



### Defining Anxiety for Kids

- It is important how we deal with children who are facing anxiety. We do not need to take an approach based on sadness, shock, or trauma. Instead, a strength-based, hope-focused, and resilient approach is needed.
- We should define anxiety the way the child defines it. They may say things like:
  - “I am worried/scared/shaken up.”
  - “I don’t want to go outside, I might die.”
  - “I can’t shut off my brain.”

### How Kids Experience Anxiety

- Children are the experts in their own story, and we need to listen to them.
- Be on the lookout for signs and symptoms. Signs are what you see, symptoms are what children report. Here are some examples of signs and symptoms:
  - Depression, headaches, upset stomach, nightmares, pain (chest or back), loss or increase in appetite, vomiting, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, sleep issues, and more.
- Be on the lookout for what they don’t say (mood).

### Ground Children in Scripture

- Do not hyper spiritualize or downplay anxiety. It is real and needs to be addressed in the natural and in the spiritual with God’s word and other interventions.
- Anxiety may be big, but God is bigger.
- Let children know God’s word is a sword they can use to fight, and this includes anxiety. Through God’s word, kids have power over their thoughts.
- Always use sound theology. Remind them that the fight is between God and the enemy (anxiety), so that the pressure is taken off the child to feel as if they have to fight alone. (Example: David and Goliath – David represents Christ, and we are like the stones and sling God used to defeat Goliath)
- Scriptures kids should hide in their heart:
  - Proverbs 18:21; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:13; Deuteronomy 31:8; Proverbs 3:5-6; Ephesians 2:10; Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 49:16; Jeremiah 29:11; Ephesians 6:11-18; Psalm 8:2

The Developing Leaders, Impacting Kids podcast is produced by International Children’s Ministries of the Church of God of Prophecy International Offices. We develop leaders by providing quality and accessible training experiences, producing relevant resources for local church ministry, and cultivating a community of support and encouragement. To learn more about our certification program, training intensives, and institutes of children’s ministry, please visit [www.cogop.org/children](http://www.cogop.org/children).

## Helping Parents

- Assure them they are not alone.
- Help them disrupt negative thought patterns about not being good parents. Remind them children care more about them being there than them getting it right.
- Encourage them to take care of their own emotional health.

## The Impact of COVID on Kids

- Kid's cups are full.

## Equipping our Teams and Volunteers

- Know these topics don't oppose God or faith.
- Awareness leads to empathy which leads to us listening differently.
- Use available resources inside and outside of your church. Have professionals come in and train your staff.
- Partner with community resources.

## The Leader and Anxiety

- Take care of yourself first (self-care) and be aware of your own emotional health.
- Listen as your body speaks.
- Recognize that it is okay to be a Christian leader and to experience stress, anxiety, anger, sadness, and depression.
- Establish boundaries and realize you cannot do everything.
- Have a strong social support outside of church.

## How to Help Kids

- Promote play and laughter.
- Do what you can to create routines and create breaks.
- Give choices instead of directives to let them feel in control.

## Recommended Resources:

- Google
- Websites:
  - [www.hope4mentalhealth.com](http://www.hope4mentalhealth.com) (Rick and Kay Warren)
  - [www.championsclub.org](http://www.championsclub.org) (Lakewood Church)
  - [www.nami.org/home](http://www.nami.org/home) (The National Alliance on Mental Illness)
  - [www.c3inthisogether.com/resources](http://www.c3inthisogether.com/resources) (Dr. Morais Cassell)