

Brave Practice Examples for Common Fears

Many of the following ideas come from www.bravepracticeforkids.com. Visit www.bravepracticeforkids.com for more up to date resources on helping kids learn to manage their anxiety.

Social Stuff

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a 1-minute presentation to your clinician on random topics (earthworms, boogers, pizza, the flu). • Call a restaurant and ask what is on the menu. • Text a friend about something you think they will like. • Wear a silly hat and walk around the clinic building. • Ask several people what time it is while wearing a watch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a 1-minute presentation to your parents' friends • Go to a public place (the mall, grocery store) & tell people you are doing a survey. Ask their favorite ice cream flavor • Introduce yourself to a new person in your building or neighborhood • Go to a public place and sing happy birthday as loudly as you can. • Answer a question in class when you're not sure you know the answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For everyone, the price of having relationships is occasional awkwardness, rejection, mistakes, and embarrassment. One goal of brave practice is learning you can handle those things. They get easier with practice! • Sometimes it helps to learn new skills (like making small talk, joining group conversations, handling teasing). • But often the best practice involves just being yourself, focusing on others, and staying in the present moment when you are interacting.

Worrying

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch a news story about your worry (health, safety, crime, etc.). • Write a story about the worst-case scenario you are imagining and read it repeatedly. • Break a small rule like being 5 minutes late to class or turning in work a few hours late. • Make mistakes on purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have caregivers change plans at the last minute, show up early or late. • Take a walk with no destination and flip a coin to decide which direction to go • Answer a question wrong on purpose (on homework, on a quiz). • Practice not asking a parent if something bad is going to happen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For fears that are real, youths can learn skills or make a plan for if they happen. • BUT, too much planning is often a SAFETY BEHAVIOR. Instead youths can practice living with uncertainty, doing things without a plan. • Caregivers can work on giving less reassurance about worries. • Kids can practice the skill of sitting with the uncomfortable feelings of not knowing what will happen.

Being Away from Family

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually decrease the amount of time caregivers spend in session. • Send caregivers on a walk or errand and talk about what the child fears could happen, without calling or texting to check in. • Spend time alone in a room, gradually increasing time. • Have caregiver leave session and return later than expected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually increase space (and time!) apart in the house (different rooms, different floors). • Have a caregiver run an errand while the child remains at home. • Have playdates, sleep overs. • Practice sleeping independently (caregiver can sit in chair by the bed, then gradually increase distance from bed) while child falls asleep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids can learn skills for sad feelings during separation (distraction, getting support of a teacher). • Safety behaviors like texting or calling to check on caregivers can be decreased, with rewards for sticking to the plan. • Caregivers can work on reducing reassurance about separation. • It can be helpful to learn other skills, like what to do if you get lost or need help and your caregiver isn't with you.

Specific Fears

(things like needles, vomit, blood, heights, spiders, other animals)

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at a picture or watch a video of the feared object or situation (animal, needle, vomit, etc.) • Read or tell short stories about children encountering the feared object or situation. • Bring the feared thing into the room and gradually get closer to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a trip to see the feared object or situation (go to a pet store, go to the doctor with a sibling, etc.). • Go on a scavenger hunt to find the feared object/animal. • Watch educational videos about the feared topic (flu shots, blood draws, high places, animals). • Look for and cut out any unnecessary safety behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caregivers can work on reducing avoidance or accommodation about these fears (like asking family friends to put their dogs away when you come over). • Some people with fears about blood or needles will faint in the presence of blood or needles, or when talking about them. Practice <u>Applied Tension</u> to prevent fainting: https://www.anxietycanada.com/sites/default/files/blood_and_needles.pdf

Feelings in Your Body

(fear of having panic attacks or other body feelings)

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do things that bring on your panic or body symptoms, to help teach your brain they aren't dangerous. Examples: ⇒ Spin fast in an office chair (1 min); ⇒ breathe forcefully, fast and deep (1 min); ⇒ hold your nose and breathe through a straw (2 min); ⇒ hold your breath (30 sec); ⇒ high knees running in place (2 min); ⇒ tense all body muscles (1 min); ⇒ put head between legs or lie down and relax and then sit up quickly (1 min); ⇒ stare at yourself in a mirror hard without blinking (2 min); ⇒ put on several heavy sweatshirts and do jumping jacks; ⇒ then combine exercises for best results! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do exercises that bring on your symptoms (see at left) in different places, in different combinations, with or without your caregiver. • Go to places or do activities that you fear could bring on panic or body symptoms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For many people with panic attacks or body symptoms that frighten them it is helpful to do bring on the feelings on purpose so you can test out your fears about them. • It is also key to start going places and doing activities you've been avoiding for fear of getting panic or body symptoms. With practice you'll learn you can handle it. • Decrease safety behaviors, like drinking water, keeping certain items nearby, staying near exits, or keeping phone or parent close by.

Other Stuff

(including obsessive compulsive disorder)

Ideas for In a Clinic	Ideas for Outside a Clinic	Helpful Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go on a germs scavenger hunt (touch floors, door knobs, parts of a toilet) without washing hands. • Break a rule without "confessing". • Write your name with your non-dominant hand. No erasing or re-writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a ritual (compulsion) "just wrong" (do the opposite of what OCD says!) • Avoid "checking" things (like door locks) • Make a mess of your belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obsessions are uncomfortable thoughts, feelings or images; Compulsions are the things you do over and over to get rid of or manage your obsessions. • The solution is to do things that bring up obsessions, but NOT do the compulsions you normally do. This teaches your brain that obsessions can be tolerated, and compulsions aren't necessary.