



Stronger Together

Parkland School Division Family Supports Newsletter October 27, 2020

Dear parents and caregivers,

We all feel anxious sometimes, it can be useful in certain situations to get us going, meet deadlines and also to help us to remove ourselves from situations that are not safe. Sometimes anxiety can become a problem and it is important not to ignore it but to reach out for support. Community supports are listed at the end of this newsletter.

Take care, Vicky Mamczasz -Family Support Facilitator, Dena Davis- Sunrise Supports Program Liaison



Family Tips for Anxiety with Joel Pukalo - Family Life Psychology - Stony Plain 780-963-7451

- Free online webinars
- Low cost counselling for children and adults

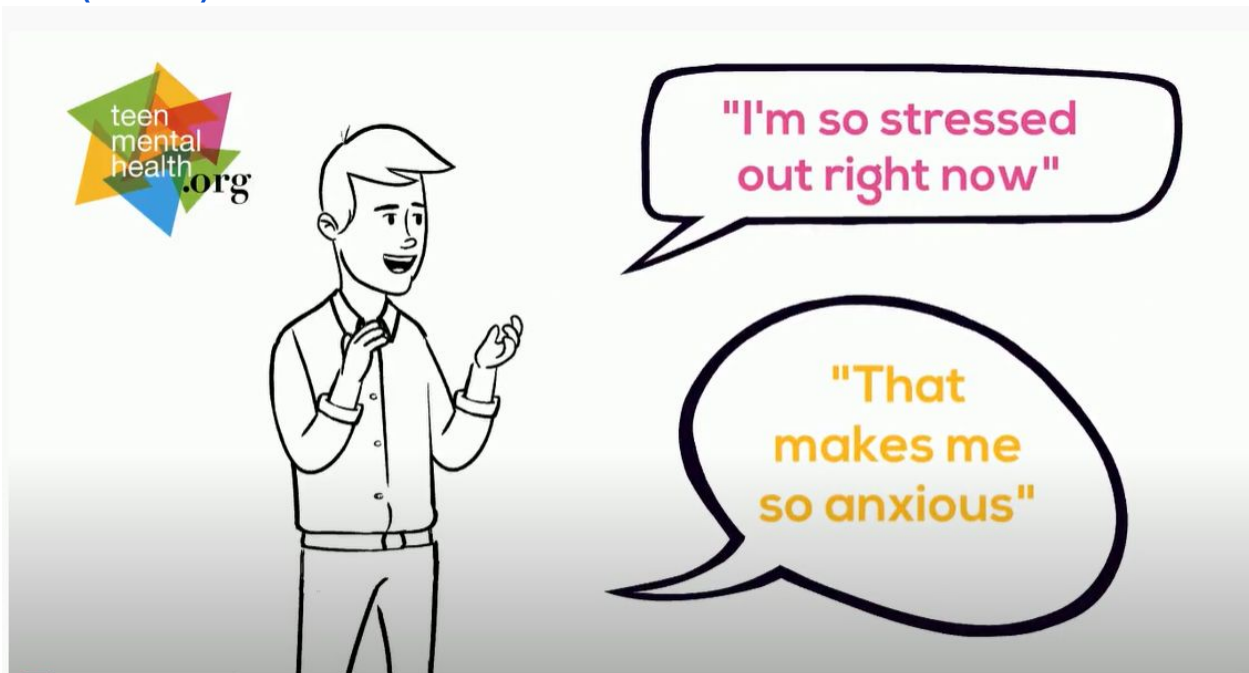
Coping with anxiety can be challenging both for parents and their children. The first step to help our children better cope with anxiety is learning to listen and support the unique needs of each individual. Teaching our children to "be okay" with not being okay is an important first step in creating openness and acceptance to process their

emotions. Emotional awareness is the first step to emotional regulation. Helping our children to identify how anxiety impacts the way they think, feel, and act cultivates emotional awareness. Learning about how anxiety impacts the way we think and feel provides clues in areas where our children may learn new strategies to cope with anxiety.

Anxiety Canada provides practical resources for parents and youth to help manage physical symptoms of anxiety, improve thinking patterns, and identify supportive plans to help our children face their fears. Your child may also benefit from working with a counsellor to develop an anxiety management program based on Anxiety Canada.

Stress vs Anxiety (from TeenMentalHealth.org)

[Stress \(Le stress\)](#)



What is anxiety and when is it a problem?

ANXIETY 101 (from Anxiety Canada)

Anxiety is normal. Everyone experiences anxiety from time to time. It alerts us to threats, protects us from danger and helps us reach important goals. For example, it is normal to feel anxious when encountering a bear on a hike, or before taking an important exam.

Anxiety is not dangerous. Although anxiety feels uncomfortable, it is temporary and will eventually decrease. The sensations we experience in an anxious situation are designed to alert and activate us. They are normal and part of our body's natural response mechanism. Our body is smart enough to know when to "amp up" and when to "calm down."

Anxiety is adaptive. Anxiety helps us prepare for real danger, such as crossing a busy street. It can also help us perform at our best, and motivate us to study for an exam or practice for a big game. When we experience anxiety, it triggers our "fight-flight-freeze" response, and prepares our body to react. For instance, our heart beats faster to pump blood to our muscles, so we have the energy to run away or fight off danger. Without it, we would not survive. We need some anxiety.

Anxiety is part of life. Trying to eliminate anxiety from your child's life is almost impossible, and even if it were possible, we are not sure you will have created a life worth living for your child. As a result, this website has been designed to provide you and your child with information, tools, resources, and more, to help your child become an expert on coping with anxiety. Since anxiety is everywhere, one of the greatest gifts you can give your anxious child or teen is the confidence and skill to tolerate anxiety whenever it occurs, and to continue living his/her life anyway!

Anxiety can become a problem. Small doses of anxiety in certain situations are useful. However, when your child is worrying much of the time, avoiding fun activities, or refusing to go to school because s/he is scared or worried, anxiety has become a problem. Think of anxiety like fog: if it covers everything, makes it hard to see, stops you from doing what you usually do, and generally gets in the way, then it has likely become a problem

Although anxiety protects us in the face of real danger, **it can become a problem when it...**

(Anxiety Canada - Anxiety in Youth - <https://www.anxietycanada.com/learn-about-anxiety/anxiety-in-youth/>)

- Goes off when there is no **real** or immediate danger (e.g., like a smoke alarm that goes off when you're just making toast)
- Happens a lot
- Feels pretty intense
- Is upsetting and causes you distress
- Stops you from doing fun and important things (e.g., like going to school dances or parties, making friends or dating, getting your homework done, or getting a job or your driver's license.)

Fight Flight Freeze - Anxiety Explained For Teens



[Anxiety in Youth](https://www.anxietycanada.com/learn-about-anxiety/anxiety-in-youth/)

Fight Flight Freeze – A Guide to Anxiety for Kids

[Anxiety in Children](#)



THE CARD SYSTEM FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

All children feel anxious or afraid sometimes, but there are things parents can do to reduce their child's fear and anxiety. The CARD System (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract) provides groups of strategies that parents can play to help their children cope with stressful situations. Originally used to help reduce children's fear and pain from medical procedures, CARD can also be used in other stressful situations. Playing your CARDS will engage your child and give them a voice when they feel anxious or afraid.

COMFORT: Help your child accept negative thoughts and feelings. Let them know these are normal and will pass. Coach your child to be courageous and to be the 'boss' of their worry.

ASK: Listen and talk to each other. Ask your child how they are feeling and answer any questions they have honestly. Use words that your child can easily understand and follow their lead. If your child doesn't seem interested or is not ready to talk, that's okay. Tell them they can always come to you if they have questions.

RELAX: Children see and feel what their parents are doing and often do the same. Model relaxation for your child. Speak to your child in a calm and normal speaking voice.

DISTRACT: Try to keep normal routines and limit the amount of time your child focuses on whatever is making them anxious.



<https://www.anxietycanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CARD-for-Parents-and-Caregivers.>

Try the app



MindShift™ CBT - FREE

Mental Health Relief

Is anxiety getting in the way of your life? MindShift™ CBT uses scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

Get the tools to tackle:

- Worry
- Panic
- Perfectionism
- Social Anxiety
- Phobias



Learn more:

Parkland School Division is proud to partner with Alberta Parenting For The Future to present another FREE information session for local families. Everyone experiences stress, be it taking a test, speaking in front of an audience or going to the dentist. But when stress becomes excessive, persistent and begins to interfere with everyday living, it can be indicative of an anxiety disorder: a chronic sense of fear or worry that outweighs actual danger, and that can cause an individual to avoid situations or develop compulsions in order to stem the tide of these intense feelings.

As a group, anxiety disorders represent

the most common of all mental illnesses, and they can affect individuals of any age or background, including children and teens. In our upcoming Strong Families session, Jennifer Harris, a registered psychologist, mother and former teacher and school counsellor, will join mental health therapist Heidi Watson to offer families valuable information about anxiety, as well as practical tips for helping their children manage and mitigate this mental illness.

Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Online Zoom Webinar / Discussion Group

Presenters: Jennifer Harris, Registered Psychologist & Heidi Watson, MSW Mental Health Therapist (Eckert Psychology)

In this session, we will discuss the basics of anxiety: how it works, how it differs from stress, the multiple ways it can manifest, and the mental and physical impact it can have on children and teens. Learn how to recognize signs that your child may be struggling with anxiety, and discover therapist-approved strategies you can use to support them.

Please register early to reserve your spot by visiting <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/strong-families-series-anxiety-in-children-and-teens-registration-126480503591>.

For more information, please contact:

Vicky Mamczasz

Family Supports Facilitator

Email: vmamczasz@psd70.ab.ca

View...

Helping your Anxious Child: What it looks like and what parents can do



[Helping your Anxious Child: What it looks like and what parents can do](#)

From Anxiety Canada

Check out the Stony Plain Youth Centre Facebook page



ADHD and the Effects of Screen Time

🕒 **October 28 @ 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**



Struggling with Screen Time and your ADHD child?

Join Presenters: John Stevenson & Steven Zwicker, [Zone Performance Psychology Inc.](#)

This presentation will include:

- discussion on ADHD assessment and diagnosis
 - 4 major effects that electronics and screen time have on the brain
 - an outline of some of the natural non-pharmaceutical approaches offered by Zone Performance Psychology Inc.
- Information on Cognitive-Perceptual Training.

Alberta Parenting For the Future Association

Website:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/alberta-parenting-for-the-future-association-15112757928>

TWO PARTS - October 28 and November 4 (must attend both sessions)

Decreasing Explosive Behaviours through Emotional Regulation

🕒 **October 28 @ 9:30 am – 11:30 am** | Recurring Event ([See all](#))



Presenter: Brittney Doody, Mental Health Therapist on CASA's Infant and preschool Services team.

This 2-part workshop is designed to help you support your child through big emotions and explosive behaviours. You will have opportunities to brainstorm and practice ways to be a source of co-regulation for your child.

Alberta Parenting For the Future Association

Website:

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Decreasing Explosive Behaviours through Emotional Regulation

🕒 **November 4 @ 9:30 am – 11:30 am** | Recurring Event ([See all](#))



Presenter: Brittney Doody, Mental Health Therapist on CASA's Infant and preschool Services team.

This 2-part workshop is designed to help you support your child through big emotions and explosive behaviours. You will have opportunities to brainstorm and practice ways to be a source of co-regulation for your child.

Alberta Parenting For the Future Association



Calling all grade 7,8,9 youth! Come join us at PVCC (Parkland Village Community Centre) for a program based on your interests. Each Tuesday will be something fun and new, and did we mention food? So be sure to sign up! Program will run from 4:30-6:30. Contact corrie@apfa.ca to register.

Reach out for support in your community...

Youth Mental Health (Westview Primary Care Network) - call in for an appointment - 780-960 - 9533 ext 221
Community Connector - Michelle Enright - 780-217-4146 Stony Plain and Prab Gill - Spruce Grove and Greater Parkland area 780-217-8701
Youth Mental Health - Northgate Walk In Clinic (AHS - now call in or virtual appointment) 780-342-2700
MOBILE/AFTERHOURS CRISIS TEAM: 780-407-1000
Mobile Addictions Support - Lisa Kimmerly - 780-868-1895
Parenting support (APFA) - Triple P Parenting - Rebecca Plante - 780-963-0549
Adult Crisis Response - 780-342-7777
Support Network Distress Line - 780-482-4357
Adult Mental Health Referral and Treatment - 780-342-7700
Parkland School Division - Family Support - Vicky Mamczasz - vmamczasz@psd70.ab.ca
Sunrise Supports - Dena Davis - dgdavis@psd70.ab.ca
