Childhood Anxiety during the Pandemic

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Disclosures

- No disclosures.
Anxiety

- Anxiety is not bad - it motivates us to avoid danger and prepares for action.
- Anxiety is a disorder when it interferes with functioning
Anxiety Cycle

Breaking the Cycle:

• Stay in it without avoiding it
• Change your rules
• Face your fears
Covid-19 Pandemic

Pandemic is a rare reality

We are all in it together
Childhood Anxiety Disorders

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder with agoraphobia
- OCD
- PTSD
- Major depression with anxious affect
Effect of Measures taken during pandemic

- Isolation
- Lack of peer contact
- Reduced opportunity for stress reduction
- Increase risk for parental mental health, domestic violence, and Child maltreatment
- Increased medical issues and lack of services
- Limited in-home support
- Lack of structured activities for children
Increased Anxiety in Adults

**Pandemic Causes Spike in Anxiety & Depression**

% of U.S. adults showing symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder*

- **January-June 2019**
  - Symptoms of anxiety disorder: 8.2%
  - Symptoms of depressive disorder: 6.6%
  - Symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder: 11.0%

- **May 14-19, 2020**
  - Symptoms of anxiety disorder: 28.2%
  - Symptoms of depressive disorder: 24.4%
  - Symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder: 33.9%

* Based on self-reported frequency of anxiety and depression symptoms. They are derived from responses to the first two questions of the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and the seven-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale.

Sources: CDC, NCHS, U.S. Census Bureau

[Statista Logo]
Increased Anxiety in Adults Cont.

During late June 2020, 40% of US adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use:

- 31-31% reported anxiety and depressive symptoms
- 26% reported trauma symptoms
- 13% started and increased subs use
- 11% considered suicide
Symptoms of Anxiety

Younger age group:
- clingy, agitated, refusing to engage/comply
- hyperactivity, restlessness, sleep issues

Adolescent age group:
- isolating themselves
- irritability, depression
- increased arguments/ poor compliance
- lack of energy/ activity
- increased somatic symptoms
- increased drug use
Helpful Plans

For parents/ Care providers:

• Accepting the New normal during current pandemic period
• Accepting health guidelines to take safe measures (CDC guideline, State guidelines)
• Compartmentalizing the worries

For younger kids:

• Reassurance
• Regular routine, predictability
• Spending 1:1 time with parents/ care providers
• Allowing to express their worries: ask questions, validate, accept not having all answers
• Outdoor or indoor play activities, coloring, art/ craft activities
Helpful Plan

For adolescents:

- Talk about it: reassure, validate, explore information together
- Limit TV/Internet news exposure
- Keep routine especially sleep cycle
- Involve in structured activity: online classes, learning tools
- Yoga, meditation, mindfulness activities
- Experiential learning: variety of play, projects e.g. gardening, building items, art/craft, music/dance, playing instruments
- Games, movies, face time with family/friends for limited duration
Helpful Action

Seek help from Mental health professionals when needed:

- Emergency mental health services
- Crisis line
- Telehealth clinic visits (telephone or video sessions) with Child and adolescent psychiatrists and therapists
Interventions

Stressors
• Child Abuse
• Lower Household Income
• Parental Stress
• Food Insecurity
• School Closures
• Inadequate Housing
• Reduced Regular Health Check-Ups
• Barriers to Visiting Children at Foster Care
• Loss of Extracurricular Activities

Interventions
• Parental Support
• Consultations with Scientific Experts
• Government Task Forces
• Youth Advisory Council
• Close-knit communities
• Cash transfer programs
• Parental Support Programs
• Parental Education
• Child Adolescent Psychiatry Mental Health (2020) 14:20, Fegert et al. Challenges and burden of Coronavirus 2019 pandemic for child and adolescent mental health; a narrative review to highlight clinic and research needs in the acute phase and the long return to normality

• CDC Morbidity and Mortality weekly report, August 14, 2020: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020