



Skills Spotlight - Learning to Manage Anxiety

Whew! You made it through another tax season. Take a breath and congratulate yourself. Learning to manage the anxiety or worry that accompanies common situations like taxes, career shifts, or discussing an important issue with a family member can be challenging. Anxiety is an emotion experienced by everyone. And, believe it or not, feeling anxious can at times be helpful.

Anxiety only becomes a problem when we begin to think certain events are more dangerous than they actually are, and we don't perceive ourselves to have the resources to cope. Or, when we begin to avoid situations where anxiety might occur. Here are a few helpful ways in which Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps to manage anxiety:

1) Anxiety alerts us to possible danger and prepares our body to respond to danger. This is known as the "fight-or-flight" response. During these times we often hyperventilate, which means breathing becomes shallow and fast. Other bodily responses can range from dizziness, feeling faint, visual changes, increased heart rate, or tingling sensations. It is important to know that these symptoms or sensations are NOT DANGEROUS. [Learning controlled breathing or progressive muscle relaxation techniques](#) are an essential aspect of managing the physical symptoms of anxiety. In order to employ these techniques effectively in anxiety-provoking situations, you must practice them routinely. Practice in the car, take a few minutes at your desk, or right before you go to bed.

2) The way in which we perceive a situation and our ability to cope with that situation has a major impact on our anxiety level. Identifying and managing thoughts when in situations that cause anxiety can be challenging. Oftentimes, we find ourselves "swept up" by our emotions. The first step is to learn to take a "pause" when we become hyper-aroused, and then to identify the anxiety-provoking thoughts that accompanied the situation. Thoughts such as, *"I can't handle this...they won't like me...nothing ever works out for me,"* can occur in a microsecond and sometimes be long-standing beliefs. Second, it is important to [challenge anxious thoughts](#) by finding more realistic and helpful alternative thoughts. Challenging thoughts is not easy. This technique takes time and lots of practice. The best way to learn how to challenge anxious thoughts is to use a [thought record](#).

3) Calling yourself a "worrier" isn't helpful. Worry is a major problem for those who suffer from anxiety. That type of thought pattern tends to move from one worrisome topic to the next with no relief. The work here is to begin to understand what underlies your worry. Oftentimes, we find that there are beliefs that worrying serves a positive purpose, which leads to continued worrying and high levels of anxiety. In these cases, treatment centers around identifying and challenging thoughts and beliefs around "worry," as well as setting up behavioral strategies that monitor worry and teach clients to develop better problem solving skills.

4) Fear of anxiety can sometimes cause us to begin to avoid situations that may cause us to feel anxious. In the short-term, avoidance may provide temporary relief from anxiety. However, in the long-term, avoidance worsens anxiety because it plants the seed that we lack the personal efficacy to confront the feared situation. [Learning to tolerate fear and face anxiety-provoking situations](#) enables the building of confidence and learning skills that allow us to handle even more challenging situations.

There is no "quick fix" in learning to manage anxiety. Remember, anxiety happens! Setbacks or rough days are moments in which we can learn even more about ourself. Our goal is to work on taking "pauses" each day to listen to our thoughts, practice deep breathing, and, most importantly, to learn how to offer ourselves encouragement and compassion.

Transgender Competence in the Therapeutic Setting

**Webinar Presented by:
Cognitive Behavior Therapy Institute
Monday, June 12, 2017
10am - 11:30am**

Gender minorities continue to be an underserved population, often presenting with previous/current harm(s) from healthcare providers, positive prognosis for therapeutic growth, and specific risk factors. Dr. Greg Stanford, Psy.D., WPATH will discuss the ethical and clinical considerations of working with transgender clients. Creating a safe environment as well as identifying a practical level of competence regarding transgender issues will be presented.

At the conclusion of this program, participants will be able to:

1. Negotiate the concerns of transgender oppression such as individual, cultural, and institutional
2. Identify non-medical transition (social transition) and medical transition (i.e., hormones and surgeries)
3. Apply appropriate therapeutic skills as they relate to gender minority stress



Dr. Greg Stanford, Psy.D., is a Licensed Psychologist with practices in Arcadia, Beverly Hills, and Cypress, California. He is a member of World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). He received his Psy.D. in clinical psychology from California School of Professional Psychology in 2009. He began his clinical training at Los Angeles LGBT Center (formerly Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center) in 2006. His doctoral project consisted of a selective literature review of the harms, considerations, and need for affirmative therapy for survivors of sexual reorientation attempts, culminating in delivering a presentation to mental health professionals. He completed his postdoctoral internship at Ocean Park Community

Center, providing services in shelter communities and with recently housed, formerly homeless individuals. Dr. Stanford has over 10 years of experience in serving the trans community.

[Link to Sign up for Webinar](#)

Partners & Parents Corner Helping Your Child Manage Their Anxiety

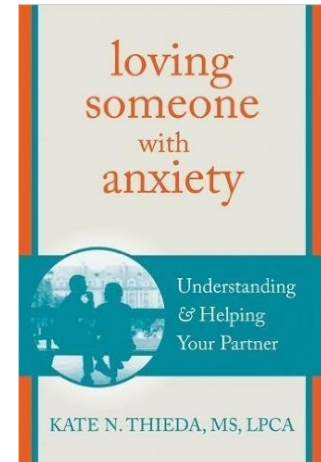
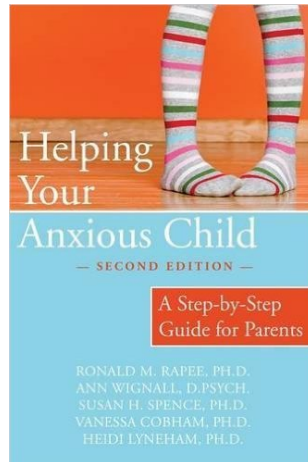
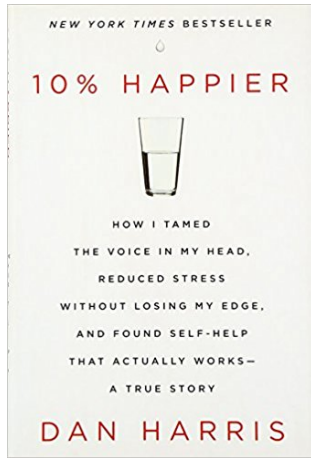
With magazines such as "*Psychology Today*" offering tips for parenting [anxious children](#), acknowledgement and treatment of anxiety in children has seen tremendous progress. The use of CBT for children and teens with anxiety has been [proven to be especially effective](#). Treatment elements such as cognitive restructuring and exposure tasks can help kids learn how to cope with the anxiety they feel today, as well have an impact on how they manage

stressors in the future. Phil Kendall's "[Coping Cat Intervention](#)" is an online resource based on CBT principles that provides useful psychoeducation and parenting strategies.

Book Recommendations

Here are a few books recommended by CBA staff. [Helping Your Anxious Child](#) provides parents a "how-to" resource, and [Loving Someone with Anxiety](#) helps individuals navigate a relationship with an anxious partner.

[10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works](#) is a book by Dan Harris an ABC news correspondent who describes how meditation helped him after having a panic attack on air. His book offers a very realistic and optimistic view of mindfulness strategies for anxiety. Like many of us, Harris discovered that the very phenomenon that resulted in his success was the very cause of his anxiety.



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