in this manual are a few MindMasters activities that you can use with your child. On each MindMasters sheet are directions to use during the activities and questions and topics to discuss with your child. The activities within this manual were discussed during the children’s group.

Included in this manual are the relaxation exercises:

- Basic Spaghetti Toes

Jelly Belly

Special Place Relaxation ** There is an activity sheet that can be used for special relaxation that is included in this manual.

Umbalakiki

Muscle Relaxation

One Breath Relaxation

Included in this manual is the ‘Cat Relaxation Scale’. The ‘Cat Relaxation Scale’ is used to gauge your child’s relaxation before and after using one of the relaxation activities.

Family Activity

*Take some time each day to do one relaxation activity with your child. This will allow you to re-direct them when you feel like they need to use one of their relaxation techniques.
SECTION 6:
PARENTAL SELF-CARE
Self-care is essential for moms and dads. Happy parents are important for a happy family. It is key for parents to make sure their own needs are met. Parents often feel pressure to give so much to their children that they forget to take care of their own needs. However, giving too much can burn parents out and make them less able to effectively parent their children. Many parents feel that they are not being good parents if they do not max themselves out and give 100% to their children. Many parents feel that if they spending time on themselves would be selfish, but ironically, doing so can help make them better parents.

**Parents who take care of themselves are healthier.**

Being constantly stressed out leads to an unhealthy lifestyle. If parents do not take care of themselves increases their chances of being sick since their immune systems go down. It is very easy to take care of yourself. It is as easy as improving your diet, taking multivitamins, or working out. It is vital to manage your stress level before anger or fatigue sets in and gets the best of you. See the section on four dimensions of self-care for some fun and interesting things you can do. Self-care does not just mean going to the spa or working out it also means looking inside oneself for things that will make you happy. Parents need to ask themselves what they want out of life, and not go by what other people have to say or what they think society will make of their decisions.

**Happy parents create an atmosphere of happiness.**

If parents are cranky, grouchy and short with each other, those emotions and actions will spill over to their children. It is okay to feel these emotions but portraying them in front of their children will affect them greatly. If parents are feeling content, positive, and loving, then there will be an upbeat mood within the home. Parents set the tone for how the household will work and their actions or inactions filter down and affect everyone. If you are feeling down or in need of some help then contact your local counselling services.

**Set boundaries.**

If a parent does not set their own boundaries to take time out for himself/herself, what are they teaching their children? Ideally, a parent wants children who are helpful, but also know how to take care of themselves and not be taken advantage of. It is important to tell children that they need to take time for themselves. Do not be afraid to say to your family that you need to take a time out and do something for yourself. It is important to communicate with your family when you are feeling burnt out. Make a schedule and set aside some time during the day for yourself. Even if it is only for 30 minutes.
Four Dimensions of Self-Care

When you find yourself being stressed or burnt out take time out of your busy lifestyle for self-care. Self-care involved four dimensions: intellectual, spiritual, emotional/social, and physical.

Intellectual:

- Defined as the need to expand one’s mind.
  - Go to the library. But stay there and read. This will give you time to spend by yourself in a quiet place.
  - Take a class that you would never think of taking.

Spirituality:

- Defined as uplifting or inspirational aspects of your life
  - Meditate.
  - Take a bath while listening to some music.
  - Volunteer.
  - Watch a sunrise or sunset.
  - Use the MindMasters CD and practice the relaxation techniques with your children.

Emotional/Social:

- Defined as learning about yourself.
  - Call up a friend.
  - Join a parenting group.
  - Have date night with your spouse.
  - Journal.

Physical:

- Defined as taking care of one’s body.
  - Get a gym membership and plan a schedule to work out.
  - Eat healthier – have a well balanced diet according to Canada’s Food Guide.
  - Make sure you are getting at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
  - Go for a walk or a bike ride.
  - Take a yoga class.
SECTION 7:
WRAP-UP
This section discusses some extra information that may be beneficial for you and your family.

How Friends and Family Can Help

Seeing you struggle with a child who has anxiety can be very difficult for the people who love and care about you. Friends and family want to help you deal with your child’s anxiety; however, they may inadvertently be doing things that are not so helpful.

The following list includes things that your friends and family might be doing that may be maintaining your child’s anxiety.

“Following the Rules”

- Some children with anxiety have set up their lives in ways where they can avoid certain situations that cause them anxiety, creating rules for themselves.
- Your family might think they are being helpful when assisting your child sticking to these rules. However, what they are actually doing is helping your child AVOID anxiety.

Reminder: Avoiding anxiety only works in the short-term. Having your child face their anxiety will effectively manage their anxiety in the long-term.

Keeping Your Child “Out of Danger”

- It can be troubling for friends and family to see your child feeling anxious, they can sometimes keep your child out of danger before they are even in an anxiety-provoking situation.
- For example: A family member might pull you out of a social situation as soon as your child looks uncomfortable.
- It is clear that friends and family are trying to help but the message they are sending is that anxiety needs to be avoided at all costs and is uncomfortable.

Reminder: Anxiety IS uncomfortable and sometimes unpleasant, but it is not dangerous. It is a normal and necessary emotion in the body.

** Refer to the section ‘Information on Anxiety’ for possible symptoms.

Pushing Too Much
• Some friends and family members may try to push your child into anxious situations. This may be because they are hearing the benefits of facing one's fears. Some friends and family members will try to push your child into these situations before they are ready.

• For example: If your child is afraid of clowns they might take your child to a circus.

• Facing fears is a good thing but only when it is not sprung on your child suddenly. Friends and family who push too much may actually be making the world a scary place for your child and may cause your child to have distrust in them.

Reminder: It is important for your child to face their fears but it is best to do this gradually and at their own pace.

Here are some helpful strategies that friends and family members can do to help. It is important for you to convey these strategies to your friends and family.

Learning About Anxiety

• An important first step that friends and family should do is learn about what anxiety is, anxiety triggers, and strategies that are helpful, such as coping skills. Family and friends need to know this information.

Reminder: Friends and family are more likely to be able to help your child if they understand what anxiety is and how they can help manage your child’s anxiety.

Provide your family and friends with a copy of the parenting manual. This will give them a complete understanding of what anxiety is and multiple strategies, resources and valuable information.

Practising Skills with Others

• It is important to have your friends and family practice the skills your child is learning. Friends and family are great supporters and will understand the strategies you are learning.

Remembering Not to Push
• It is important for your friends and family to encourage your children in managing their anxiety; however, it is important that your child do so at their own pace.

• Tell friends and family that they need to respect the pace that your child is setting for dealing with his/her anxiety. Friends and family who encourage you to try new things is great, but they should not force your child into new situations.

• It might seem confusing for your friends and family when they are told they should not encourage avoidance but that they also should not push your child into anxious situations.

• Rule: Family and friends are the most helpful when they providing your child with reinforcement and encouragement. Have friends and family help your child think about what they can do to face their fears.

How to Prevent a Relapse

The final section of the parenting manual discusses how to assist your child in preventing a relapse. This section will help you assist your child in maintaining all the skills discussed during the children’s group. It will also assist you in maintaining the knowledge that you have learned throughout group.

Many individuals who have anxiety are afraid of losing any progress that they have made. This is what they call a ‘relapse’. A relapse is defined as reducing anxious symptoms and feeling comfortable with their anxiety and then slipping back into old habits and losing the improvements that they have made.

What is the difference between a lapse and a relapse?

A lapse is when an individual returns to their unhelpful thoughts and habits for a brief period of time. Lapses can be triggered by stress, mood, and fatigue.

A relapse is a return of all your child’s unhelpful thoughts and behaviours that they had prior to learning new and effective ways to manage their anxiety.

Tips for Preventing a Lapse

Tip #1: Practice, practice, and more practice

The best way to help your child prevent a lapse is to keep practicing their coping skills taught during the children’s group. If they are regularly practicing their skills they will be successful in handling anxiety-provoking situations. Have your child practice their deep breathing, muscle relaxation, positive imagery etc. Make a schedule that will determine what skills your child will practice every week.

Tip #2: Know Your Child’s Triggers
Your child is less likely to have a lapse if you and your child know their triggers. For example, lapses may occur during stress and transitions. Make a list of your child’s triggers that can act as a reminder for you. You can also make a plan of action with your child that will help them plan for how to cope with their triggers.

**Tip #3: Know the Facts**

Having a lapse may have an impact on your child’s behaviour. They may start thinking that they are a failure and that they should just give up. It is important to sit down and talk to your child about the lapse that they just had.

**What to say to your child if/when they have a lapse.**

- It is impossible to go back to square one because they cannot unlearn all of the skills and techniques that they were taught.
- They can get back on track. Keep practicing the coping skills taught during the children’s group with them. They will be in control of their anxiety again in no time.
- Lapses are normal. Tell your child not to get down on himself/herself and realize that everyone can all make mistakes.

**Tip #7: Reward Your Child**

Make sure you reward your child and reinforce them for all the hard work they are doing. It will motivate them even more if you give them something special every once in a while. A reward might be renting their favourite movie and watching it together as a family, making a nice meal together, or buying them their favourite snack. It is hard work for your child to manage their anxiety and any progress they make is due to their own efforts and the support of your family. So in reality, every one of you deserves a reward.

Remember to be patient with your child, help them learn from their lapses and move forward.

Moving forward is the best thing a child with anxiety can do.
Resources

Internet Resources


References

Saying Goodbye!

Dear Parents,

I hope that you enjoyed reading this manual as much as I enjoyed writing it. I hope that you can take some of the skills and strategies learned from the parenting group and implement them in your own home. This manual was designed specifically for your needs and the needs of your child. I hope that it was educational and fun for you at the same time. You are an important part in your child’s life and supporting them with their anxiety is even more important.

Thanks so much,

Kaitlyn Villeneuve
RELAXATION TECHNIQUES
Basic Spaghetti Toes

A relaxation exercise that uses the concept of uncooked and cooked spaghetti to teach the difference between tension and relaxation. Children learn to relax different parts of their bodies.

Get Ready!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>CD Track #1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Feeling Great” pages 69 – 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cat Relaxation Scale (Mindmasters Worksheets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching point</td>
<td>Present the concept of stress and relaxation by talking about uncooked and cooked spaghetti. When you feel stressed-out your muscles or body often get tense or hard, like, stiff, uncooked spaghetti. When you feel relaxed your body feels more like warm, soft, cooked spaghetti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ideas</td>
<td>• If possible, distribute a piece of uncooked and cooked spaghetti for each child to explore. You can microwave already cooked spaghetti to make it feel warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It’s also fun to have children pretend to be like hard, uncooked spaghetti. Ask them to tense their muscles, their arms, legs and neck and to keep holding their muscles tight for 10 – 20 seconds. Then, instruct the children to “let go”, to let all their muscles go soft like cooked spaghetti. This is a great way to help children feel the difference between stress and relaxation and to appreciate how good it feels to be relaxed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Get Going!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To begin</th>
<th>Does anyone know what it feels like to be scared or tense or afraid or worried? Do you know what it feels like to relax? What’s the difference between feeling worried and feeling relaxed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>✓ Before they listen to the CD, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Listen to the CD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ After they’ve listened, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>How did you feel doing Spaghetti Toes? When could you use Spaghetti Toes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>Practice Spaghetti Toes on your own, in bed tonight or anytime you want to relax. Try using Spaghetti Toes when you find that something is painful or stressful. The more you practice making your muscles go soft, the better you’ll get at relaxing when you want to.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes for next time

Stress is like something is bottled up inside. Relaxation is like opening the bottle and letting all the tension pour out. (10 year-old)
Jelly Belly

A relaxation exercise that teaches children to relax by controlling their own breathing. This is a simple form of diaphragm or abdominal breathing.

Get Ready!

Resources
CD Track #2
“Feeling Great” pages 73 – 75

Teaching point
When you are worried or stressed your heart beats faster and you breathe in and out faster. When you slow down your breathing and breathe deeply from your belly (diaphragm breathing), you relax. Most great athletes and singers do Jelly Belly Breathing even when they are running or swimming or singing because it helps them to relax.

Other ideas
◆ Before listening to the Jelly Belly track, ask children to demonstrate how little children or babies breathe when they are crying (quick, shallow breaths, often gasping in between sobs, hyperventilating). Then, ask them to show you how they breathe when they are sleeping. This will help children understand how breathing patterns change and can affect them.
◆ Talk about situations in which you and the children might use Jelly Belly at school, at home, in the car, at the hospital.

Get Going!

To begin
Did anyone try Spaghetti Toes at home to relax or help you to go to sleep?
How do you know when you are feeling worried or scared?
How do you know when you are relaxed?

Activity
✓ Listen to the CD.

Wrap-up
How did you feel doing Jelly Belly? Did you feel tense or relaxed?
When could you use Jelly Belly? Could you use Jelly Belly to feel better if you are worried or to relax if you are feeling tense?

Homework
Practice Jelly Belly or Spaghetti Toes on your own whenever you feel worried or stressed, or just for the fun of taking charge of your body and making your breathing slow down and muscles relax.

Notes for next time

Relaxation is when you lie down and breathe slowly. Memories of bad stuff go away. Your troubles disappear. You just feel calm and good—like you’re free.

(9 year-old)
A relaxation exercise that teaches children how to relax their minds and bodies by imagining a beautiful, calm and relaxing special place.

**Get Ready!**

| Resources       | CD Track # 3  
|                 | ‘Feeling Great’ page 82  
|                 | Special Place Relaxation Sheet (Mindmasters Worksheets)  

| Teaching point | The more you learn to relax, the happier and less stressed you will be. A great way to relax is to think of your own Special Place, a place that is very beautiful and very relaxing.  

| Other ideas | • Remind children, especially children who have trouble creating a Special Place, to continue to look for special places wherever they go. They’ll know it’s a Special Place if it helps them to feel calm and relaxed. Then, they can remember these images and put them in their own Special Place.  

**Get Going!**

| To begin | Did anyone try Jelly Belly on your own? Ask children to share the details — what, where and how it worked.  

| Activity | ✓ Listen to the CD.  
|          | ✓ Ask children to draw or paint their Special Place. For younger children, write their description of the place on their drawing.  
|          | ✓ Show and share by giving each child the opportunity to show their drawing or share something about their Special Place.  

| Wrap-up | Did you feel relaxed or tense in your Special Place?  
|         | When would it be good to go to your Special Place? (probe for positive opportunities)  

| Homework | Practice Special Place Relaxation, Jelly Belly or Spaghetti Toes; any time you are worried or stressed or just because you want to enjoy a little relaxation.  

**Notes for next time**

Alice laughed. “There’s no use trying,” she said. “One can’t believe impossible things.” “I dare say you haven’t had much practice,” said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes, I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Lewis Carrol, Through the Looking Glass
Umbalakiki

An exercise that teaches children how to put away worries or negative feelings and to free themselves to live and perform more joyfully.

Get Ready!

| Resources     | CD Track #5  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Feeling Great” pages 52 – 55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Teaching point | We can make ourselves happier and get rid of bad feelings or worries by looking for good things or Highlights; by doing something happy every day; and by putting our worries away somewhere – like in a tree or in a jar or in an envelope. |

| Other ideas   | Use “props” such as a worry jar, worry tree or garbage can where children can place angry feelings, worries or frustrations. |

Get Going!

| To begin | Does anyone have a Highlight to share? Did anyone use a relaxation exercise on your own yesterday or today, for example, Spaghetti Toes, Jelly Belly, Special Place Relaxation? Probe for details. |

| Activity   | ✅ Listen to the CD. |

| Wrap-up    | What did the story called Umbalakiki talk about? What was the voice saying? Probe for details. How can you use what you heard in this story? Probe for examples of when and how children could use Umbalakiki or Tree It. |

| Homework   | If something worries you or makes you feel unhappy today or tomorrow, see if you can Umbalakiki it. Tree it. If you have a really big worry or something has made you very unhappy, it may be too big to put on the tree. The best way to deal with really big worries or troubles is to talk about them with someone you trust, like your parents, a teacher, a counsellor, a doctor, or me. |

Notes for next time

Put your troubles in a pocket with a hole in it. Old Postcard
**Mindmasters**

**Level 2**

**Activity # 8**

---

**Muscle Relaxation**

An exercise that teaches children how to relax by relaxing different muscle groups in their bodies.

---

### Get Ready!

| Resources | CD Track # 8  
|-----------|--------------|
|           | “Feeling Great” pages 69 - 72 and 80 - 81  
|           | Cat Relaxation Scale (Mindmasters Worksheets)  

| Teaching point | One of the best ways to relax your whole body and mind is to focus on relaxing different muscles in your body.  

| Other ideas | An effective way to help children locate and relax different muscles is to encourage them to first “tense up” or “flex” their muscles. Ask them to tense up different muscle groups: their arms, their legs, their necks. Ask them to keep their whole body tense and stiff for 10 – 20 seconds. Then, instruct them to “let go”, letting all the tension leave their muscles. This is a great way to understand the difference between tense muscles and relaxed muscles and to appreciate how it feels to be relaxed.  

---

### Get Going!

| To begin | What do you feel like when you are stressed or worried or scared?  
|          | What do you feel like when you are relaxed?  
|          | What’s the difference between feeling stressed and feeling relaxed?  

| Activity | ✓ Before they listen to the CD, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.  
|          | ✓ Listen to the CD.  
|          | ✓ After they’ve listened, ask children to circle or colour the cat they feel like.  

| Wrap-up | Were you able to focus on relaxing the different muscles in your body?  
|         | Did you feel relaxed during Muscle Relaxation?  
|         | When could you use Muscle Relaxation?  

| Homework | Practice Muscle Relaxation on your own before you go to sleep tonight.  

---

### Notes for next time

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**Stress:** It’s like a rubber band that’s pulled to the very end and it’s ready to snap.

(10-year old)
# One Breath Relaxation

A relaxation exercise that teaches children how to relax themselves quickly in a stressful situation, by taking one long, slow, deep breath, in and out.

## Get Ready!

| Resources | CD Track # 10
|           | "Feeling Great" pages 83 – 84 |
| Teaching point | The better you learn to relax, the less stressed and the happier you'll be. It is important to be able to learn to relax quickly if you need to. For example, if you are taking a test, performing a sport, speaking in front of the class or undergoing a medical procedure or if someone yells at you or you feel angry or frustrated, you'll be in charge and feel strong if you are able to relax yourself in one or two breaths. |
| Other ideas | Before doing One Breath Relaxation ask children to demonstrate how they breathe during hard physical activity, for example, when they run really fast, and to talk about how they feel when they are breathing hard and fast. Then, ask them to demonstrate how they breathe when they are sleeping or when they are very relaxed, for example, if they are lying in the sun or relaxing on the couch. This helps children understand different breathing patterns and how these breathing patterns can affect them. |

## Get Going!

| To begin | Did anyone try Quiet Lake or Muscle Relaxation to relax? Ask for someone to share details – what, when, where and how it worked. Does anyone else have an experience to share? |
| Activity | ✓ Listen to the CD. |
| Wrap-up | When could you use One Breath Relaxation? Probe for specific examples. |
| Homework | Remember to use One Breath Relaxation whenever you start to feel nervous or worried or stressed or angry; at home, in school, with friends or siblings; when taking tests, playing sports or during painful or stressful medical procedures. |

---

**Notes for next time**

> When the breathing is disturbed, the mind is disturbed. When the breath is calmed, the mind becomes steady.  
> Hatha Yoga Pradipika
Chester the Cat feels anxious!
How does Chester feel anxiety in his body?
How do YOU feel anxiety in your body?
My Fear Thermometer
CAT RELAXATION SCALE
Circle or colour the cat you felt like before relaxing and after relaxing.

How did you feel before trying to relax?

- Very Stressed
- A little stressed
- In between
- A little relaxed
- Very relaxed

How did you feel after relaxing?

- Very Stressed
- A little stressed
- In between
- A little relaxed
- Very relaxed
Special Place Relaxation

Draw or write about your own special place.
The Kid Companion—
A Manual To Help
Manage Anxiety

Created & Written by: Kaitlyn Villeneuve
Hi there,

Tony is afraid of the dark. Tara hates to eat in front of other people. Eric becomes sick to his stomach if he has to speak aloud in class. Fears and worries are a very NORMAL part of life for children and adults. Anxiety can be a scary thing. But it actually does not have to be. There are many things that YOU can do to help manage anxiety. This manual was created to help you understand anxiety more and give you tools that can be used to help decrease anxiety. I hope that this manual is helpful and interesting at the same time.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Villeneuve

😊
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INFORMATION ON ANXIETY

What Is Anxiety?

Anxiety Is:

- A feeling of worry
- A feeling of nervousness
- Feeling worried about an activity.
- Feeling stressed about an activity.

Feeling anxiety is NORMAL, and EVERYONE experiences it.

Anxiety can be helpful, and it can be unhelpful. Anxiety can be helpful because it can help you get ready for challenges and cope with dangers. It can become unhelpful if it happens in situations that stop you from doing things you like. For example: going to a sleepover or eating in certain restaurants.

Our Goal is to help manage anxiety, not remove it.

The Difference Between a Fear and a Phobia

A fear is:

• Natural.
• Something that can begin during certain times in your life.
• Something that may develop after an upsetting event.

A phobia is:

• A fear that interferes with someone’s daily life.
• Intense.

Symptoms of Anxiety

Common Symptoms of Anxiety in Kids

• Sore tummy
• Heart races
• Fast breathing
• Peeing a lot
• Tense muscles
• Not sleeping
• Angry
• Cannot concentrate
• Not wanting to leave parents
• Refusing to go to school
• Temper tantrums
• Feeling uncomfortable playing with friends
• Avoiding certain places or activities
• Being shy

** Take out the Chester the Cat worksheet from your anxiety fighting toolbox or turn to the work sheet section for a blank Chester the Cat or How do you feel anxiety in your body?

Instructions:

Write on the worksheet some of the feelings you have when you feel anxious, nervous or stressed.
Talk about it with your mom or dad – Ask them what happens when they become anxious.

---

ANXIETY TRIGGERS

What Are Anxiety Triggers?

Anxiety can happen for many reasons. A trigger is an object or situation that can cause anxiety symptoms to appear. Some things that can cause anxiety are clear and some are not. It is very important to understand what about the ‘fear’ (object or situation) is causing the anxiety.

Common Anxiety Triggers

Some common anxiety triggers for kids are:

- Leaving a parent
- Making new friends
- Bullying or teasing
- Speaking in front of a class
- Writing a test
- Speaking out loud
- Being hurried from one activity to the next
- Fighting with parents, brothers or sisters
- Fear of dogs or the dark
- Having a lot of homework
- Moving to a new home or school
- Being left alone at home

Activity You Can Do At Home

Make a list of your own triggers with mom or dad.
Talk to mom or dad about some things that cause you to feel anxious or stressed.
Ask mom or dad about things that make them anxious or stressed.

Steps of Anxiety

Anxiety occurs in different stages. Understanding how anxiety happens will help you understand it.

**Triggering Event:** Anxiety usually starts after an object or situation that causes anxiety. For example: seeing a big dog.

**Thoughts:** Next comes the ‘worry thoughts’. These are thoughts that may be running through your head. For example: Thinking –“Oh no, the dog is going to bite me” or “That is a really big dog.”

**Feelings:** Anxious thoughts lead to anxious feelings. For example: feeling afraid, feeling upset, feeling scared.

**Behaviours:** Behaviours are things that you do when feeling anxious. For example: running away from the dog, crossing the street.
Anxiety and How We Think

Self-Talk

Self-Talk is:

- Comments that we say to ourselves (both out loud and in our head) when we feel anxious.
- Something that everyone does and happens all the time.
- Something that might overpower our thinking and occur a lot if we feel anxious.

Self-Talk can be both helpful and unhelpful.

Helpful self-talk is:

- When we speak nicely to ourselves.
- Something that may decrease our stress
- Something that may help us stay calm
- Something that highlights our strengths
- Something that encourages us.

For example: I can overcome my anxiety.

I am awesome.

Unhelpful self-talk is:

- When we concentrate on things we dislike about ourselves.
- Something that might be upsetting for us.
- Something that may make anxiety worse.
- Something that may overpower our confidence.

For example: I can’t stand up in front of the class and read.

I am not good at hockey.

Practice Helpful Self-Talk often. Look in the mirror and say “I Rock”.

Remember: NO UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS ALLOWED.

BECAUSE WHAT WE THINK AFFECTS HOW WE FEEL.
COPING STATEMENTS

Here is a trick to help think more positively: Coping Statements on Coping Cards

Coping statements are positive words that you can say to yourself. Coping statements are empowering, inspiring, and just make you feel AWESOME.

It is important to say these statements to yourself when you are feeling stressed or a little anxious.

Here are some examples of Coping Statements:

“This situation scares me BUT I know some tools that can help me deal with it.”

“I am bigger than my anxiety – I am more powerful.”

“Anxiety is JUST a bully.”

“I ROCK.”

“I am awesome.”

Do you know what Optimism is?

Optimism is always looking at the positive and good in everything around you. It is important to be optimistic.

For example: I will do well on my math test.

** Remember: Take out the coping cards from your anxiety fighting toolbox. Or create some coping cards with your family. This can be a fun activity.

Activity You Can Do At Home

- Cut some coloured paper in half to make coping cards.
- Think of some positive statements that make you feel good about yourself. See above for some examples.
- Write these down on your coping cards.
- Decorate them with markers and stickers.
- Keep these in your anxiety fighting toolbox, your book bag or your pocket for easy access.
Relaxation Training

What is Relaxation Training?

Relaxation is some type of activity that helps you relax or achieve a state of calmness. Relaxation training can help decrease stress, anxiety, or anger. Relaxation training can decrease stiff muscles, slow your heart rate, and slow your breathing.

Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation techniques are activities that can teach you how to relax, when to relax, and why to relax. Once you learn these skills you can practice them everywhere, at home, in the classroom, out in public, and when you have to perform in front of people. These activities include: deep breathing and muscle relaxation.

Along with relaxation techniques, you are also going to learn some positive imagery, positive thinking, and stress control.

Positive imagery helps you focus your attention and use your imagination in creative ways. This helps you imagine yourself doing great things that you would like to do and going to a special place that you would like to go.

Positive thinking helps you learn how to be positive with yourself and with others and why being positive is important. You can use positive thinking everywhere – at school, at recess, during playtime, during sports, with peers, with family, and whenever you need to feel better about a situation.

Stress control helps you identify and cope with stress, and when to use these coping skills and why they are important. You can use these skills when you are tense, worried, or stressed.

The relaxation techniques, positive imagery, stress control, and positive thinking activities come from the MindMasters program by Terry Orlick, used with permission. Included in this manual are a few MindMasters activities that you can use. Also, use the Relaxation Scale provided in the worksheet section, to rate how you feel before and after using each activity.

---

Included are:

- Basic Spaghetti Toes
- Jelly Belly
- Special Place Relaxation. *See the worksheet section for the special place relaxation worksheet.
- Umbalakiki
- Muscle Relaxation
- One Breath Relaxation

**See the relaxation techniques section for the mind masters activities. Don’t forget to use the mind masters CD as well.
Self-Care

What is Self-care?

Self-care is things that you can do to take care of yourself and to make you feel happy.

When you are feeling tense or upset, you can:

- Sing
- Jump around
- Go for a walk
- Go for a run
- Go for a bike ride
- Play with a pet
- Throw a ball around
- Read a book
- Draw or colour
- Talk to a friend or a family member
- Listen to music
- Listen to your relaxation CD and practice your relaxation activities. **See above section on relaxation training.

To help yourself feel better, you can:

- Take a nap – make sure you get enough sleep
- Take a time out or enjoy some quiet time
- Talk to your stuffed animals
- Use your relaxation CD and relaxation activities
- Use your coping cards. **Refer to the section on Anxiety and How we Think.
- Stretch
- Snuggle your pillow
- Have a yummy and healthy snack – having a well balanced diet, which comes from the Canada Food Guide, and consists of at least 3 regular meals of breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus snacks.
- Regular exercise
- Participate in yoga, martial arts, or sports.
RESOURCES

Internet Resources


Relaxation Activities
Basic Spaghetti Toes

A relaxation exercise that uses the concept of uncooked and cooked spaghetti to teach the difference between tension and relaxation. Children learn to relax different parts of their bodies.

Get Ready!

| Resources      | CD Track #1
|                | “Feeling Great” pages 69 – 72
|                | Cat Relaxation Scale (Mindmasters Worksheets)

| Teaching point | Present the concept of stress and relaxation by talking about uncooked and cooked spaghetti. When you feel stressed-out your muscles or body often get tense or hard, like, stiff, uncooked spaghetti. When you feel relaxed your body feels more like warm, soft, cooked spaghetti.

| Other ideas    | ◆ If possible, distribute a piece of uncooked and cooked spaghetti for each child to explore. You can microwave already cooked spaghetti to make it feel warm.
|                | ◆ It’s also fun to have children pretend to be like hard, uncooked spaghetti. Ask them to tense their muscles, their arms, legs and neck and to keep holding their muscles tight for 10 – 20 seconds. Then, instruct the children to “let go”, to let all their muscles go soft like cooked spaghetti. This is a great way to help children feel the difference between stress and relaxation and to appreciate how good it feels to be relaxed.

Get Going!

| To begin       | Does anyone know what it feels like to be scared or tense or afraid or worried? Do you know what it feels like to relax? What’s the difference between feeling worried and feeling relaxed?

| Activity       | ✓ Before they listen to the CD, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.
|                | ✓ Listen to the CD.
|                | ✓ After they’ve listened, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.

| Wrap-up        | How did you feel doing Spaghetti Toes? When could you use Spaghetti Toes?

| Homework       | Practice Spaghetti Toes on your own, in bed tonight or anytime you want to relax. Try using Spaghetti Toes when you find that something is painful or stressful. The more you practice making your muscles go soft, the better you’ll get at relaxing when you want to.

Notes for next time

Stress is like something is bottled up inside. Relaxation is like opening the bottle and letting all the tension pour out. (10 year-old)
**Jelly Belly**

A relaxation exercise that teaches children to relax by controlling their own breathing. This is a simple form of diaphragm or abdominal breathing.

---

### Get Ready!

| Resources | CD Track #2  
Feeling Great pages 73 – 75 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching point</td>
<td>When you are worried or stressed your heart beats faster and you breathe in and out faster. When you slow down your breathing and breathe deeply from your belly (diaphragm breathing), you relax. Most great athletes and singers do Jelly Belly Breathing even when they are running or swimming or singing because it helps them to relax.</td>
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</table>
| Other ideas | ◆ Before listening to the Jelly Belly track, ask children to demonstrate how little children or babies breathe when they are crying (quick, shallow breaths, often gasping in between sobs, hyperventilating). Then, ask them to show you how they breathe when they are sleeping. This will help children understand how breathing patterns change and can affect them.  
◆ Talk about situations in which you and the children might use Jelly Belly at school, at home, in the car, at the hospital. |

---

### Get Going!

| To begin | Did anyone try Spaghetti Toes at home to relax or help you to go to sleep?  
How do you know when you are feeling worried or scared?  
How do you know when you are relaxed? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>✅ Listen to the CD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Wrap-up | How did you feel doing Jelly Belly? Did you feel tense or relaxed?  
When could you use Jelly Belly? Could you use Jelly Belly to feel better if you are worried or to relax if you are feeling tense? |
| Homework | Practice Jelly Belly or Spaghetti Toes on your own whenever you feel worried or stressed, or just for the fun of taking charge of your body and making your breathing slow down and muscles relax. |

---

**Notes for next time**

Relaxation is when you lie down and breathe slowly. Memories of bad stuff go away. Your troubles disappear. You just feel calm and good – like you’re free. 

(9 year-old)
**Special Place Relaxation**

A relaxation exercise that teaches children how to relax their minds and bodies by imagining a beautiful, calm and relaxing special place.

### Get Ready!

| Resources     | CD Track #3  
|               | ‘Feeling Great’ page 82  
|               | Special Place Relaxation Sheet (Mindmasters Worksheets) |
| Teaching point| The more you learn to relax, the happier and less stressed you will be. A great way to relax is to think of your own Special Place, a place that is very beautiful and very relaxing. |
| Other ideas   | Remind children, especially children who have trouble creating a Special Place, to continue to look for special places wherever they go. They’ll know it’s a Special Place if it helps them to feel calm and relaxed. Then, they can remember these images and put them in their own Special Place. |

### Get Going!

| To begin       | Did anyone try Jelly Belly on your own? Ask children to share the details – what, where and how it worked. |
| Activity       | ✔ Listen to the CD.  
|               | ✔ Ask children to draw or paint their Special Place. For younger children, write their description of the place on their drawing.  
|               | ✔ Show and share by giving each child the opportunity to show their drawing or share something about their Special Place. |
| Wrap-up        | Did you feel relaxed or tense in your Special Place? When would it be good to go to your Special Place? (probe for positive opportunities) |
| Homework       | Practice Special Place Relaxation, Jelly Belly or Spaghetti Toes any time you are worried or stressed or just because you want to enjoy a little relaxation. |

**Notes for next time**

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Alice laughed. “There’s no use trying,” she said. “One can’t believe impossible things.” “I dare say you haven’t had much practice,” said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Lewis Carrol, Through the Looking Glass
**Umbalakiki**

An exercise that teaches children how to put away worries or negative feelings and to free themselves to live and perform more joyfully.

---

### Get Ready!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>CD Track # 5</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Feeling Great</em> pages 52 – 55</td>
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</table>

**Teaching point**

We can make ourselves happier and get rid of bad feelings or worries by looking for good things or Highlights; by doing something happy every day; and by putting our worries away somewhere – like in a tree or in a jar or in an envelope.

**Other ideas**

- Use “props” such as a worry jar, worry tree or garbage can where children can place angry feelings, worries or frustrations.

---

### Get Going!

**To begin**

Does anyone have a Highlight to share? Did anyone use a relaxation exercise on your own yesterday or today, for example, Spaghetti Toes, Jelly Belly, Special Place Relaxation? Probe for details.

**Activity**

- Listen to the CD.

**Wrap-up**

What did the story called Umbalakiki talk about? What was the voice saying? Probe for details. How can you use what you heard in this story? Probe for examples of when and how children could use Umbalakiki or Tree It.

**Homework**

If something worries you or makes you feel unhappy today or tomorrow, see if you can Umbalakiki it. Tree It. If you have a really big worry or something has made you very unhappy, it may be too big to put on the tree. The best way to deal with really big worries or troubles is to talk about them with someone you trust, like your parents, a teacher, a counsellor, a doctor, or me.

---

**Notes for next time**

---

Put your troubles in a pocket with a hole in it. Old Postcard
Mindmasters
Level 2

Activity # 8

Muscle Relaxation
An exercise that teaches children how to relax by relaxing different muscle groups in their bodies.

Get Ready!

Resources
CD Track # 8
“Feeling Great” pages 69 - 72 and 80 – 81
Cat Relaxation Scale (Mindmasters Worksheets)

Teaching point
One of the best ways to relax your whole body and mind is to focus on relaxing different muscles in your body.

Other ideas
◆ An effective way to help children locate and relax different muscles is to encourage them to first “tense up” or “flex” their muscles. Ask them to tense up different muscle groups: their arms, their legs, their necks. Ask them to keep their whole body tense and stiff for 10 – 20 seconds. Then, instruct them to “let go”, letting all the tension leave their muscles. This is a great way to understand the difference between tense muscles and relaxed muscles and to appreciate how it feels to be relaxed.

Get Going!

To begin
What do you feel like when you are stressed or worried or scared?
What do you feel like when you are relaxed?
What’s the difference between feeling stressed and feeling relaxed?

Activity
✓ Before they listen to the CD, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.
✓ Listen to the CD.
✓ After they’ve listened, ask children to circle or colour the cat they feel like.

Wrap-up
Were you able to focus on relaxing the different muscles in your body?
Did you feel relaxed during Muscle Relaxation?
When could you use Muscle Relaxation?

Homework
Practice Muscle Relaxation on your own before you go to sleep tonight.

Notes for next time

Stress: It’s like a rubber band that’s pulled to the very end and it’s ready to snap.
(10-year old)
One Breath Relaxation

A relaxation exercise that teaches children how to relax themselves quickly in a stressful situation, by taking one long, slow, deep breath, in and out.

Get Ready!

| Resources  | CD Track # 10  
|           | "Feeling Great" pages 83 – 84 |
| Teaching point | The better you learn to relax, the less stressed and the happier you'll be. It is important to be able to learn to relax quickly if you need to. For example, if you are taking a test, performing a sport, speaking in front of the class or undergoing a medical procedure or if someone yells at you or you feel angry or frustrated, you'll be in charge and feel strong if you are able to relax yourself in one or two breaths. |
| Other ideas | Before doing One Breath Relaxation ask children to demonstrate how they breathe during hard physical activity, for example, when they run really fast, and to talk about how they feel when they are breathing hard and fast. Then, ask them to demonstrate how they breathe when they are sleeping or when they are very relaxed, for example, if they are lying in the sun or relaxing on the couch. This helps children understand different breathing patterns and how these breathing patterns can affect them. |

Get Going!

| To begin | Did anyone try Quiet Lake or Muscle Relaxation to relax? Ask for someone to share details – what, when, where and how it worked. Does anyone else have an experience to share? |
| Activity | Yes – Listen to the CD. |
| Wrap-up | When could you use One Breath Relaxation? Probe for specific examples. |
| Homework | Remember to use One Breath Relaxation whenever you start to feel nervous or worried or stressed or angry; at home, in school, with friends or siblings; when taking tests, playing sports or during painful or stressful medical procedures. |

When the breathing is disturbed, the mind is disturbed.
When the breath is calmed, the mind becomes steady.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
ACTIVITY WORKSHEETS
Chester the Cat feels anxious!
How does Chester feel anxiety in his body?

- Headache
- Face goes red
- Lump in throat
- Big eyes
- Can’t talk
- Clenched fist
- Butterflies in stomach, or sore tummy
- Cold hands and feet
- Shaking legs
How do **YOU** feel anxiety in your body?
My Fear Thermometer
CAT RELAXATION

Circle or colour the cat you felt like before relaxing and after relaxing.

How did you feel before trying to relax?

- Very Stressed
- A little stressed
- In between
- A little relaxed
- Very relaxed

How did you feel after relaxing?

- Very Stressed
- A little stressed
- In between
- A little relaxed
- Very relaxed
SPECIAL PLACE

RELAXATION

Draw or write about your own special place.
Children’s Anxiety Group

Facilitator’s Guide

Created & Written by: Kaitlyn Villeneuve
Dear Facilitator,

This guide is directed to assist you in organizing and replicating the children’s group. The group was designed to correspond with some of the modules discussed during the parenting group ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’. Included in the facilitators guide are agendas for each session, worksheets, activities, and tools that will be needed for each session. However, this facilitator’s manual is only put together as a guide. It is not necessary to implement the group exactly since all children have different needs and recognizing the needs of each individual group is important. The previous children’s group had great success and it is important to make it your own. If you think of some cool activity that you would love to do then by all means put it in.

The Kid Companion – A Manual to Help Manage Anxiety is a kid-friendly manual that I designed in conjunction with Child and Youth Counselling Services (CYCS). I gathered information and resources that CYCS already had and incorporated them into my manual. The kid-friendly manual was developed for children, ages of 7-12, and should be adapted if you are running a group with older children.

I hope that that you enjoy facilitating this group as much as I did.

Remember: Be creative and have fun. 😊

Kaitlyn Villeneuve
St. Lawrence College Student
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Children’s Anxiety Group Agenda Week #1

5:00 p.m. – Group Begins

5:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. – Introductions

- Facilitators should introduce themselves
- Children introductions – asking them ‘what brought them to group’. (Remember: ‘I don’t know’ or ‘My parents made me’ is not an answer)

5:10 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. – Group Rules

- Discuss group rules that are written on the poster board.

5:15 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. – Introduction to Anxiety

- What is anxiety?
- Ask the children what they believe anxiety is – get some definitions and write on easel.

5:25 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. – Symptoms of Anxiety

- Chester the Cat Activity: Pass out the blank Chester the Cat activities and have the children identify their own symptoms of anxiety.

5:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Break Time

6:00 p.m. to 6:25 p.m. – Fears, Phobias & Anxiety

- Discuss with the children the difference between fears, phobias and anxiety. Write on the easel.
- Assign homework

6:25 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – Anxiety Fighting Toolbox

- Explain the tool box to the children
- Allow them to decorate their anxiety fighting toolbox.

6:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Meeting with Parents

- Go over what was discussed during the children’s group.
- Go over the items in the anxiety fighting toolbox
- Discuss the homework.

Body Break If Needed*
• Body Breaks are important when running a group with anxious children. Body breaks can be as simple as going for a walk around the building or stretching in their seats. Body breaks help the children release some of their energy from sitting in their seats.

How To Create An Anxiety Fighting Toolbox

The anxiety-fighting toolbox is an important aspect of the Children’s Anxiety Group. The kids can decorate their own box and put some useful things in it. This is a fun way to get everyone interested in managing his or her anxiety.

Materials Needed

- A pencil case (preferably a hard shell case)
- A ‘worry’ notebook
- A stretchy bracelet or necklace for the girls (could be called ‘Chewlry’)
- A stress ball for the boys.
- Stickers (this is important because the kids can decorate their box as part of a getting to know each other activity)

**Have these materials ready prior to the first session of the children’s group.

How To Create Group Rules

Group rules are important for a group to run successfully. Having group rules helps the children understand what is expected of them. The group rules should be simple and easy for the children to understand.

Group rules could include:

• Showing Respect
• Listening
• No Interrupting each other (always raise your hand to speak)
• No sharing of individual stories outside of group
• Participation – Everyone must participate
• Responsibility – take responsibility for your actions

The group rules can be flexible and ask the children if they would like to add their own. Purchase a piece of Bristol board and write out the rules. Keep them hung somewhere around the room as a reminder for the children.
Using the Parent Manual and the Kid Companion

The information regarding introductions to anxiety, symptoms of anxiety, and fears and phobias can be taken out of the parent manual and the kid companion. Refer back to these manuals for information regarding the above topics. Use the attached activities: Chester the Cat (Appendix A), and How do you feel anxiety in your body? (Appendix B) to help the kids understand their own anxiety.

**Activity:**

Photocopy the blank Chester the Cat (Appendix C) activity or How do you feel anxiety in your body? Have the children write different ways that they feel anxiety in their body. After they are done have the children go around the room and share how they feel anxiety in their body.

When Meeting With the Parents

When meeting with the parents discuss what has been learned during the session. Explain any activities that were completed and discuss with them the anxiety fighting toolbox and its contents.
Children’s Group – Week #2 Agenda

5:00 p.m. – Group Begins

5:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. – Catch up

- How was everyone’s week
- Ask if there are any questions from last week

5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. – Fear, Phobia & Anxiety Game

- Questions:
  - What is anxiety?
  - Is anxiety normal? Yes or No
  - Give 2 of your symptoms of anxiety
  - Give 2 of your fears
    - Ask the kids to write this down on a piece of paper and go over to discuss. Then give them a prize for sharing.

5:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Break

6:00 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. – Anxiety Triggers & Common Anxiety Triggers

- What are ‘Anxiety Triggers?’ – provide examples
- Have the children discuss some of their anxiety triggers

6:20 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – Steps of Anxiety

- Write on board & provide an example.

6:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Meet with the Parents

- Go over what was discussed during Children’s Group
- Discuss with them the ‘worry notebook’

*Body Break if Needed

**Refer to the above instructions regarding the body break.

Assign Homework:

The homework should include: discussing their ‘triggers’ with their parents and writing in their worry notebook.
Fear, Phobia & Anxiety Game

The fear, phobia and anxiety game is a refresher that will assist kids in their understanding of the information discussed in the previous week. The game should be no longer than 30 minutes long and a prize should be purchased for each individual for participation (pencils from the dollar store is a good prize).

The questions for the game are listed above in the agenda; however, you may use different questions. The questions listed above are just examples.

Using the Parent Manual or Kid Companion

The information regarding anxiety triggers and steps of anxiety can be taken out of the parent manual and the kid companion. Refer back to these manuals for information regarding the above topics.

When Meeting With the Parents

When meeting with the parents discuss what has been learned during the session. Remind the parents about the worry notebook included in the anxiety fighting toolbox. Remind the parents to prompt their children to write in the notebook if they seem upset or anxious.
Children’s Group – Week #3 Agenda

5:00 p.m. – Group Begins

5:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. – Catch Up

• Ask how everyone’s week was
• Ask if there were any questions from last week
• Ask about the worry notebook

5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. – Worry Tree Activity

• Pauline will read a worry tree story
• Discuss what the story means to the children
• Ask the kids if they would like to put any of their worries from their worry notebook onto the tree.
• Give the kids some time to place their worries on the tree.

5:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Break Time

6:00 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. – Positive Self-Talk

• What is Self-Talk?
• How Self-Talk effects us
• Provide example and ask children what the child might be thinking.
• Different Types of Self-Talk

6:20 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – Coping Statements

• Coping Cards
• Activity: Develop Coping Cards

6:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Meet with the Parents

• Discuss what went on during group
• Assign any homework
• Hand out Awards

*Body Break if Needed

**Refer to the above instructions regarding the body break.
Catch-Up

In regards to ‘catch-up’ ask the children if anyone has used any of the tools in their toolbox. Praise the ones who did and praise the ones who did not. If the children did use their toolbox then it is important to praise them for using the skills being learned. If the children did not use the toolbox then it is important to praise them for not feeling anxious.

Worry Tree Activity

The worry tree activity is an important part of the children’s group. The worry tree activity helps the children understand that they are in control of their worries. It is important to make a worry tree for the kids. You can do this by taking the tree down from the agency or making your own tree.

Activity:

The worry tree activity starts by having one facilitator read a worry tree story OR use umbalakiki. It is important to discuss with the kids what the story means to them. Ask the children if they have written any of their worries in their notebook. If not, provide some time for the children to do so. Then allow the children to physically put their worries on the worry tree. If they would like to share their stories then let them. However, do not push them to share their stories.

Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion

The information regarding self-talk and coping statements can be taken out of the parent manual and the kid companion. Refer back to these manuals for information regarding the above topic.
Coping Statements

Coping statements are a key part of the children’s anxiety group. The activity involved with the coping statements involves creating coping cards. Another activity involved with the coping statements is the mirror activity.

Activity:

To create the coping cards you will need coloured paper, crayons or markers and examples of some coping statements. After you provide the kids with some examples have them create their own coping cards. The kids should be able to share these coping cards with everyone else.

Activity:

The second activity, mirror activity, involves taking a mirror and have the child say something positive about themselves in the mirror. This activity may be hard for some kids but try to get them to say something that they like about themselves. You will need to bring in a handheld mirror.

When Meeting With the Parents

When meeting with the parents discuss what has been learned during the session. Remind the parents about both the coping card activity and the mirror activity. Discuss with the parents of creating coping cards with their children. Discuss posting the coping cards around the house.

Awards

Handing out awards during session 3 is a fun activity to do with the kids in front of their parents. The awards can be written on fun paper and include positive things that the children have accomplished or skills they have portrayed. Some examples include: listening, understanding their triggers and feelings, using the toolbox etc.
Children’s Group – Week #4 Agenda

5:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. – Begin Group

• Discuss last week’s homework assignment.
• Discuss worry tree/workbook

5:10 p.m. to 5:20 p.m. - Relaxation Discussion

• What is relaxation?
• How does it help children with anxiety?
• What types of relaxation techniques do you know about?
• Have any of you used the relaxation techniques?
• Discuss and complete the ‘cat relaxation scale’ with the kids

5:20 p.m. to 5:35 p.m. - Basic Spaghetti Toes (track 2) 6:08

• Discuss the difference between cooked and uncooked spaghetti – bring in a piece of cooked and uncooked spaghetti – ask the children to be cooked spaghetti and then uncooked spaghetti.
• Follow along w/ the basic spaghetti toes sheet in MindMasters
  o Does anyone know what it feels like to be scared or tense or afraid or worried?
  o Does anyone know what it feels like to relax?
  o What is the difference between feeling worried and relaxed?
  o Wrap Up
    ▪ How did you feel doing spaghetti toes?
    ▪ When could you use spaghetti toes?
• Put on the basic spaghetti toes.

5:35 p.m. to 5:50 p.m. – Jelly Belly (track 2) 6:40

• Discuss deep breathing with the kids
• Follow along with the jelly belly sheet in MindMasters
  o Discuss how babies breathe when awake and crying or sleeping
  o When could you use jelly belly?
• Put on jelly belly
• Wrap Up
  o How did you feel?

5:50 p.m. to 6:10 p.m. – Break
6:10 p.m. to 6:35 p.m. – Special Place Relaxation (track 3) 4:12

• Put on Special Place Relaxation
• Ask the children to draw their special place
• Show and Share their special places with everyone
• Wrap Up
  o Did you feel relaxed or tense
  o When would it be good to go to your special place? (Probe for positive opportunities)

6:35 p.m. to 6:40 p.m. – Cat Relaxation Scale

• Have the kids complete the section part of the relaxation scale

6:40 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – Discussion/Extra time

• This is extra time in case some of the MindMasters activities went over scheduled time.
• Or you can use this as discussion – talk about what they liked the best.
• Make sure to tell them about the c.d. the parents will be getting next week and about the website they can go to for an mp3 version of the exercises.

6:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Meet with the parents
Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion

The information regarding relaxation can be taken out of the parent manual and the kid companion. Refer back to these manuals for information regarding the above topic. Do not forget to use the CAT relaxation scale.

Relaxation Techniques

The relaxation techniques come from the Mind Masters book by Terry Orlick (2002). The agency has the Mind Masters C.D for your use.

The relaxation skills used are:

- Basic Spaghetti Toes (Appendix F)
- Jelly Belly (Appendix G)
- Special Place Relaxation (Appendix H)

Follow the instructions on the agenda and on the Mind Masters activities. Print out the CAT relaxation scale (Appendix I) and have the children fill out the first part at the beginning of the session and at the end of the session after all the activities are completed.

It may not be necessary to use all of 3 relaxation techniques. Use at your own discretion because relaxation techniques may be scary for some children because they may not recognize the feeling of calmness.

Also attached is the ‘special place relaxation’ worksheet (Appendix J). Use this during the corresponding activity.

When Meeting With the Parents

When meeting with the parents discuss what has been learned during the session. Discuss with the parents the different types of relaxation techniques and provide them with the Mind Masters CD to use with their children.
Children’s Group Agenda Week #5

5:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. – Begin Group

- Discuss with the kids if anyone used the activities or downloaded the music

5:10 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. – Cat Relaxation Scale

- Complete the first half of the cat relaxation scale

5:15 p.m. to 5:35 p.m. – Umbalakiki (track 5) 5:51

- Bring up the worry tree/worry notebook
- Listen to Umbalakiki
- Wrap Up
  o What did the story called Umbalakiki talk about?
  o What was the voice saying? (Probe for details)
  o How can you use what you heard in this story?
  o Probe for examples of when and how children could use Umbalakiki

5:35 p.m. to 5:50 p.m. – Muscle Relaxation (track 8) 5:39

- Talk about how this is similar to basic spaghetti toes
- Talk about the different muscle groups
  o Ask them to flex different muscle groups: their arms, legs, and necks.
- Listen to muscle relaxation
- Wrap Up
  o Were you able to focus on relaxing the different muscles in your body?
  o Did you feel relaxed?
  o When could you use muscle relaxation?

5:50 p.m. to 6:05 p.m. – Break

6:05 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. – One Breath Relaxation (track 10) 5:35

- Talk about how this is similar to jelly belly
- Talk about fast versus slow breathing
- Listen to one breath relaxation
- Wrap Up
  o When could you use one breath relaxation (probe for positive examples)

6:20 p.m. to 6:25 p.m. – Cat Relaxation Scale

- Have the kids to the final part of the cat relaxation scale
6:25 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. – Children’s Manual

• Discuss what is in the manual
• Discuss the work sheets
• Discuss the activities

6:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Meet with the parents
Using the Parent Manual and Kid Companion

The information regarding relaxation can be taken out of the parent manual and the kid companion. Refer back to these manuals for information regarding the above topic. The above activities are similar to ones used in the previous session. Do not forget to use the CAT relaxation scale.

Activities included are:

- Umbalakiki
- Muscle Relaxation
- One Breath Relaxation

Discussion of Children’s Manual

If you are providing your group with the children’s manual it is important to discuss the manual with both the kids and their parents. Inform the kids about how all the information included within the manual is what they have learned. Inform them that the manual can be used as a reference and they can refer back to the manual after group finishes.

When Meeting With the Parents

When meeting with the parents it is important to discuss the children’s manual with them as well. Inform them that the children’s manual corresponds with the parenting manual.
Children’s Group Agenda – Week #6

5:00 p.m. – Begin Group

5:00 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. – Catch up

- Ask the children if they used any of the relaxation activities.
- Ask them how they felt about the relaxation activities.

5:10 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. – Self-Care

- Ask the children if they know what self-care is?
- Go over the self-care sheets in the parent manual and in the kid companion.
- Take out some blank cards and have the children write down some self-care that they can do.

5:30 p.m. to 5:50 p.m. – At School Relaxation

- Pauline will go through the breathing and muscle relaxation activities with the children.

5:50 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Bathroom Break

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Graduation/Meeting With Parents
The information regarding self-care can be taken out of the parent manual and the kid companion. Most of the information used within the self-care section can be taken from the kid companion primarily. Refer back to these manuals for information regarding the above topic.

Activity:

Take out some construction paper and have the children write different activities on the construction paper that they consider part of their ‘self-care’ routine (Appendix O – example self-care card). Have the children share these activities with everyone in the group.
Chester the Cat feels anxious!
How does Chester feel anxiety in his body?

- Headache
- Face goes red
- Big eyes
- Lump in throat
- Can't talk
- Clenched fist
- Butterflies in stomach, or sore tummy
- Cold hands and feet
- Shaking legs
Appendix B: How do you feel anxiety in your body?

How do **YOU** feel anxiety in your body?
Appendix C: Basic Spaghetti Toes

Basic Spaghetti Toes

A relaxation exercise that uses the concept of uncooked and cooked spaghetti to teach the difference between tension and relaxation. Children learn to relax different parts of their bodies.

Get Ready!

Resources
- CD Track #1 “Feeling Great” pages 69 – 72
- Cat Relaxation Scale (Mindmasters Worksheets)

Teaching point
- Present the concept of stress and relaxation by talking about uncooked and cooked spaghetti. When you feel stressed-out your muscles or body often get tense or hard, like, stiff, uncooked spaghetti. When you feel relaxed your body feels more like warm, soft, cooked spaghetti.

Other ideas
- If possible, distribute a piece of uncooked and cooked spaghetti for each child to explore. You can microwave already cooked spaghetti to make it feel warm.
- It’s also fun to have children pretend to be like hard, uncooked spaghetti. Ask them to tense their muscles, their arms, legs and neck and to keep holding their muscles tight for 10 – 20 seconds. Then, instruct the children to “let go”, to let all their muscles go soft like cooked spaghetti. This is a great way to help children feel the difference between stress and relaxation and to appreciate how good it feels to be relaxed.

Get Going!

To begin
- Does anyone know what it feels like to be scared or tense or afraid or worried? Do you know what it feels like to relax? What’s the difference between feeling worried and feeling relaxed?

Activity
- ✓ Before they listen to the CD, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.
- ✓ Listen to the CD.
- ✓ After they’ve listened, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.

Wrap-up
- How did you feel doing Spaghetti Toes?
- When could you use Spaghetti Toes?

Homework
- Practice Spaghetti Toes on your own, in bed tonight or anytime you want to relax. Try using Spaghetti Toes when you find that something is painful or stressful. The more you practice making your muscles go soft, the better you’ll get at relaxing when you want to.

Notes for next time

Stress is like something is bottled up inside. Relaxation is like opening the bottle and letting all the tension pour out. (10 year-old)
Appendix D: Jelly Belly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Get Ready!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching point</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other ideas</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Get Going!</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To begin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap-up</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homework</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes for next time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation is when you lie down and breathe slowly. Memories of bad stuff go away. Your troubles disappear. You just feel calm and good – like you’re free.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9 years old)
Appendix E: Special Place Relaxation

A relaxation exercise that teaches children how to relax their minds and bodies by imagining a beautiful, calm and relaxing special place.

Get Ready!

- **Resources**: CD Track #3 'Feeling Great' page 82
- **Teaching point**: The more you learn to relax, the happier and less stressed you will be. A great way to relax is to think of your own Special Place, a place that is very beautiful and very relaxing.
- **Other ideas**: Remind children, especially children who have trouble creating a Special Place, to continue to look for special places wherever they go. They'll know it's a Special Place if it helps them to feel calm and relaxed. Then, they can remember these images and put them in their own Special Place.

Get Going!

- **To begin**: Did anyone try Jelly Belly on your own? Ask children to share the details - what, where and how it worked.
- **Activity**: Listen to the CD.
- **Wrap-up**: Did you feel relaxed or tense in your Special Place? When would it be good to go to your Special Place? (probe for positive opportunities)
- **Homework**: Practice Special Place Relaxation, Jelly Belly or Spaghett Toes any time you are worried or stressed or just because you want to enjoy a little relaxation.

Notes for next time

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Alice laughed. “There’s no use trying,” she said. “One can’t believe impossible things.” “I daresay you haven’t had much practice,” said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes, I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass
Appendix F: CAT Relaxation Scale
Appendix G: Special Place Relaxation Worksheet
Appendix H: Website for MindMasters C.D

## Appendix I: Umbalakiki

**Mindmasters**  
**Level 1**

### Activity # 5

#### Umbalakiki

An exercise that teaches children how to put away worries or negative feelings and to free themselves to live and perform more joyfully.

#### Get Ready!

| Resources | CD Track # 5  
|           | “Feeling Great” pages 52 – 55 |
| Teaching point | We can make ourselves happier and get rid of bad feelings or worries by looking for good things or Highlights; by doing something happy every day; and by putting our worries away somewhere – like in a tree or in a jar or in an envelope. |
| Other ideas | Use “props” such as a worry jar, worry tree or garbage can where children can place angry feelings, worries or frustrations. |

#### Get Going!

| To begin | Does anyone have a Highlight to share?  
|          | Did anyone use a relaxation exercise on your own yesterday or today, for example, Spaghetti Toes, Jelly Belly, Special Place Relaxation? Probe for details. |
| Activity | ✔ Listen to the CD. |
| Wrap-up | What did the story called Umbalakiki talk about? What was the voice saying? Probe for details.  
|          | How can you use what you heard in this story? Probe for examples of when and how children could use Umbalakiki or Tree It. |
| Homework | If something worries you or makes you feel unhappy today or tomorrow, see if you can Umbalakiki it. Tree It. If you have a really big worry or something has made you very unhappy, it may be too big to put on the tree. The best way to deal with really big worries or troubles is to talk about them with someone you trust, like your parents, a teacher, a counsellor, a doctor, or me. |

#### Notes for next time

Put your troubles in a pocket with a hole in it. Old Postcard
Appendix J: Muscle Relaxation

Mindmasters
Level 2
Activity # 8

Muscle Relaxation

An exercise that teaches children how to relax by relaxing different muscle groups in their bodies.

Get Ready!

| Resources          | CD Track # 8  
|                   | “Feeling Great” pages 89 - 72 and 80 – 81  
|                   | Cat Relaxation Scale (Mindmasters Worksheets)  

| Teaching point | One of the best ways to relax your whole body and mind is to focus on relaxing different muscles in your body.  

| Other ideas | An effective way to help children locate and relax different muscles is to encourage them to first “tense up” or “flex” their muscles. Ask them to tense up different muscle groups: their arms, their legs, their necks. Ask them to keep their whole body tense and stiff for 10 – 20 seconds. Then, instruct them to “let go”, letting all the tension leave their muscles. This is a great way to understand the difference between tense muscles and relaxed muscles and to appreciate how it feels to be relaxed.  

Get Going!

| To begin | What do you feel like when you are stressed or worried or scared?  
|          | What do you feel like when you are relaxed?  
|          | What’s the difference between feeling stressed and feeling relaxed?  

| Activity | ✓ Before they listen to the CD, ask children to circle or colour the cat that they feel like.  
|          | ✓ Listen to the CD.  
|          | ✓ After they’ve listened, ask children to circle or colour the cat they feel like.  

| Wrap-up | Were you able to focus on relaxing the different muscles in your body?  
|         | Did you feel relaxed during Muscle Relaxation?  
|         | When could you use Muscle Relaxation?  

| Homework | Practice Muscle Relaxation on your own before you go to sleep tonight.  

Notes for next time

Stress: It’s like a rubber band that’s pulled to the very end and it’s ready to snap.  
(10-year old)
Appendix K: One Breath Relaxation

A relaxation exercise that teaches children how to relax themselves quickly in a stressful situation, by taking one long, slow, deep breath, in and out.

### Get Ready!

| Resources       | CD Track # 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&quot;Feeling Great&quot; pages 83 – 84</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching point</strong></td>
<td>The better you learn to relax, the less stressed and the happier you’ll be. It is important to be able to learn to relax quickly if you need to. For example, if you are taking a test, performing a sport, speaking in front of the class or undergoing a medical procedure or if someone yells at you or you feel angry or frustrated, you’ll be in charge and feel strong if you are able to relax yourself in one or two breaths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other ideas</strong></td>
<td>Before doing One Breath Relaxation ask children to demonstrate how they breathe during hard physical activity, for example, when they run really fast, and talk about how they feel when they are breathing hard and fast. Then, ask them to demonstrate how they breathe when they are sleeping or when they are very relaxed, for example, if they are lying in the sun or relaxing on the couch. This helps children understand different breathing patterns and how these breathing patterns can affect them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Get Going!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To begin</th>
<th>Did anyone try Quiet Lake or Muscle Relaxation to relax? Ask for someone to share details – what, when, where and how it worked. Does anyone else have an experience to share?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
<td>Listen to the CD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap-up</strong></td>
<td>When could you use One Breath Relaxation? Probe for specific examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homework</strong></td>
<td>Remember to use One Breath Relaxation whenever you start to feel nervous or worried or stressed or angry; at home, in school, with friends or siblings; when taking tests, playing sports or during painful or stressful medical procedures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes for next time

When the breathing is disturbed, the mind is disturbed.
When the breath is calmed, the mind becomes steady.
Hatha Yoga Pradipika
## Appendix F: Raw Data Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Parent 1</th>
<th>Parent 2</th>
<th>Parent 3</th>
<th>Parent 4</th>
<th>Parent 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The manual is visually appealing</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual was easy to navigate through (i.e. properly organized, properly laid out)</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information regarding anxiety was presented in a manner that was easy to understand.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual includes pictures and charts that relate to information being presented.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information was relevant to what was being discussed during the parenting group ‘Parenting Your Anxious Child’ and the needs of your child.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructions on the relaxation techniques (i.e. deep breathing, self talk) were clear and concise.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual was designed in a way that made it easier for me to use these techniques with my child.</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The manual assisted me in generalizing the tips for parenting a child with anxiety from group to home.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improvements should be made within the ‘Education on Anxiety’ section of this manual. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
---|---|---|---|---|---
Improvements should be made in the ‘Common Triggers of Anxiety in Your Child’ section. | Strongly Disagree | Undecided | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree
---|---|---|---|---|---
Improvements should be made in the ‘Tips for Parenting an Anxious Child’ section. | Strongly Disagree | Undecided | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree
---|---|---|---|---|---
Improvements should be made in the ‘Techniques to Assist with Anxiety’ section. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree
---|---|---|---|---|---
Improvements should be made in the ‘Parental and Child Self-Care’ section. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Disagree
---|---|---|---|---|---
Overall, I enjoyed using this manual. | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree | Strongly Agree
---|---|---|---|---|---

### Parent Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent 1</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 2</td>
<td>“Thoroughly enjoyed the manual – helped to easier explain our situation to other family members and provided us with more understanding”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 3</td>
<td>“The only suggestion I have may be to include different and more facts regarding anxiety”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 4</td>
<td>“Very helpful – may need to include more tips on parenting an anxious child”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent 5</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>