



PediPRN

Bradley Hospital

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Addressing Physical Symptoms of Anxiety (10 years old+)

Intervention Script:

Anxiety is the body's response to stress. It makes sense that you would be feeling more anxious with all the current changes and concerns related to the virus everyone has been talking about.

When we feel stressed or anxious our bodies often feel dizzy, uncomfortable, upset stomach or headaches, etc.

If we take control of our breathing when we become anxious, we can decrease the uncomfortable feelings in our body. There are two great ways to take control of your breathing:

1. **Exercise:** Exercise can be walking, riding bikes, shooting hoops or indoor activities like sit-ups, jumping jacks, etc.
2. **Deep breathing/relaxation:** Slowing your breathing can help you calm your body down.

Deep breathing requires breathing in through your nose slowly, filling your belly with air like it's a balloon, and slowly exhaling through your mouth.

One easy strategy to get started with this is called Figure 8 Breathing.

See this picture of a figure 8. I'm going to show you how to trace it with your fingers while breathing and then I want you to practice that at home with your parents when you are feeling anxious.

Start in the center. As you're drawing the first half of the figure 8, breathe in through your nose, into your belly for three seconds. When you get to the middle, hold your finger and breath still for one second. Then, for the second half of the figure 8, breathe out through your mouth slowly for three seconds. When you get to the middle, hold for one again. (Repeat three or four times).

I would recommend creating your own figure 8 so you can practice this at home.

Smartphrase:

Patient reporting increased anxiety related to current COVID-19 pandemic during telehealth visit. Current symptoms include: ***

Anxiety related interventions:

Reminded patient and family that anxiety is common, especially in response to acute stressors such as the current pandemic, and that positive health behaviors (e.g., getting enough sleep, eating nutrient rich foods, physical activity, etc) and distraction are strategies that can help with symptoms.

Education was provided regarding physiological response to stress and anxiety and effective strategies to manage these symptoms including exercise and deep breathing/relaxation. Reviewed and modeled use of Figure 8 breathing technique in detail.

Reviewed plan to consider additional treatment options, should symptoms persist and/or have a significant impact on patient's functioning.

Total time of telephone contact: ***minutes