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PHRASES TO CALM AN ANXIOUS CHILD

Information in this article was taken from an article by Tina Williamson of Mindfulmazing in the February 10, 2020 issue of ASD Magazine.

Does your child suffer from anxiety? If so, then you know how hard it is to be unsure of how to help them feel better.

We try to help by saying things like, “It’s okay, you don’t need to worry” or, “everything is going to be fine” or “this is not a big deal.”

Did you know that these comments can actually make the anxiety worse?

Your child’s worries may seem minor to you but to them it is a BIG deal, and telling them it’s not isn’t helping them solve the problem or making them feel better.

Anxiety is the most common mental health concern for kids and adults. So, instead of saying things that aren’t helping them solve their problem or making them feel better try saying something that might help them calm down and be less anxious. (continued on pg. 4)

Stay Off the Summer Slide

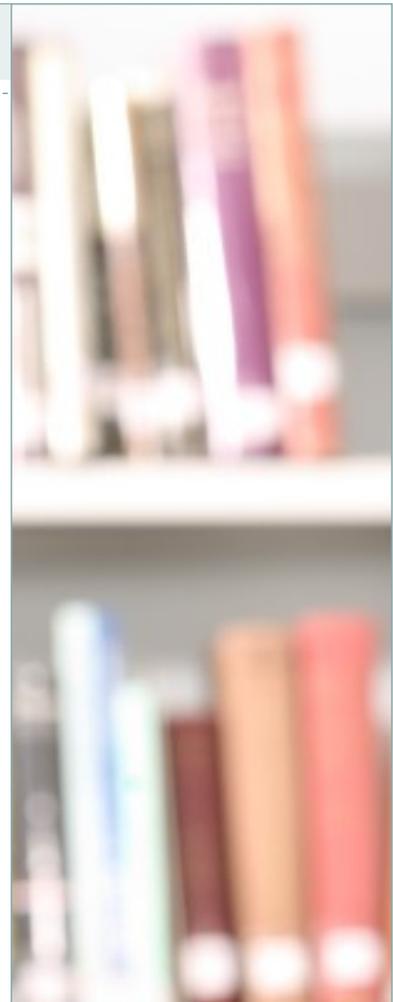
Information taken from article in ADDitude Magazine by Stephanie Watson.

Summer is a time for kids to take a break from the day to day pressures of the school year. But with kids who have ADHD , removing that structure from their day can be stressful for them and their parents. During the two months of summer break, a student can lose the educational ground that they gained during the school year.

“The challenge during the summer months is to maintain the progress the child made in the school year, while exploring new experiences and having fun,” says MacLean Gander, professor at Landmark College, in Vermont.

“ADDitude Magazine asked summer program experts for their best strategies to help parents maintain their children’s skills in a range of areas- leadership, social skills, academics-during the summer months. Here is what they had to say,” says Stephanie Watson.

1. Build Leadership and Self-Esteem- Have your child practice speaking up for himself. Younger children can order their own food at a restaurant, while older children can schedule their own doctor’s appointments and answer questions the doctor may ask about their health during the appointment. Children who are confident in their communication skills are more comfortable asking for help and advocating for themselves.—Samantha Curiale-Feinman (continued on page 2)



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“Kids can exercise leadership skills by playing a sport.” - Samantha Curiale-Feinman

Learn Life Skills—

Too much free time in the summer overwhelms kids and parents. It can also make it hard to transition to structured activities when it is time to go back to school. Keep your child and family anchored by having at least one consistent, scheduled activity that you and he or she can rely on every day—a five-minute morning exercise routine or 10 minutes of required reading before you head to the pool. - Stephanie Lee, Psy.D Senior Director, ADHD and Behavior Disorders Center, Child Mind Institute, New York

STAY OFF THE SUMMER SLIDE—(CONTINUED FROM PG. 1)

2. **Practice Social Skills—**
Practice giving “put-ups.” - People like getting compliments, and friends enjoy being lifted up rather than being torn down. Help your child develop a list of common compliments she/he can draw from. “Wow, that was a great job!” or “You’re really good at that,” or “Thank you for being so nice to me.” - John Willson
3. **Gain Independence—**
Nurturing Independence can be accomplished through empowerment.—Consider having your child create a schedule for one of the days on the weekend, or plan a family date night. Once you have listed any concerns or additional parameters to include, she can complete the plan for your approval. -John Willson
4. **Bolster Academics—**
Academics on the go. If there is a content area, such as social studies or science, in which your child struggled during the school year, find ways to build in some regular academic work in that area during the summer. Introduce some hands-on activities—such as examining garden soil under a microscope, or letting him be the chief navigator in the car, using Google Maps. Identifying readings or lessons the student can work on a couple of days a week to make up for what he missed in the previous year or to prepare for the coming term. —MacLean Gander
5. **Learn Life Skills—** Create routines that can be completed, and expectations that can be met, on a consistent basis. Set up a routine that is logical for your child, easy to remember, and something he or she can accomplish independently. If your child’s bed must be made before he eats breakfast, clearly explain this expectation and consistently enforce the rule. He may need help to understand the steps involved with making his bed properly, so direct instructions from you will be needed. Be sure to recognize his effort and successes along the way as he works on mastering all the steps. —Lana Stoch Camp Kodiak, Ontario, Canada

Bolster Academics—

“If your child used a planner for the school year, reinforce the habit by asking her to use one during summer vacation.”—Lesley Gibbs Director of Enrollment,



A MESSAGE FROM MRS. KLUGH

Hello!

Here we are with just nine more weeks of school.....time truly goes by so fast. We do need to take time to stop and “smell the roses”.

We move at such a fast pace that we don't take time to appreciate all we have to be thankful for in our lives. The children will be grown and on their own before you know it. While you might think, “I will never get them raised,” it will happen and then you will wonder, “where did the time go?”

Take time to enjoy your children/teens. Plan some fun time with them. They may act like they don't want to spend time with their parents, but they will enjoy it. Family game night or movie night, a special lunch or dinner with them (no phones allowed). Communication is one area that kids struggle with now days. If they can't do it through a text, Instagram or some other social media they do not know how to carry on a face to face conversation.

Also, take time for yourself. Mental health and self care is important. If you don't take care of yourself, you can't take care of your family!

PLC conferences (Plan for Educational Care) will be held Friday, May 1st. The PLC is the same as your IEP or Parent/Teacher conference for public school. It is important that you schedule a time to meet with your child's file teacher. Make sure and read your emails because the teacher should let you know when they start scheduling their PEC conferences.

It has been a great year at Town and Country . I know I speak for all of the teachers, staff and administration in saying thank you for allowing us the privilege to work with your children and look forward to seeing them in August.

Have a Great Summer!

Robin Klugh

REMINDERS

March 12th—HS Parent Information Night for the Positive Prevention Curriculum

March 16th-20th—Spring Break

March 23rd-26th—HS Positive Prevention Course

March 26th—Urban Air Night

March 27th 1/2 Day

April 1st/31st—Read-A-Thon

April 1st—Senior Cap & Gown Pictures (12:30)

April 3rd—Spring Dance

April 6th-17th—ACT Administration for those who registered

April 10th—Senior Reception

April 20th—23rd—6th grade Transition to MS week

April 23rd—6th grade Transition to MS parent meeting

April 27th-30th—8th Transition to HS week

April 30th—8th transition to HS parent meeting

May 1st—PEC conferences/NO School for students

May 6th-10th—Upper school Book Fair

May 7th—Elem. Link Up Music Program

May 8th—ACT registration deadline for June test

May 8th—Elem. Field Day

May 12th—Running Club Awards

May 15th—Senior Graduation

May 19th—HS fieldtrip to Drillers game

May 20th—MS/HS Award Assembly

May 22—Yearbooks handed out

May 26th—Elem. Award Assembly

Last Day—May 26th (due to snow day)

MS/HS Book Resources

Stanley Will Probably Be Fine by Sally J. Pla

Side Tracked by Diana Harman Asher

What to Do When You're Scared and Worried (workbook) by James J. Crist PhD.

Anxiety Sucks—A Teen Survival Guide by Natasha Daniels

My Anxious Mind –A Teens Guide to Managing Anxiety and Panic by Michael A. Tompkins & Katherine Martinez

What To Do When You Worry Too Much—A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Anxiety by Dawn Huebner

Black Dog by Levi Pinfold

SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS SUFFERING FROM ANXIETY (CONTINUED FROM PG. 1 PHRASES TO CALM AN ANXIOUS CHILD)

Anxiety isn't always straight forward. Children will most likely not say, "I have anxiety" or "look I'm struggling here."

Anxiety will manifest in different behaviors.

Below are a few examples of how anxiety might present in your child:

- **Anger or agitation (behavioral issues)**
- **Negative thinking**
- **Sleep issues**

- **Controlling behavior**
- **Avoiding activities**
- **Rude and/or defiant behavior**

Often, anxiety will present as anger, and this is because the child feels out of control.

If you suspect this is happening in your household check out : **Ultimate Guide to Anger Management in Kids** (<https://www.mindfulmazing.com/how-to-help-an-angry-child-calm-down/>)

PHRASES AN ANXIOUS CHILD MIGHT SAY

If your child is suffering from anxiety, there will be common phrases you might hear, such as:

- **I don't want to go**
- **No one likes me**
- **I don't want to go to school**
- **I can't do it**
- **What if you die**
- **I feel sick, my stomach is upset**
- **But what if....**
- **I want to stay with you**

Have you heard these phrases before?

Helping your child learn to change the narrative running through his/her head will help. These phrases are unhelpful, counterproductive and just plain negative. These negative and anxious thoughts can actually start to manifest into real physical symptoms, like headaches, stomachaches, dizziness, panic attacks, etc.

It is important to develop coping strategies and do everything you can to help your child navigate these overwhelming emotions.

PHRASES YOU SHOULDN'T SAY TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD

Here are a few of the common things we might say, and a short explanation of why saying these things doesn't help.

- **Don't worry**
- **This is all in your head**
- **Why is this upsetting you so much, it's no big deal**

(continued on pg. 5)

PHRASES YOU SHOULDN'T SAY TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD (CONTINUED FROM PG. 4)

- **Calm down**
- **It's going to be ok**
- **There's nothing to be afraid of**
- **What's wrong with you?**
- **You better snap out of it, or else**
- **You're just a worrywart**
- **You have no reason to be worried**
- **This is so silly, don't worry about this**
- **You're fine**
- **Don't cry**



While it is not the intention to harm the child with these phrases, these phrases are all so unhelpful!

Saying “calm down” has actually never likely made anyone feel calm. It typically has the reverse effect. If you perceived something as a legitimate threat, would any of the above statements make you feel better?

Young children don't understand all their feelings. They get overwhelmed with fear, and feel no one understands. They look around and it seems everyone else is fine but yet they do not feel safe. Then their parent or some other adult says, “calm down,” and instead of feeling better they feel they are doing something wrong.

We aren't teaching our kid's life-long coping skills. We need to help them manage their anxiety and anger so that they can thrive as an adult because anxiety isn't going anywhere. It doesn't disappear, but we can learn to cope. (continued on pg. 6)

(<https://www.mindfulmazing.com/how-to-help-an-angry-child-calm-down/>)



*“Everyone you meet
is fighting a battle
you know nothing
about. Be kind!*

—Unknown

KINDNESS !!!

PHRASES TO CALM AN ANXIOUS CHILD (CONTINUED FROM PG. 1)

Here are some phrases that may be helpful in calming an anxious child.

1. **Beat It, Mr. Worry Bully.**—One of the best anxiety squashing techniques we have used is to name our worry, draw our worry, and then talk to it. Giving worry a name allows children to feel like they have some control. It gives a face and a name to a powerful, invisible force within them.
2. **This Feeling Will Pass.**—When your child is caught up, replaying that movie reel of bad thoughts, they sometimes feel that the movie will never end. Instead of trying to force them to stuff the worry away, remind your child that relief is coming. Kids can take a deep breath and know that the feeling will pass. Breathing is so important!
3. **Let’s Take 5 Deep Breaths Together.**— Perhaps you’ve noticed that when you inhale a big, slow, deep breath that you feel calmer, more relaxed and less anxious? Well, kids need this big breath too. When we are anxious we tense up and less oxygen gets to our brains, this makes it hard to think clearly. A breathing break will give back a sense of calmness and control. It can be hard to convince your child to take deep breaths when they are super upset, so instead of trying to force it, you can say, “I’m going to take 5 deep breaths now. You can count out loud while you inhale and exhale and this simple shift in energy will calm your child and hopefully encourage them to breathe alongside you.
4. **I Know This Is Hard. Tell Me How You Are Feeling.**—Acknowledge and empathize with your child that what they are feeling is difficult and valid. One of the best phrases to calm an anxious child is simply to say, “I understand.” By talking about your child’s feelings and acknowledging that it is hard and that you are here to help, you are validating your child, and this is a great place to start to find solutions to these difficult feelings.
5. **You Are In A Safe Place. You Are Safe And You Are Loved.**—Being told you are safe by the person you love most is a super powerful phrase. Remember that anxiety manifests as physical symptoms, your body actually wants to run and prepares for battle. Your heart pounds, your palms get sweaty and you feel dizzy and panicked. This is scary, especially for a young child who doesn’t understand what is happening. Feeling safe can calm the nervous system.
6. **Why do you think that?** - For example: A child might worry that he can’t make friends or that no one likes him. Instead of telling him, “Oh don’t be silly, everyone loves you,” which doesn’t validate the root of why he is feeling that way. You can say, “Why do you think no one like you?” He will probably give it some thought and then tell you what is really happening that is creating this feeling he is having. Then you can talk about solutions to his problem.
7. **Tell me all about it and what can I do to help.**—Let your child openly talk about their fears instead of trying to repress them. Kids need time to process their feelings and thoughts. Don’t offer solutions, just listen. After talking about your worries, it is much easier to say good-bye to them and move on. Give them a hug, remind them you are their safe place and that you are there for them.
8. **Let’s change the ending to that story.**—Anxiety has a way of making kids feel stuck, their thoughts might play on repeat. Like a broken record. Help your child find and see different solutions, and retell their internal dialogue with a new ending. Perhaps they might flunk that test, but, they also might ace it and get tons of recognition from the teacher. Have them also face their fears, what would actually happen if x, y or z occurred? Discuss what that looks like and how you could handle that. This helps develop a plan which will help them cope if something does go wrong.

ELEMENTARY—BOOK RE-SOURCES

[Hey Warrior](#) by Karen Young

[Angry Octopus](#) by Lori Lite

[The Worry Box](#) by Suzanne Chiew

[Jonathan James And the WhatIf Monster](#) by Michelle Nelson-Schmidt

[When Lions Roar](#) by Robie H. Harris

[All Birds Have Anxiety](#) by Kathy Hoopmann

[Is A Worry Worrying You](#) by Ferida Wolff & Harriett Mae Savitz

[Ruby Finds a Worry](#) by Tom Percival

[Don’t Think About Purple Elephants](#) by Susanne Whelan

For more ideas go to <https://www.mindfulmazing.com/17-phrases-to-calm-an-anxious-child-how-to-help-kids-with-anxiety/#respond>

