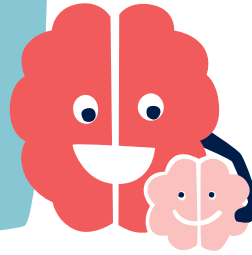


Strategies to build connection with your child when they're feeling anxious

Parent Resource

This resource has been developed in collaboration with Clinical Psychologist, Dr Jodie Lowinger.



When your child is feeling anxious, focusing on building a strong connection is one of the most powerful ways to support them. Anxiety can make kids feel isolated and misunderstood, but a sense of connection helps them feel safe and supported. By creating an open, understanding environment, you can help them navigate their emotions and build the mental fitness they need to manage anxiety in the future. Focusing on connection allows your child to feel heard, seen, and reassured.

Stay Present, Even When It's Hard

When your child is feeling emotional or overwhelmed, they might push you away or act out. Stay calm and present, even if it feels uncomfortable. Your steady presence sends a powerful message to them that you are a safe and supportive base, no matter how big their feelings are.



Use Reassuring Language

Try saying: "I love you, and I'm here when you're ready." Simple, unconditional statements like this let your child know that they don't have to earn your love and support, and that you'll be there when they feel ready to talk or reconnect.



Create Daily Connection Rituals

Build regular moments of connection into everyday life - remember that small things matter. These could be chats in the car, bedtime stories, walking the dog together, or doing a shared hobby. These casual moments are often when children feel most comfortable opening up.



Listen Without Judgment or Fixing

When your child shares something personal or vulnerable, resist the urge to immediately solve the problem or correct them. Instead, listen with empathy and curiosity. This builds trust and encourages them to come to you more often with their worries.



Model Vulnerability and Emotional Awareness

One of the most effective ways to build connection is by showing your child that you too have feelings and challenges. Share age-appropriate examples of how you navigate emotions like stress or disappointment. This normalises emotional expression and helps children feel less alone in their experiences.



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Take Action:

Give this simple family activity a go to boost connection!

Family Adventure Jar

Together as a family, brainstorm simple, fun activities you all enjoy (e.g., going for a nature walk, baking biscuits, a family game of sport, playing a board game, or having a backyard picnic).

Write each idea on a slip of paper and place them in a jar. Every now and then, draw one at random and do the activity together.

Why it works:

- Everyone contributes ideas, giving children a sense of ownership.
- Adds excitement and spontaneity to family time.
- Builds positive shared experiences and strengthens your connection as a family.



*A special thanks to Dr Jodie Lowinger for her collaboration on these resources.
Dr Lowinger is a clinical psychologist, high-performance coach, and the founder of The Anxiety Clinic.
For more information about anxiety and how to support your child, visit drjodie.com.au.*

Please note: This resource has been developed in collaboration with Dr Jodie Lowinger and is intended for general information purposes only. It's not a substitute for professional advice. Gotcha4Life does not offer counselling or crisis support.

If you have concerns about your child's wellbeing, please speak with your GP or a qualified health professional. You can also explore a range of free, trusted supports and information at gotcha4life.org/help-resources. For direct support, Kids Helpline offers free, confidential counselling for young people aged 5 to 25. Call 1800 55 1800 or visit kidshelpline.com.au.

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