

Anxiety

Anxiety can be a shady character and can often appear in ways that don't look like anxiety. Because of this, it can be difficult to know when your child is anxious. Anxiety has been doing its thing since the beginning of humans, and it's brilliant at it. What it's not so great at is announcing its presence in gentle, clear ways that preserve the capacity for any of us to meet it with a strong, steady, 'Oh, there you are,' and an even more powerful, 'It's okay, I'm safe – you don't need to be here right now'.

Anxiety in Children – Why Does Anxiety Happen?

Anxiety is the work of a strong, healthy brain that's a little overprotective. It comes from a part of the brain called the amygdala, which keeps us safe by getting us ready to fight for our lives or run for it. The amygdala is instinctive, so if it thinks there might be danger, it will act first and think later – and the unfamiliar, the unknown, humiliation, embarrassment, separation from important people, can all count as danger. When the amygdala is triggered, it initiates a surge of neurochemicals to make us stronger, faster, more powerful, and more physically able to deal with a threat. Sometimes, the amygdala can work a little too hard and hit the alarm button too often when it doesn't need to. It is NOT a broken brain, but a strong, healthy, capable brain that's working a little too hard and being a little too overprotective.

Back when the threats we humans faced were mostly physical, the most anxious of us probably would have been the most likely to survive. An anxious brain would have made us more alive to any threats, which would give us the survival edge. Now, the dangers we face are less physical threats and more psychological ones. We no longer face the possibility of being dinner for a furry predator, but we do face very real psychological threats such as failure, rejection, exclusion, humiliation, disconnection from the people we care about – and the list goes on. The brain still fires up in response to threat, exactly as it's meant to, but when the threats are psychological stressors, the fight or flight response doesn't serve us so well. When there is nothing to fight or flee, there's nothing to burn the fight or flight neurochemicals that surge through us, so they build up and cause the symptoms of anxiety.

Excerpt from Hey Sigmund website.

www.heyigmund.com

This website has a wealth of information to help support your child. If you are concerned please visit your doctor for a professional opinion.