

PAC meeting
Nov 25th. 7-8:30pm

1. Speaker on Anxiety

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Anxiety is normal.
Part of our survival system to:
Avoid separation from adults, be vigilant for predators, avoid specific dangers.
Too much anxiety is a problem though.

Anxiety is developmental.
Infant/toddlers - separation/novel situations normal
Preschool - animals, separation
School - adaptations, performance, family, obsessive-compulsive
Pre-adolescence - morality, health
Adolescence - performance, future

Anxiety is physical
Arousal: heart rate, breathing, shaky, dizzy

Anxiety is psychological
emotional:
cognitive: lots of thoughts that turn to negative thoughts

Anxiety is behavioural
fight/flight/freeze responses: all natural responses

What causes anxiety?
Genetics
Temperament
Chronic stresses (illness, loss, trauma, learning and developmental problems)
Acute Stresses
Modeling and learning

Impact of anxiety?
Effects on functioning at school (under/overachieves), social development, family coping
Increased risk of developing other mood disorders
Increased challenges in parenting

Normal vs excessive anxiety
15% of kids have anxious temperament
Developmental - brief (weeks to months) and typical vs atypical, persistent, disabling
Situational: losses, family changes vs absence of stressor
Manageable with support vs does not settle with strategies

Typical issues with anxious children:

Sleeping problems - child will want parent to help them relax. Children need to learn the skill of getting asleep alone.

Refusals and avoidance - kids may avoid going to school - the longer kids are out of school, the less likely they are to go back. Really important to teach skills in coping early.

Physical complaints - a way to avoid doing things that stress them out

Irritable

Perfectionism and procrastination - typical for anxious kids to procrastinate. perfectionistic tendencies of school work: have to look exactly right. Good to start working on in elementary school years, as expectations rise a lot during high school years.

Pessimism - negative thinking patterns

Constant worry

Behavioural and emotional challenges:

Low frustration tolerance

Quickly overwhelmed

Highly intense

Difficulty thinking clearly - can't think clearly. Don't try to argue with them or explain.

Inflexibility and rigid thinking - rule bound. Require other kids to follow the rules.

Crying

Shut down - unable to shift gears. A request is beyond their emotional control. It is someone else's fault.

These behaviours are your clue that they are not coping. They are not there to get at you. These kids don't have maliciousness in them. Often they feel horrible after - they are regretful and remorseful. Parents need to separate consequences from the anxiety-related disruption.

Anxious kids are highly intense and emotional. They have great empathy. Kind hearted. Good imagination. Often quite bright. Often very verbal.

Because of the rigidity, they are less reluctant to experiment with stuff that other kids are.

Treatment principles:

Environmental management - look at what is happening at home and school

Education for parents and kids

Cognitive-behavioural therapy

Medications (for severe anxiety only)

Anxiety management is a life skill

Review your own temperament and your own stress coping style. Are you modeling effective relaxation, time management and problem-solving skills?

Kids today are very busy and scheduled. They often have no time to relax after their day of activities, as we do once they are in bed.

Consider some family-wide/school-wide strategies: when to do homework, exercise (though team sports might not be good for anxious kids), more sleep, "screens-off" time to relax, stop to breathe and to listen to each other (e.g. Mindfulness program). We often model for our kids what the next activity is, rather than what's going on right now, which increases anxiety.

Helping anxious children and adolescents:

Know temperament

Consistent routines

Feed often (graze)

Exercise
Sleep routines
Anticipate - transition planning
Promote self-soothing and problem solving
Take time
Compartmentalizing
Distraction
Organizational skills
Psychological relaxation/self-talk
Modeling - anxious kids are watching everything
Training self-awareness and self-management and self-soothing skills

2. Playground fundraising committee

Recycling profits will go to the playground.
Budget for playground may easily be \$300K. Other schools have done comparable funding.
New co-chair fundraisers - Nicole and Liane. Thank you.
Playground committee meets the week before the PAC meeting each month.
“Good Bye Gordon” event instead of Spring Fling this year. June 7th 2014.
Ideas to Erin Arnold, who will pass on ideas to Nicole and Liane.
New school footprint is about where current school is. Playground committee wanted to leave grassy space where it is, as it is so functional. Even on rainy days more kids using the grassy area than gravel field. This is now possible with the current location of the new school. Gravel field will remain too, for kids that need it for soccer.

3. Direct Donation

\$10,000 now raised for Direct Donation.

4. Winter events

Winter concerts Dec 12th
Decorations are up
Coffee and bake sale
Poinsettia sale

5. Sesimic

Wed seismic upgrade relocation meeting with Gordon and QE PAC/admin committee meeting.
Antipate needing a bussing survey in the new year.
To stay on budget, new school is 3 stories. No balconies/outside stairwells. All classrooms face south.
Preschool/kindergarten in middle. Admin/library at the front. On night of winter concert will have a display of the new school.
Demolition - save bricks/lockers to use for fundraising - would have to happen in the summer.
Stage is being pushed for, and will be finalized later.

6. MLA David Eby to attend PAC meeting

Planning to attend January meeting.

7. Seeking parent to oversee website and social media site

Parent with social media skills to run social media site for school

8. Winter food baskets

Jennifer Correa and Kristin MacDougal overseeing.

9. Giftcard ordering

Use for holiday orders

10. Student events

Movember event on Wed

Collection for Phillipines