

# Parents: 10 Tips On How To Reduce Child Anxiety & Stress



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Hi, I'm Julie, and those of you who follow me on social media or have purchased my book, 'Hank The Hungry Monster', will know that I am passionate about sharing ways to help our children to manage their anxiety and stress.



Because if there's one thing that I have learnt from having one daughter with extreme OCD...

And another suffering from exam anxiety... it's this...

**Most mental health issues and illnesses are caused by anxiety.**

Because we are not born with fear.

Fear is created in us by people or events.

**Let me share a quick example of this.**

I can remember, once watching the Speakmans (who are therapists who regularly feature on TV daytime shows like 'This Morning'), who were helping a woman overcome her fear of frogs.

She had developed an extreme phobia of frogs ,ever since a child, when she turned yellow after kissing a flog!

On delving into the situation, a bit deeper, the Speakmans identified that It wasn't the actual kissing of the frog that had caused her fear of frogs (or her yellow skin).

But more the **look of horror on her mum's face** when she saw her daughter's yellow skin...

Which by the way was caused by a medical illness, and not by kissing the frog!

So, in other words, it was the **reaction** on her mother's face that had made her feel scared and had caused her consequent fear of frogs, and not kissing one.

And that's often the cause for children developing fears and phobias, which they then carry with them throughout childhood and often into adulthood.

**So, what can we do to reduce our children's anxiety...?**

Especially in the current climate.

Well here are **10 Tips** that I have personally found useful, in helping my own daughters to overcome their anxiety issues.

So, grab a cuppa, and sit back and relax ,as I share with you my **Top 10 Tips On How To Reduce Child Anxiety & Stress:**

## **1. Anxiety is contagious**

This is so important.

In the same way that smiling is contagious, so too is anxiety and stress.

Meaning, that if you are constantly anxious or stressed around your child, it is very likely that your child will pick up on it and become anxious too.

I truly believe that is not a coincidence that children who are brought up in a happy and stress-free environment, grow into calmer and more confident individuals.

Sadly, I know this only too well!

Because as a result of having extreme pressure and cashflow problems within our bricks and mortar businesses , I was often stressed around the children and often passed on my worries and concerns to them.

This is something that I deeply regret as there is no question in my mind, that this played some part in my daughters' anxiety and health issues.

I cover more on this within a blog that I wrote that you can read by clicking the link below:

<https://copywhatiuse.com/2020/09/16/teenage-anxiety-why-everything-i-did-raising-my-teens-was-wrong/>

## **2. Praise in the right measures**

I was brought up to stay grounded.

When I passed all of my exams, or received compliments, I was encouraged not to “brag” about it, for fear of people thinking that I was “big headed”.

This was good advice to some extent, as it did indeed keep me humble and worked during those times.

However, I fear that adopting the same approach with my own daughters, might not have been the best tactic to use.

Why?

Because neither have much self-confidence.

They both think that they are ugly, fat or not good enough.

And as a result, they spend hours trying to look more beautiful or trying to be more popular.

Is this my fault or a sign of the times?

Who knows?

What I would recommend though is to ensure that you praise children appropriately, without them becoming overconfident, so that they will develop in confidence and ability and have a develop good self esteem.

### **3. Rewards**

Speaking of praise, another REALLY effective way that I have found works well with reducing child anxiety, is to negotiate rewards.

If your child is struggling to do something, or if certain situations make them anxious, offering rewards can be a great way of helping them to overcome their anxiety.

If they are suffering extreme anxiety, you can even break the task into several steps and reward each step.

#### **For example:**

Let's say that your child is petrified of going to the dentist, you could offer a small reward for each part of the process:

- A reward for actually leaving the house.
- Another for stepping inside the dentist surgery.
- And something else for actually sitting in the chair.

Breaking the process up into smaller steps, will help the child to keep their anxiety levels down ,especially during the waiting process to actually get to the dentist chair, as they will be focusing on a more positive end goal instead i.e. their reward(s).

It doesn't have to be anything big or expensive.

Some of the most popular rewards within our house have been:

- A car ride.
- A coffee, meal or even a Ben and Jerry's ice cream

- Playing a board game as a family (usually it's the dreaded Monopoly which can go on for hours!)
- Baking together
- Planning a trip somewhere like the cinema or to a designated place.

#### **4. Create Sensory Boxes**

Items that appeal to all 5 senses are believed to be really effective in helping to reduce anxiety.

Simply use an old box like a shoe box for example.

Or you can buy a nice box if you prefer.

Then place items into the box that will appeal to the various senses.

Here are a few suggestions of items that you can put into the box:

- Photographs
- Stress balls
- Chocolate
- Seashell
- Play list
- Crystal
- Notepad and paper
- Wordsearch
- Pack of playing cards
- Fiddlers
- Candle
- Sachet of hot chocolate

The list of possibilities are endless.

**If your child becomes anxious, simply reach for the box and have them take out whatever it is that offers them calm and relief.**

## 5. Distraction

This was a BIG success for us especially for my daughter who had OCD.

When she was overcome with an OCD meltdown, we learnt to immediately use some form of **distraction**.

We also used these techniques with our other daughter when she was suffering from exam stress too.

Some of the most popular distraction techniques that we personally used (and still use now for that matter) include:

- A car ride to the coast (as we're fortunate to live near to the coast)
- A coffee from a drive through
- Some car Karaoke usually singing Beyonce songs full blast!
- Playing board games
- Joining the gym- my daughters really benefit from this
- Popping off somewhere for a coffee or a meal
- Playing calming music. One of our favourite songs is 'Moon River' from Breakfast in Tiffany's'
- Watching a film
- Visiting family especially Grandparents

Simply select some distraction methods that may work well for your child and try using them when your child begins to feel anxious or stressed.

## 6. Write it down

One tip that we were advised to try was to get our daughter to keep a journal every day.

Not to write an account of what she did, as that would have been rejected straight away

But more for the purpose of writing down, every day, **3 things that had made her happy.**

We were told that if she couldn't think of anything happy to write down, then to just make up 3 things instead.

Examples could be:

1. The sun shone
2. I cuddled the dog
3. I enjoyed my pizza

Because, it seems that the brain can be tricked.

If it reads positive, it processes positive.

Meaning that your child will start to experience some of the "happy" chemicals that the brain releases, as opposed to the "sad" ones.

**Getting them to write a letter to a friend or a family member, like a grandparent, can also be a therapeutic way of helping them to manage anxiety too.**

## 7. Postcards

Speaking of writing things down, I picked up another tip the other day, which was to leave postcards or post it notes, with an uplifting message written on it, in a child's bedroom.

Imagine the surprise and pleasure that they will feel on finding unexpected notes left for them to find.

## 8. "I'm Holding The Spoon"

Another technique that we use to combat anxiety, comes in the form of a wooden spoon.

We sit around a table and whoever has the spoon talks about any issues that they have.

Nobody is allowed to interrupt until the person holding the spoon has finished speaking.

You can even take this a step further by introducing a "post box" where your children can post notes expressing any issues that they may have about anything that might have upset them in the house (or outside of the house).

Again, you could all sit around the table, once a day, to discuss these issues and what can be done to overcome them.

**Given that most childhood anxiety and consequent mental health issues derive from their "stress bucket" overflowing, the sooner that you can help them find ways to release some of the stresses from their buckets, the better their chances will be of them not going on to develop full blown mental health issues.**

## 9. "Believe"

From my own parenting experience, one of the most common denominators in my daughters' anxiety was lack of belief and self-confidence.

Therefore, my advice would be to get your child, from an early age, to write down what they are good at.

This doesn't have to be just about academic or sporting skills.

But can also apply to their personality and characteristics too.

### **For example, being:**

- Kind
- Helpful
- Empathetic
- Approachable
- Considerate

An additional way to encourage them to have belief and self-esteem, is to get them to look in the mirror, every morning, while brushing their teeth...

And to recite to themselves what they are good at.

This should then help them to build up more confidence and self-worth and consequently help to reduce their anxiety.

## 10. Memory Tricks

And finally, why not introduce some memory tricks for a bit of fun.

There are numerous ways that memory tricks can be introduced to reduce anxiety, especially around school and learning.

And which will also help to create some fun and interest in their learning at the same time.

Here are just a few examples of some memory tricks that you can try.”

### 1. The Tray Game

- Place some items on to a tray and cover with a tea cloth.
- Remove an item from the tray.
- Have your child to guess which item has been removed.

### 2.The shopping list

Another fun memory game to play is where you start off with the sentence:

“When I went shopping, I bought some...

The person then adds an item e.g. some grapes.

The next person then repeats the sentence and adds another item to the list.

And so on...

Until someone forgets an item on the list.

This can be a great (and fun) way to train children's memories to remember information.

### **3.Learning Numbers**

This is a fun way to remember numbers.

My children learnt this trick over 10 years ago and they still remember it (and so do I).

My mum, who's 80 also can recite it.

As well as my 6-year-old grandson, who even made his own video reciting it!

**Here's the number that we are going to learn:**

**1415926535**

**We are going to need to use our imagination to learn this number.**

To remember the first 4 numbers- **1415**

*Imagine walking into a school and looking at an enormous clock which is showing the time as **14.15***

## Numbers 9&2

*As we walk into the hall a balloon comes floating towards us (which looks like the number 9).*

*Followed by an elegant swan that resembles the number 2.*

## Numbers 65 & 35

At the bottom of the hall there is a **65**-year-old man marrying a **35-year-old** woman.

**When you piece all of the story together, you will then have prompts to help you remember all of the numbers.**

Which will then store into your child's long-term memory.

And what they will have learnt is not just any 10-digit number.

**But the first 10 decimal numbers of Pii.**

How impressed will their peers and teachers be when they go into school reciting the first decimal numbers of pii.

There are numerous other ways to use memory tricks like these to make learning more fun and less stressful for children too.

Using memory tricks like these can be a great thing to use before school, to relax children ready for their school day.

**I cover more on these memory type tricks within my FREE revision guide and also on my You Tube channel and blog.**

FULL DETAILS CAN BE FOUND ON MY WEBSITE.

Thank you so much for downloading my **10 Tips for Parents On How To Reduce Child Anxiety and Stress.**

I sincerely hope that you found it useful and that the tips covered will prove useful in reducing **your** child's anxiety...

And that it will deter them from experiencing any mental health issues in the future.

As mentioned previously, I also post lots of tips and advice on my social media platforms and blogs.

**The links are featured below:**

Blog: [www.copywhatiuse.com](http://www.copywhatiuse.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/themindmonsters>

You Tube:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIOfbk9E4zqfupa\\_Ge-o6Qg?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIOfbk9E4zqfupa_Ge-o6Qg?view_as=subscriber)

Meanwhile, wishing you and your child every good health and a calm and happy life,

Julie 😊