

Anxiety Management Exercises

Source: South Carolina BHDD Office of Mental Health



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The following exercises can assist in helping to manage anxiety:

Five Senses Grounding Activity:

When feeling overwhelmed, take a deep breath and observe your environment. During this observation, slowly name 5 things you see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.

This sensory exercise can help young children cope with difficult emotions, as well as assist older children in calming down when they feel overburdened.

Your Favorite Hot Food:

Think of your favorite hot food. What does it look like? Imagine how it smells. Take 4 seconds to blow on it to cool it off. Imagine how it might taste.

This exercise is for younger children, and can divert their attention from overwhelming emotions, helping them to calm down.

Wall Push-Ups:

A wall push up is like a regular push-up, only you put your palms against a wall with your arms fully extended. Do a few wall push-ups until you start to feel tired, then take a couple of deep breaths

This exercise is a positive way to funnel energy for younger and older children.

Exploring through Creative Arts:

Engaging in activities like journaling, art, or music allows kids and teens to explore their thoughts and feelings in a non-judgmental space.

These activities encourage creative self-expression and emotional regulation, helping kids and teens to process their emotions in a healthy way.

Three Good Things:

Name three good things happening in your life. Intentionally identifying good things in our lives can help us in times of disappointment and angst. When you are anxious, thinking of your 3 good things can help you step back from the current moment.

This activity can help kids and teens develop positive thinking patterns.

Kid Directed Play:

Spend at least 10 minutes with your child per day playing with no electronics. Let your child pick an activity and make all the rules - just follow their lead and join into the game. Don't ask them questions or provide directives. Listen to them. Repeat what they are saying.

This activity can help kids to reduce stress.