



Anxiety



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Clinical Psychology PSX 002

What is Anxiety?

✦ Defined by American Psychological Association

✦ Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure (Anxiety, n.d.)

Symptoms

✦ What are some of the general symptoms of Anxiety?

✦ Feelings of panic, fear, and uneasiness.

✦ Problems sleeping.

✦ Cold or sweaty hands and/or feet.

✦ Shortness of breath.

✦ Heart palpitations.

✦ An inability to be still and calm.

✦ Dry mouth.

(“Anxiety Disorders,” n.d.)

Anxiety in Children

✦ Anxiety is a normal part of childhood

✦ Example: Seeing a scary movie, being able to be comforted. This anxiety is temporary.

✦ An anxiety disorder is not a normal part of childhood.

(Children and Teens, n.d.)

✦ "Anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent psychiatric disorders experienced by children" (Affrunti & Woodruff-Borden, 2015)

Childhood Anxiety

Disorders

✦ Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

✦ Obsessive Compulsion Disorder (OCD)

✦ Panic Disorder

✦ Separation Anxiety Disorder

✦ Social Anxiety Disorder

✦ Selective Mutism

✦ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

✦ Specific Phobias

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

✦ "excessive worry about a variety of topics"
(Carroll, 2014)

✦ When a child has GAD they

- ✦ Tend to worry about many things
- ✦ Very hard on themselves
- ✦ May seek constant approval or reassurance from others
- ✦ Strive for perfection

("Childhood Anxiety Disorders", n.d.)

Symptoms

✦ Excessive worry

✦ restlessness

✦ fatigue

✦ difficulty concentrating

✦ irritability

✦ muscle tension

✦ sleep disturbance

(Davis, 2013, p. 425)

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

- ✦ Characterized by unwanted and intrusive thoughts (which are obsessions)
- ✦ Feeling compelled to constantly repeat ritual or routines to try and ease the anxiety (which are compulsions)
- ✦ Most children are diagnosed by age 10
(“Childhood Anxiety Disorders”, n.d.)

Common Obsessions

- ✦ Fear of dirt and germs and other contaminations
- ✦ Violation of religious or moral rules
- ✦ Harm to self or others
- ✦ Guilt, self-doubt
- ✦ Aggressive thoughts
- ✦ Body concerns

(Davis, 2013, p.422)

Common Compulsions

- ✦ Washing or cleaning
- ✦ Counting, checking, arranging possessions
- ✦ Praying, confessing,
- ✦ Seeking reassurance

(Davis, 2013, p. 422)

Panic Disorder

- ✦ Usually diagnosed when a child has two or more unexpected panic or anxiety attacks
- ✦ Meaning that they came suddenly and for no reason

(“Childhood Anxiety Disorders”, n.d.)

Symptoms

General symptoms

- ✦ shortness of breath
- ✦ chest pain
- ✦ fear of losing control or “going crazy”

For children most common are

- ✦ heart palpitations
- ✦ chest pain
- ✦ nausea

(Davis, 2013, p. 419-420)

Separation Anxiety Disorder

- ✦ “When separation anxiety disorder occurs, a child experiences excessive anxiety away from home or when separated from parents or caregivers” (“Childhood Anxiety Disorders” n.d.)
- ✦ It is more common with ages seven to nine

Symptoms

- ✦ May develop extreme homesickness even during brief separation
- ✦ Difficulty at bedtime
- ✦ Often a fear of a disaster befalling the primary attachment figure in their absence.

(Davis, 2013, p. 425)

Social Anxiety Disorder

✦ intense fear of social and performance situations and activities

✦ Like:

✦ Being called on in class

✦ Starting an conversation with a peer

✦ Social anxiety can effect a child's school performance

✦ Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa8zUrMRDzU>

(“Childhood Anxiety Disorders” n.d.)

Selective Mutism

◆ What is it?

◆ When a child refuses to speak or talk in certain situations

◆ A child can have normal behavior and talk at home or in comfortable situations, which surprises parents when teacher reports that they refuse to speak at school

(“Childhood Anxiety Disorders”, n.d.)

Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- ✦ For a child or adolescent to be diagnosed with PTSD, the event must be
 - ✦ "traumatic enough to produce feelings of extreme fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, developmentally atypical disorganized or agitated behavior)" (Davis, 2013, p. 423)

Symptoms

- ◆ Other symptoms of PTSD include
 - ◆ intrusive thoughts or nightmares
 - ◆ avoidance of trauma-related stimuli or memories
 - ◆ increased psychological arousal not present before the trauma
- ◆ These symptoms must be present for more than 1 month

Specific Phobias

- ✦ A specific Phobia is “marked, persistent, unusual, or excessive fear of a specific object or situation” (Davis, 2014, p. 420)
- ✦ It is important to note that some fear in children is normal during their development (Davis, 2014)

Specific Phobias

◆ Possible subtypes of phobias

◆ animal type

◆ natural environment type (i.e., storms or heights)

◆ blood-injection-injury type

◆ situation type (i.e., tunnels, elevators, flying)

◆ or other type (which could include fear of sickness or a child's fear of costumed characters)

(Davis, 2013, p. 420)

Specific Phobias

- ✦ Usually develops in later childhood
- ✦ To be diagnosed, a child under 18 must present symptoms for at least 6 months because some irrational fears in children are common
- ✦ Most common in children are animal and natural environment

(Davis, 2013, p 420-421)

Symptoms

- ✦ Crying
- ✦ Tantrums
- ✦ Freezing in place
- ✦ Clinging to a familiar adult
- ✦ avoidance headaches and stomachaches

Children may also not see that their fear is unreasonable



Video



✦ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVvTEzvAtHo>

Treatments

- ✦ Just like another medical condition, Anxiety disorders need to be treated
- ✦ There is no one "best" treatment that works for every child
- ✦ Most common used is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

✦ What is CBT?

- ✦ CBT "is a type of talk therapy that has been scientifically shown to be effective in treating anxiety disorders" ("Treatment", n.d.)

Other forms of Therapy

- ◆ There are also other forms of therapy used to help treat anxiety disorders
- ◆ Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)
- ◆ Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT)

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)

- ✦ “uses strategies of acceptance and mindfulness
- ✦ (living in the moment, and experiencing things without judgment) as a way to cope with unwanted thoughts, feelings, and sensations” (“Treatment”, n.d.)

dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT)

- ✦ “emphasizes taking responsibility for one's problems and helps children examine how they deal with conflict and intense negative emotions” (“Treatment” n.d.)

Medication

- ✦ Medication can be useful in treating anxiety disorders
- ✦ In fact "a major research study found that a combination of CBT and an antidepressant worked better for children ages 7-17 than either treatment alone" ("Treatment", n.d.)
- ✦ Can be short-term or long-term depending on the how severe

Medication cont

- ✦ Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are the medications most commonly used in childhood and adult anxiety treatment
- ✦ some SSRIs for the treatment of pediatric obsessive-compulsive disorder have been approved by The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- ✦ However there are some medicine such as tricyclic antidepressants and benzodiazepines, that are less commonly used to treat children

(“Treatment”, n.d.)

Managing Anxiety

(in general)

- ✦ Exercising
- ✦ Good nutrition
- ✦ Adequate amount of sleep
- ✦ Stress reduction
- ✦ Limit alcohol and caffeine consumption
- ✦ Learn what triggers anxiety
- ✦ Talk to someone



Questions?



Extra video



✦ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VbxjsO9lYI>

References

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