

Supporting Children with Anxiety

Theresa Buczek, MA
Pre-Doctoral Intern



Outline for Today

- When do you feel anxious?
- What is anxiety?
- Signs of anxiety
- How to manage anxiety
- Group Activity
- Questions and Answers





Definition of Anxiety

“Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes like increased blood pressure.”
(APA, 2022)

It is a completely normal emotion to experience!



Features of Anxiety

- **Physical Signs**
 - Change in breathing
 - Increased blood pressure
 - Sweating
 - Shaking
 - Nausea
 - Headaches
- **Internal Signs**
 - Unwanted worrisome thoughts
 - Avoidance (e.g., “I’m fine!”)
 - Isolation
 - Asking for reassurance



Examples of Anxious Thoughts



“I have to be perfect all the time!”



“What if I get a bad grade?”



“Will they get mad at me for getting in trouble?”



“I have to be happy! If I’m not happy, then something is wrong with me.”

Ways
Children/Teens
May Express
Anxiety

Anger

Difficulty Sleeping

Defiance

Chandeliering (easily provoked)

Lack of Focus

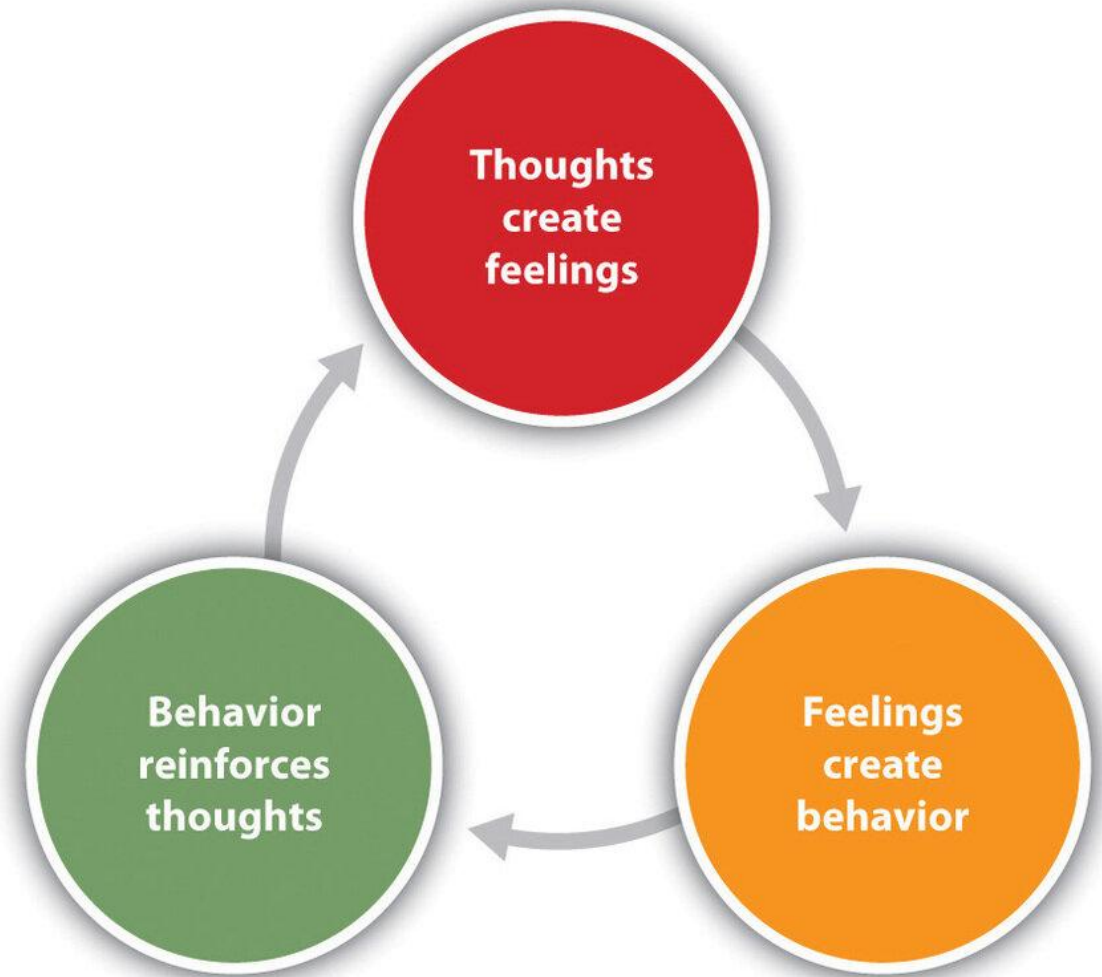
Avoidance

Negativity

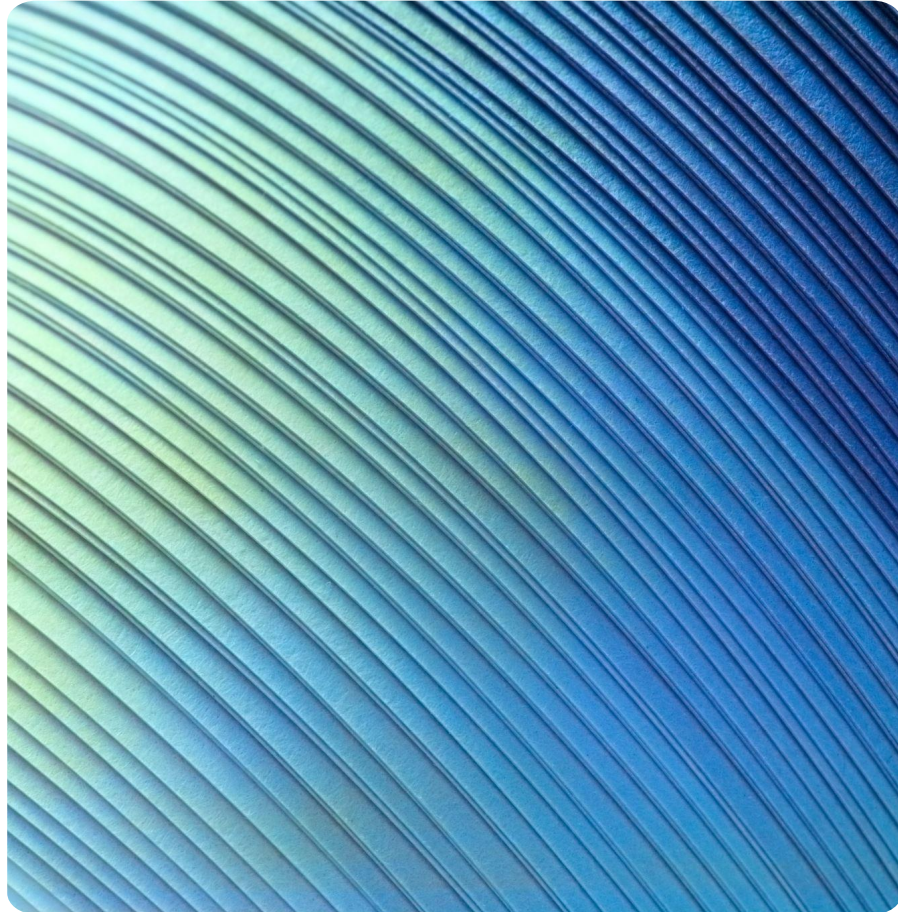
Overplanning



Breaking the Cycle



How Parents Can Use CBT



01

Learn how to best respond to children when they are anxious

02


Teach child how to face their fears

03

Teach children new coping skills so they can feel less worried in anxiety-provoking situations

A black silhouette of a family consisting of a mother, a father, and two children walking together and holding hands. The mother is on the left, the father is on the right, and two children are in the middle. The background is a solid grey color. The text 'Steps Parents Can Take' is written in white on the left side of the image.

Steps Parents Can Take

- Do not try to get rid of the anxiety
 - Do not avoid things because they make your child anxious
 - Set positive and realistic expectations
 - Respect their feelings, but empower their strength, not their fear
 - Do not ask leading questions such as “Are you anxious about being alone while we are at dinner?”
 - Do not reinforce your child’s fear with phrases such as “You know, you *should* be worried about this.”
 - Be encouraging and empowering!
 - Think things through with your child
- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of several short, thick, yellow dashed lines arranged in a curved path on the right side of the page.