

# Brainstorming with Barbara

October 2021

Barbara Eisenmenger, MSW, LCSW – Student Family Assistance Program  
School District of La Crosse Gundersen Health System

## All About Anxiety -

Anxiety: it's something we've all experienced at one time or another. Sometimes anxiety can be helpful, like when it motivates us to practice for soccer tryouts or spend extra time on that project we really care about. But, what about when anxiety starts to get in the way of important things like going to school, making friends, or falling asleep?

This month kicks off a mini-series focusing specifically on anxiety: how to recognize it, how YOU as a parent or caregiver can support at home, and when to connect your child with a medical professional for more support.

**Thanks for being here! - Barbara**

## A Note to Grown Ups -

These resources are not meant to take the place of direct medical or behavioral health care. For needs specific to your child, please contact their pediatrician or family medical provider.

## Resources -

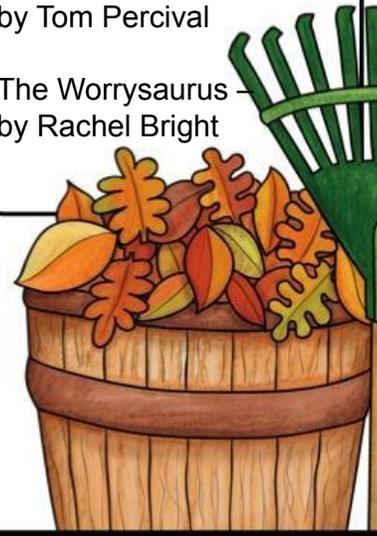
These titles are available for Read Aloud on Youtube. Some may also be available at your local library or school's LMC.

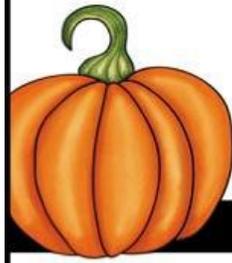
Don't Feed the Worry Bug – by Andi Green

What To Do When You Worry Too Much – by Dawn Huebner, PhD

Ruby Finds a Worry – by Tom Percival

The Worrysaurus – by Rachel Bright





# Brainstorming with Barbara

## Recognizing Anxiety

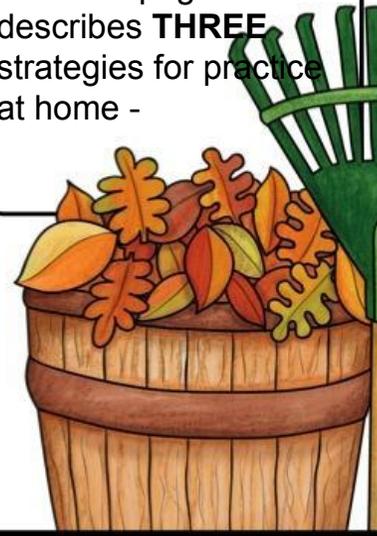
### I might notice...

- Irritability
- Avoidance of tasks/places
- Withdrawal from social events
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleep disruptions
- GI (gastrointestinal) difficulties
- Complaints of headache, stomachache, etc.
- Increased heart rate, sweating, or rapid breathing patterns
- Frequent thoughts or verbalizations about the “worst case scenario”

Adults often wonder how to best support youth struggling with anxiety. This can be a difficult process, especially if the worry seems unrealistic or very unlikely to happen.

The next page describes **THREE** strategies for practice at home -

If symptoms are causing impairment in your child's life, OR they are making comments about harming themselves or others, contact your local medical facility for support.





# Brainstorming with Barbara

## Skills to Practice at Home

### Validate, Model, Breathe

- Verbalize that anxiety and worry are normal. Also keep in mind that your child's experience is REAL to them, no matter how far-fetched their worry may seem.
- Model successful methods of coping with anxiety and share about what has worked well for you.
- Strategies such as **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**, **Guided Imagery**, and **Belly Breathing** are age-appropriate and can be done anywhere. Check out the links in the righthand column for tutorials of each skill and start practicing at home.

### Let's Practice –

[Belly Breathing Tutorial](#)

[Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)

[Guided Imagery](#)

### Resources –

Thanks to: PBS Kids.org, University of Michigan Mott's Children's Hospital, and Children's Hospitals of California.

