



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY



Experiencing anxiety now and then is a normal part of growing up as children develop and learn about the world around them. It's quite common for primary age school children (5-12 year old) to feel anxious about a variety of situations and objects particularly as they face new experiences. For this age group, anxiety comes and goes and doesn't last long.

Of over 1,000 children and young people surveyed in 2020, almost 25% were personally impacted by floods in the 2019/2020 Australian summer (ACYP, 2020). Yet children are often relatively invisible in disaster management and recovery responses.



RECOGNISING ANXIETY

Anxious feelings can range from butterflies in the tummy, trouble sleeping and tiredness to frequent feelings of panic that may prevent your child from doing things such as going to school or withdrawing from activities.

When a child's anxious thoughts and feelings have an ongoing impact on their ability to enjoy/participate in one or more aspects of their daily life it is important to seek further support. Talking to your GP or School Support Officer is a great place to start.

Later in primary school (around 9-12 years old) most children are experiencing lots of changes – in their bodies, friendships, school environment and family relationships. They often gain a growing awareness of local, national & global events like climate change and homelessness which can add to their worries. Greater use of social media can lead to them to feel pressured to look and act a certain way, increase the risk of cyberbullying and add to the risk of anxiety.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

• TALK- ASK ABOUT HOW THEY ARE FEELING

Choose a time when they are feeling relaxed - whilst playing a game, listening to music in the car, whilst cooking or creating art together.

- LISTEN AND CLOSELY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR CHILDS FEELINGS
- SUPPORT THEM TO FEEL SAFE

Help your child to come up with ways to manage their anxiety eg, getting enough sleep, healthy eating, physical exercise, breathing & relaxation exercises and/or music. Allow a minimum of 1-2 hour away from gaming or social media prior to bed. Schedule time for practical activities that will assist them to feel supported around their specific anxieties.

• TALK TO THE SCHOOL AND LOCAL GP



TRAUMA IMPACTED ANXIETY



Young people who have experienced natural disasters such as bushfires or floods and the family stress that often comes with them, have a greater risk of experiencing some mental health challenges and may need some professional support. Remain curious in the weeks, months and even years following a disaster and regularly check in as to how they are feeling and keep an eye out for changes in their behaviour.



FURTHER SUPPORT



For further support around this or other issues your young person maybe experiencing you can contact Social Futures on Ph1800 719 625 or The Family Centre on 1800 211 154. Emerging Minds also has a lot of great advice for supporting young people with anxiety.
www.emergingminds.com.au

