

Week 3
Combating Fear and Anxiety-
Letting go of Stress through mindfulness/meditation
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Fear

*Fear is a protective device; in ancestral times it protected people from legitimate threats. (fight or flight)

*Fear is different for everyone and people feel fearful in varied situations.

*With regard to the current circumstances people are fearful of the unknown, of becoming ill or having a family member who might become ill. Children are no exception, and likely feel multiple fears of things they don't understand.

*Persistent fear could impair a person's emotional growth and the person could develop a phobia.

*The current circumstances could lead to fears and possible phobias

*Parents struggle to balance and keep in perspective their own fears so as not to increase fear in their children.

*It is important therefore to balance what is said to young children and children with disabilities with respect to the virus.

Overcoming Fear

*Therapies

1. Exposure Therapy- Therapist guides the person to engage with the fear while working on relaxing strategies. Virtual Reality computer can be a useful tool.

2. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy- Therapist works on reframing and challenging the harmful beliefs.

*If families are not currently working with a therapist similar yet limited work by parents can be done.

Anxiety

Anxiety is described as feelings of tension, worried thoughts, physical changes such as increased blood pressure and increased heart rate.

Two kinds of anxiety: General anxiety and clinical anxiety

*General Anxiety- something that is a sort of uncomfortable feeling, that feeling you get when you step out of your comfort zone. Not all anxiety is bad, sometimes anxiety is a sign of danger that you shouldn't be doing something. Usually people can manage this and push through, it doesn't negatively impact one's ability to function. This level of anxiety is likely what we all are feeling now.

* Clinical Anxiety- this is anxiety that makes it difficult for one to function. People might struggle to concentrate, they might feel unmotivated, withdraw and harbor extreme worries.

Coping with Fear and Anxiety

*Allow children to feel what they feel and to also express those thoughts, feelings and emotions.

*Try to let the feelings turn into actions that can help.

Perhaps do something positive to help others. Review with

children how they can behave to keep things positive (i.e., hand washing, social distancing, etc.)

- *Limit media exposure

- *Search out good news, provide that to children. Create a positive family experience—e.g., each person in the family could say at dinner what they are thankful for or what positive thing they experienced that day.

- * Stay connected to others. Children can do this with family and friends through social media, etc.