

Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions- SPACE

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HOLLISTON YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions (SPACE) is a parent-based approach for treating childhood anxiety, OCD or related problems. This short term treatment (approximately 12 sessions) has been shown to be as effective as child-based CBT in reducing childhood anxiety symptoms. Because parents (or caregivers) are the ones participating in treatment, SPACE is particularly helpful for children who are unwilling or unmotivated to participate in therapy.

As a parent, you are not the cause of your child's anxiety, but you can be an important part of the solution. Children naturally rely on their parents for reassurance and protection. While some ways of accommodating a child's fears may lessen their anxiety at the time, they can also prevent the child from learning how to deal with their worries on their own as they get older. For example, a parent might sleep with a child who has separation anxiety or order for a child at a restaurant when a child has social phobia.

Children with anxiety disorders try to find ways to not experience anxiety, or to make themselves feel better when their anxiety is activated, just as other children do. One way children make themselves feel better is by staying away from situations that make them anxious. By doing so their anxiety is maintained; they “learn” that the way to feel better is to avoid, which in turn leads to more avoidance and ongoing or worsened anxiety symptoms.

SPACE treatment provides parents with skills and tools to help them respond more supportively to their anxious child and reduce the accommodations they have been making to the child's symptoms.

HYFS staff were trained by Dr. Eli Lebowitz of the Yale School of Medicine to provide this therapy in person or via telehealth. **If you are interested in becoming a new client please contact Program Director, Jackie Winer LICSW at winerj@holliston.k12.ma.us or by phone at 508-429-0620 x1 to learn more**



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