PEOPLE INCORPORATED
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

SBMH Newsletter

SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH

OCTOBER 2022

BOO!

Are You Scared?

It's October and many people consider this time "spooky season". What better time to talk about fear, it's impacts and how we can overcome it!

Hitting the Sweet Spot

Fear does not always have to be a bad thing. The feeling of fear is a natural response and is needed to alert us to danger. However, for some, fear can come in doses that are sometimes too high or even too low. Not having enough fear might cause someone to make risky decisions such as not looking both ways before crossing a road. On the other side of this, having too much fear may make someone never leave their house. The goal is to find the "sweet spot" or balance. In the example above this may look like leaving the house to go on a walk but following traffic lights and looking both ways before crossing roads.

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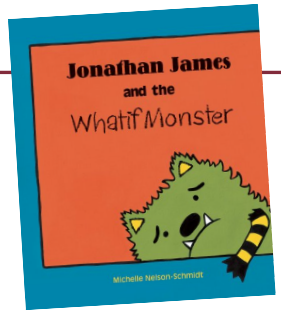
Avoidance and Exposure

One of the most common reactions to things we fear is to avoid them. However, as stated above, this could lead to unhealthy coping patterns as well as make us miss out on things. Exposure to our fear in small doses while practicing healthy coping skills can help desensitize us to the fear's power and overcome the barriers it poses. One way to do this is to draw a staircase with anywhere between 5 and 10 steps. Write your goal on the top step. Starting at the bottom, come up with smaller goals you can practice, working your way up to the most difficult step. For example: If you are experiencing fears of leaving the house your top step might be, go shopping for 1 hour. The smaller steps leading up to this might be standing in your doorway for a few minutes each day, then moving further and further away from your home.

Book Recommendation



Jonathan James and the Whatif Monster by Michelle Nelson-Schmidt
In the book, a young boy named Jonathan James questions the Whatif Monster's "what ifs" and explores his power over his worries and fears.

Art Corner: The Panic Book

Sometimes our fears can lead to feelings of panic. Before we can work on solutions or goals, we need to focus on calming our mind and body. This activity encourages participants to create a book full of images that help them keep calm during stressful situations and help refocus their mind onto something more positive.

Materials you need: A notebook or sketchbook, markers or preferred creative medium, any craft materials you would like to add to your pages (magazines cutouts, newspapers, old picture books, glitter, construction paper)

Process: Create images on the pages of the notebook that evoke feelings of calm and comfort. Imagine pictures of your favorite things, favorite places, calming colors, and more. No need to fill all the pages, keep some room for changing ideas of comfort. Keep the notebook nearby for a positive distraction and a way to focus on calm emotions in times of stress.