

Treatment Approaches for Anxiety Disorders



Systematic Desensitization

Increasingly greater anxiety-provoking scenes are visualized by the child while engaging in relaxation techniques.

“In vivo” desensitization involves actual exposure to the feared situation or object while the child engages in relaxation techniques.

Modeling

Most successful treatment involves modeling of appropriate behavior while child is also participating in the event.

Child is reinforced for appropriate responses.

Contingency Management

Positive consequences are provided following exposure to the feared stimulus.

Cognitive-Behavioral Treatments

Alters the thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions of anxious children.

Child is taught self-talk messages before, during, and after exposure to feared stimulus.

Progressive Relaxation and Guided Imagery

Child is taught how to progressively relax the body starting from the feet and ending at the head.

Child is taught to create pictures of calming scenes.

Medication

Serotonin inhibitors (SRI's or SSRI's).

Clomipramine (and SRI) is the most extensively studied medication for treatment of anxiety disorders.

Most effective use of medications occurs in children diagnosed with OCD.

