

Overview

SNAP-B suggests Azim's learning might be affected by anxiety, which means that he will quickly give up or run away from situations with which he cannot cope. He may try to over-control situations in order to avoid anxiety.

How will this affect Azim?

While anxiety will affect children and young people differently according to their personality and developmental age, some common patterns do exist:

- Changes in routines can cause a disproportionate degree of worry.
- Constant reassurances will be sought.
- Future changes are worried over, well in advance.
- There is an over-willingness to please and a tendency to being over-sensitive to upsetting people.
- These children often avoid new challenges and, if persuaded to face them, may display an *"I expect I will fail"* attitude.
- These children will easily cry when upset.
- These children may complain of physical symptoms, headaches, etc. when faced with challenges at school.

Interventions selected to help Azim at school

Modelling

Using other pupils as positive role models.

Relaxation techniques

Controlled breathing and muscle relaxation techniques.

Visualisation and guided imagery

Uses positive imagery and the pupil's imagination to change negative feelings.

What can I do to help Azim at home?

The tips, strategies and advice shown here are not comprehensive and are certainly not prescriptive. You may already be using some or most of them. They are intended just as a resource for you to draw on, using your own judgement and knowledge of Azim – you know more about him than anybody else!

- Remember, the aim is not to eliminate anxiety as it is a healthy normal response. The aim is to help Azim manage anxiety and not to be overwhelmed and controlled by it.
- Azim may believe that what he is feeling is normal or he may believe there is something wrong with him. Talking to him about anxiety when possible can help. What kind of things scared you as a child? How did you feel? Learning about anxiety, and how it is a normal reaction, can be the first step towards taking control of it.
- Use open-ended questions. Avoid asking: *'Are you worried about the test tomorrow?'* Instead say: *'How are you feeling about tomorrow's test?'*
- Give feedback when Azim tolerates a level of anxiety more than usual: *'It took a lot of effort and self-control to stay calm in that situation. I was impressed. I hope you felt pleased as well.'*
- When something potentially stressful is going to happen, keep the build-up time as short as possible.

Activities to try at home

- Develop a routine of practising together relaxation techniques: how to unwind and reduce stress. These can include deep breathing, music, exercise, colouring in, etc. Help Azim find the activities that help him unwind. You are modelling and teaching healthy ways of dealing with stress and anxiety.
- Practise problem-solving. Use different everyday worries, like a new school or meeting new people, to talk through ideas that could help manage the anxiety.

Useful websites and resources

<http://www.anxietybc.com/parenting/anxiety-101> – *Anxiety 101: What You and Your Child Need to Know about Anxiety* gives useful practical ideas about understanding anxiety and managing it.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/renee-jain/9-things-every-parent-with-an-anxious-child-should-try_b_5651006.html – *9 Things Every Parent with an Anxious Child Should Try*: a user friendly problem-solving approach to managing anxiety.

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk> – Information and practical advice on anxiety for children and young people, parents and professionals.

http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/media/19579/cyp_parents_1_2_web.pdf – *Children and Young People with Anxiety: A Guide for Parents and Carers* looks at common anxiety disorders with tips for parents and school management.

Manassis, K. (2015) *Keys to Parenting Your Anxious Child* (Barrons Educational Series). Explains anxiety in children and teenagers with strategies to manage common problem areas.

Plummer, D. & Harper, A. (2010) *Helping Children to Cope with Change, Stress and Anxiety: A Photocopiable Activities Book* (Jessica Kingsley). Offers over 100 activities and games specifically aimed at helping children to build emotional resilience.

Sunderland, M. & Armstrong, N. (2001) *Willy and the Wobbly House: A Story for Children Who are Anxious or Obsessional* (Speechmark). A picture book written for 4–11-year-olds that promotes understanding and normality.

Wilson, R. et al. (2013) *Anxious Kids, Anxious Parents: 7 Ways to Stop the Worry Cycle and Raise Courageous and Independent Children* (Health Communications). Clear explanation of anxiety and user-friendly steps to manage it.