Eight (or more!) Homework Ideas for Anxious Kids: Skills, Fun and Connection
Lynn Lyons, LICSW
Brief Therapy Conference
December 14, 2014

Homework should:

- Be experiential and active
- Illustrate the larger process(es) that you’re teaching
- Change/create the emotional tone of therapy (and often the tone of the anxious family)
- Be the basis of your treatment, not an adjunct to it
- BE FUN!

Of note...

While research shows that homework improves treatment outcome, a 2007 study (Hughes & Kendall) specifically with anxious children and teens found the therapeutic relationship—and NOT homework compliance—to be the bigger predictor of treatment outcome and post-treatment success.
“A therapist must be serious about the grim situation of his clientele while being free to change the framework of the situation in the spirit of play.”

Jay Haley

Potential Downfalls:

- Too internally focused and cognitive
- Focuses on elimination of symptoms (a focus on relaxation and calmness)
- Too serious and too much like school (so maybe you don't call it "homework" with some kids)
- STIC Show That I Can (Hudson & Kendall, 2002)
- Gathering data/information
- A Mission
- "What should we call it?"
- No follow up by YOU!
- Moves too slowly (or too quickly...but in my experience too slowly is more of a problem)

Focus on the Skills:

- Increase Flexibility
- Tolerate Uncertainty
- Compartmentalize
- Interrupt Family Patterns/ Get Out of the Cult
- Be on Offense!
- Problem Solve
- Connect/Disconnect (depending)
Creating Flexibility
- The Spaghetti Challenge
- Wall of Flexibility
- Closet and Photo Album Investigation
- Perfect & Favorite

Interrupt, Interrupt, Interrupt
- The Opposite Game
- What Went Well (Seligman) or 10 Good Things
- The Autonomy Inventory

Tolerating Uncertainty
- What I Know / What I Don’t Know Game
- Unexpected Things of the Day
- Setting the Reassurance Trap (or Time to Trick the Parents)
- Rewards for (other people’s) Bad Behavior
How to Create the Best Exposure Assignments

An example…
- A Flexible Ladder
- Competing Emotions
- The Role of Parents
- Something Tangible: Drawings, Lists, Recordings
- YOUR ENERGY

Thank you!
Lynn Lyons, LICSW
lynnlyonsnh.com
playingwithanxiety.com
Information Stuff

- Websites:
  - lynnlyonsnh.com
  - playingwithanxiety.com

- Email: Lynn@lynnlyonsnh.com

- Facebook: Lynn Lyons Psychotherapist, Anxiety and Children

- To get my newsletter: Go to FB page and click on EMAIL SIGN UP, or email me and ask.

Resources on Homework in Therapy


