

Anxiety and Other General Tips

- ◆ Children naturally want to avoid situations that they find distressing. If you notice your child is trying to avoid something, have a conversation with them about their fears and come up with a gradual set-by-step plan for how to overcome that fear.
- ◆ It's okay for your child to experience failure and disappointment. Use encouragement to help them focus on their strengths, what lessons they can learn from the experience and develop a plan of how to bounce back.
- ◆ Discuss good things about each day. This can help them learn to focus on positives and help build resilience.
- ◆ **Most Importantly:** Make the most of any opportunity to talk with your child about their strengths and the good things they're doing. This isn't just a focus on achievement but also on other small things like acting kind, being responsible or putting in a great effort.



Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office
School Counsellors 2017

Tips for Families to Support Social and Emotional Development



Managing Emotions



- ◆ Spend quality time with your child—build a loving, safe and secure relationship

- ◆ Modelling is crucial—

It is important that we behave how we want our children to behave

- ◆ Take any everyday opportunity to talk with your child about emotions, help build their vocabulary around emotions and capacity to recognize emotions in themselves. Use real life situations or even characters in movies, TV shows and books. You might ask questions like:

“How do you think (character name) felt when that happened?”

- A key message to send to our kids is that it’s ok ay to experience difficult feelings such as worry, anger, sadness, frustration, etc. These emotions are a normal part of life.
- Allow your child to experience uncomfortable feelings, even though it may be uncomfortable for you to watch your child go through it—this helps build resilience!

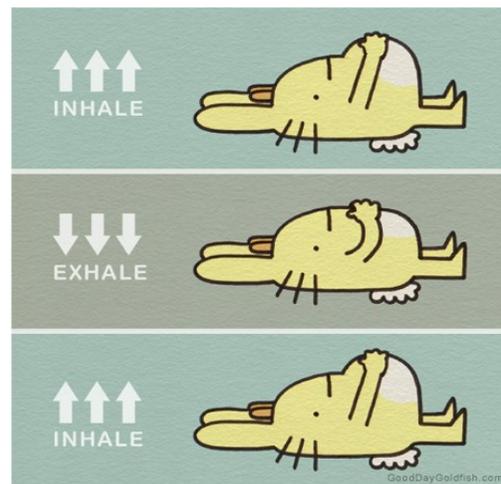
- During these times, the first step is to listen to what your child is telling you and acknowledge how they are feeling. Initially your child might need help to label their feelings. You might say things like:

“I can see that you are feeling upset because (re-state what happened)”

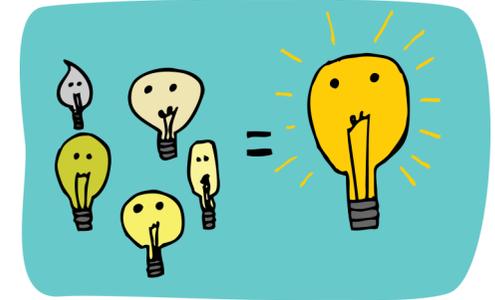
- During these times it’s also important to validate and empathize how your child is feeling. You might say things like:

“It sounds like that really upset you and I can understand why you are feeling upset about that”

- Talk to your child and work together to discuss what they can do to feel better. Initially you may need to model a strategy or work through it with your child (e.g., doing calm breathing together, count to 10,), with the idea that they can build independence in using these strategies when they need to.



Problem-Solving



- When your child comes to you with a problem, avoid the temptation to solve it for them. After they have managed to calm themselves, work with them to implement a problem solving strategy you have taught them.

“What do you think might help solve this problem?”

“What do you think might happen if you tried that solution?”

- If your child does make an unhelpful choice in handling a problem or responding to an emotion, avoid swooping in to fix it—it’s important that your child experience the natural consequences of their choices (as long as they’re safe).
- Do spend time with your child to discuss how they felt, why they felt that way (identify the trigger), why what they did was an unhelpful choice and help them problem solve more helpful choices for next time.