**Supporting Children with Anxiety: A Guide for Parents & Teachers**

Anxiety is a normal part of life, but for some children, it can become overwhelming and interfere with their daily activities. Parents and teachers play a crucial role in helping children manage their worries and build confidence. This guide provides practical strategies to support children experiencing anxiety.

**Understanding Anxiety in Children**

Anxiety can show up in many different ways, including:

* Frequent worries or fears about school, social situations, or everyday activities
* Avoidance of certain places or tasks
* Physical symptoms like stomach aches, headaches, or restlessness
* Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
* Emotional outbursts or withdrawal

Recognising these signs can help provide the right support early on.

**Strategies for Parents**

**1. Create a Safe & Supportive Environment**

* Validate their feelings: "I can see that you’re feeling worried. It’s okay to feel this way. Let’s talk about it."
* Encourage open communication about their fears without dismissing them.
* Maintain predictable routines to help reduce uncertainty.

**2. Teach Coping Skills**

* **Deep Breathing:** Encourage slow, deep breaths to help calm the nervous system.
* **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Teach them to tense and relax different muscle groups to relieve stress.
* **Mindfulness & Grounding Techniques:** Help them focus on the present moment with activities like "5-4-3-2-1" grounding (identifying five things they see, four they can touch, three they hear, two they smell, and one they taste).

**3. Gradual Exposure to Fears**

* Help them face fears in small, manageable steps instead of avoiding them completely.
* Praise their efforts and progress, no matter how small.

**4. Model Healthy Ways to Manage Anxiety**

* Show how you handle stress in a calm and positive way.
* Talk about challenges you’ve faced and how you coped with them.

**5. Support Sleep & Healthy Habits**

* Establish a consistent bedtime routine.
* Limit screen time before bed.
* Encourage regular physical activity and healthy eating.

**Strategies for Teachers**

**1. Create a Calm & Predictable Classroom Environment**

* Use visual schedules to help children understand daily routines.
* Provide advance warnings for transitions or changes.
* Offer quiet spaces where students can self-regulate.

**2. Encourage Positive Social Interactions**

* Pair anxious students with supportive peers for group work.
* Teach empathy and inclusion to create a supportive classroom culture.

**3. Help Students Develop Coping Skills**

* Integrate breathing exercises and mindfulness breaks into the school day.
* Offer alternative ways to participate (e.g., allowing students to write instead of speaking in front of the class).

**4. Work with Parents & Support Systems**

* Keep open lines of communication with parents about concerns and progress.
* Refer students for additional support if needed (e.g., school counsellors or external specialists).

**When to Seek Professional Help**

If anxiety is significantly affecting a child’s daily life, professional support may be needed. A psychologist can provide assessments, therapy, and strategies tailored to the child’s needs.

**Final Thoughts**

Supporting a child with anxiety requires patience, understanding, and a collaborative approach. By creating a safe, structured, and encouraging environment, both parents and teachers can help children manage their worries and build the confidence they need to thrive.

For further guidance or professional support, please reach out to **Saga Psychology**.