



Neurodiversity Affirming Care & Anxiety

Finding the right therapist when you need it.

At Home Support for Anxiety

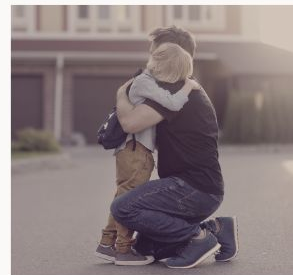
- Take good care of yourself
- Model and normalize emotions
- Focus on their strengths
- Look for examples within their interests
- Natural and safe activities to practice coping
- Listen and observe; lean into who they are
- Create plans with your child
- Focus on your relationship with your child



Connection and Co-Regulation

- Connect in meaningful ways for your child
- All moments of connection are meaningful
- Consider their sensory preferences
- When all else fail, return to connection

- Take care of yourself so you can help them
- Let them "borrow" your state of mind to regulate
- Don't always protect them from hard emotions
- Reconnect when things go off plan



When to Consider Therapy



- They have asked for help or therapy
- They may benefit from a safe space and person to process with
- You feel like they need more than what you can do
- Anxiety is decreasing their quality of life
- Anxiety is keeping them from doing things they like
- Anxiety is impacting their physical health
- Anxiety has exceeded their coping skills
- You see a significant shift in their mood, activities, or interactions
- You and/or they feel stuck
- You are concerned about their safety

Different Approaches

Does the approach:

- encourage masking?
- focus on your child changing to fit societal norms?
- provide flexibility for their needs?
- feel superficial or meaningful to your child?
- leave space for your child to be who they are and engage in a way that is meaningful to them?
- come from a neurodiversity affirming place?

Not all professionals understand twice-exceptionality or neurodiversity in the same way, their recommendations may not be what your child needs.



Neurodiversity Affirming Care

Aims to empower individuals to recognize and draw upon their strengths, navigate their challenges and make adjustments that are to their authentic selves.

- Neurodivergence is a natural variation of the human brain.
- Interventions that emphasize acceptance, strengths, compassion, and support.
- Respects all communication styles.
- Tailors support to individual needs.
- Recognizes the sensory experience.
- Recognizes and values the unique way the individual experiences the world.
- Promotes autonomy.
- Promotes self-acceptance and self-compassion.
- Informed by neurodivergent voices.

Finding Your Therapist

Do you and your child feel a sense of connection and trust?

Does the clinician:

- "get it" or are willing to learn more?
- collaborate with you and others?
- listen and respond to you in a way that works for you?
- appear to be flexible and adjust to needs
- appear genuine and congruent?
- show commitment to learning and improving as a provider?
- provide affirming, inclusive, and culturally sensitive care?
- If all the above, then, consider, their experience or accomplishments.



Red Flags

- They have all the answers
- Their words don't match their actions
- They dismiss "giftedness"
- They make comments or jokes that break your trust
- You or your child do not feel comfortable with them
- They ignore their own blind spots
- They are not open to your feedback
- They are defensive or combative

What to Expect

While therapy is a place to learn and practice the skills, to make things work you or your child need to take the things you've learned in therapy and apply them outside of your sessions. Your therapist can support you in doing so.

INTAKE & CONSULTATION

Learning about needs and goals. Determining fit and discussing the plan.

TYPE

Defining the type of therapy and frequency.

RELATIONSHIP

Building and establishing trust.

INTERVENTION

Developing skills and processing experiences

COLLABORATION

Working with parents, school, & other professionals

If It Feels Like It Isn't Working

- Listen to your child's perspective.
- Ask for a meeting with your provider.
- Have your professional and academic team collaborate.
- Ask the therapist how they feel things are going.
- Re-evaluate goals, plans, and expectations.
- Trust your gut, you know your child, consider if you need a different approach.
- Consider if your own therapy could help your child.



Remember – sometimes it takes longer than expected because the time to build trust, intensities, asynchrony, and the need to go at their pace.

Integrative Therapy

Interweaves elements of different approaches to create a tailored experience.



- Strength based and client-centered
- Emphasizes collaboration
- Puts the relationship first & builds off of connection
- Looks at motivation, needs, identity, and goals of the client to inform interventions
- Focuses on the client not on the client accepting the approach
- Flexible and relies on creativity



- Aims to be affirming, inclusive and culturally sensitive.
- Acknowledges that we are all learning and growing.
- Accepts that we all may make mistakes and can learn through to repair and correction.
- Acknowledges that while the clinician brings knowledge and perspective, the client is the expert on who they are.
- Focuses on learning who each client truly is in order to support them.
- Aims to reduce masking of client in session in order to facilitate growth.

Connect. Support. Empower.



Contact

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