

Horizons Newsletter

Fall 2016

www.autism-mi.org

40th Anniversary

1976-2016

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*Autism Society
of
Michigan*



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13 Helpful Phrases You Can Say to Calm an Anxious Child

If your child struggles with anxiety, you know the challenge of finding the right things to say when he or she is worried. It's not easy to connect without making the fears worse, while at the same time offering support and encouragement.

Are you curious how you can help calm an anxious child? Rather than telling your child "You'll be fine," or "Don't worry about it," try one of these phrases the next time your child is feeling worried:

What to Say to Calm an Anxious Child

"I am here; you are safe." Anxiety has a way of making things look worse and feel scarier than when we are not feeling worried. These words can offer comfort and safety when your child is feeling out of control, especially if they are at the height of their worry. If you're not sure what to say, this is an excellent go-to phrase!

"Tell me about it." Give your child room to talk about their fears without interrupting. Some children need to have time to process through their thoughts. Do not offer solutions or try to fix it. Children sometimes do better with a set amount of time: "Let's talk about your worries for 10 minutes."

"How big is your worry?" Help your child verbalize the size of their worry and give you an accurate picture of how it feels to them. They can represent their worry by using arm length (hands close together or arms stretched wide apart) or by drawing three circles on a paper (small, medium and large) and choosing the one that applies.

“What do you want to tell your worry?” Explain to your child that worry is like an annoying “worry bug” that hangs around telling them to be worried. Create a few phrases, then give them permission to talk back to this “worry bug.” They can even be bossy: “Go away!” or “I don’t have to listen to you!” Use silly voices, and try it loud and quiet.

“Can you draw it?” Many kids cannot express their emotions with words. Encourage them to draw, paint or create their worries on paper. When they are finished, make observations, and give them a chance to explain the significance: “That’s a lot of blue!”

“Let’s change the ending.” Anxious children often feel stuck in the same pattern without a way out. Help them see different options by telling their story, but leaving off the ending. Then, create a few new endings. Some can be silly, but at least one should be realistic for your child. Focus on your child conquering their fears with confidence!

“What other things do you know about (fill in the blank)?” Some children feel empowered when they have more information about their fear (especially things like tornadoes, bees, elevators, etc.). Grab a book from the library, do a science experiment, research together online: How often does your fear happen? How do people stay safe?

“Which calming strategy do you want to use?” Work proactively to create a long list of calming strategies your child enjoys. Practice them during the day, at random times when your child feels calm. When your child feels a worry sneaking into their thoughts, encourage them to pick something from the list.

“I’m going to take a deep breath.” Sometimes our children are so worried that they resist our encouragement to pick a calming strategy. In this case, use yourself as the calming skill! Verbalize what you are doing and how it makes you feel. Some people hold their children close so they can feel the rise and fall of their chest as they breathe.

“It’s scary AND…” Acknowledge your child’s fear without making it even more frightening by using the word “AND.” After the word “and” you can add phrases like, “You are safe.” or “You’ve conquered this fear before.” or “You have a plan.” This models an internal dialogue your child can use next time they are feeling worried.

“I can’t wait to hear about…” It’s hard to see our kids suffer with worry. Many parents rush in to rescue their child from an anxiety-producing situation. Encourage your child that they will survive this difficult feeling by bringing up a topic to talk about when you’re together later — what they did at recess, who they sat by at lunch, etc.

“What do you need from me?” Instead of assuming that you know what your child needs, give them an opportunity to tell you what would help. Older kids may be able to verbalize if they need you to listen, give a hug, or help them find a solution. If you can’t do it, give them their wish in fantasy: “I wish grown-ups could go to kindergarten too!”

“This feeling will pass.” This may be a phrase you can both use when your child is at the height of panic. All feelings pass eventually. It often feels like they will never end, you won’t make it through, or it’s too hard. And that’s OK. Don’t let your brain get stuck in that moment; focus on the relief that is on the horizon.

Reprinted from: www.lemonlimeadventures.com



The Autism Society of Michigan
is Celebrating
40 years of Making Human Connections
1976-2016



The History of the Autism Society of Michigan
From MSAC to ASM
Through the Years-The First Decade

1987-New Special Education Rules take effect July 1.

1988-MSAC receives Sage grant of \$7,500. The grant enabled MSAC to enlarge and improve its professional and film library.

1989-On May 23rd members of the MSAC joined with over two thousand people and marched to the Capitol with banners and signs to support increased funding for Michigan's Mental Health Programs.

1990-Controversy confronts Michigan's Schools. The controversy involves the use of a device referred to as SIBIS; the Self-Injurious Behavior Inhibiting System.

1991-MSAC opposes HB 4817, this bill would mandate that the Department of Mental Health maintain seven Regional Centers for persons with developmental disabilities. Closure would require legislative review.

1992-.In May, the membership voted to change the name of the Society to Autism Society of Michigan.

1993- ASM Mission Statement adopted by the ASM Board of Directors on February 21, 1993.

1994-ASM selected by Sally Burton, Ed.D. as the new Executive Director on May 1, 1994.

1995- Children's SSI program threatened ASM members urged to call or write legislatures.

1996-State Board of Education adopts process for Administrative rule waivers.

Check out the Winter Horizon's Issue for the Fourth Decade

ASM's Fall Conference

~Celebrating 40 Years of Making Human Connections~

Thursday, November 10th

Holiday Inn Conference Center

2187 University Park Drive

Okemos, MI

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Featuring Lianne Holliday Willey



Author of: "Pretending to be Normal" & "Safety Skills for Asperger Women"

Registration Fees:

Registrant.....\$50
Student.....\$30
Person w/ASD..\$20



Register by Calling:

517-882-2800
or Online at:

<http://www.autism-mi.org/events/>

Please make checks payable to:

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2178 Commons Parkway
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~Continental Breakfast Provided

~Lunch On Your Own (Many Restaurants within walking distance)

~Vendors, Book Store, & Resource Sale Available

Donations & Memberships are a Great Way to Help ASM!!

TITLE: Pretending to Be Normal: Living with Asperger's Syndrome

AUTHOR: Holliday-Willey, Liane

SUBJECT AREA: Asperger Syndrome-Autobiography

PUBLISHER: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

PUBLICATION DATE: 1999

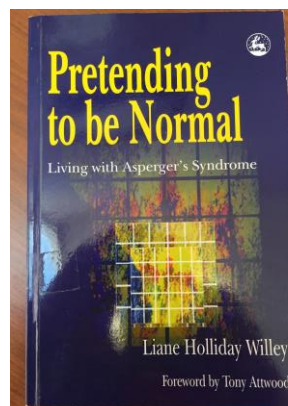
NUMBER OF PAGES: 175 (Includes list of references)

Quite a number of years ago, I wrote a review of Liane Holliday-Willey's book, Pretending to Be Normal: Living with Asperger's Syndrome, which was published back in 1999. I am revisiting an old friend as this book has been a mainstay for people wanting to better understand what living with a milder form of autism is all about. After reading this book for a second time, I was just as moved and affected by what Liane had to say as I was back then.

Liane starts out by writing about her life as a child with the whirl of sounds, sights and smells just being too much for her and her feeling as though she was stuck on a Ferris wheel that wouldn't stop! This resonated so much with me as I felt that same way too; everything was fascinating, yet too bright and too loud and too smelly. What was especially poignant was her experience in middle school when she had difficulty keeping up with other swimmers on the swim team. Nonetheless, her grades and her high intelligence helped her to get into college and to earn a doctorate in education. She also met a very kind and understanding man who became her husband; they shared a common dislike of large crowds and social gatherings and they married and had twin daughters.

Holliday-Willey pulls no punches about the difficulties she has experienced with sensory processing, understanding social cues and learning how to navigate life's complexities. A monkey wrench fell into the works when she found out that one of her daughters was on the autism spectrum!, Then came another revelation; she discovered ASD traits in herself and discovered that she had ASD as well. This opened up a whole new world for her, a world of anxiety and fear but also of wonder and discovery. She saw how being on the autism spectrum actually enhanced some of her abilities and brought out new capabilities that she never even dreamed of!

This book is an oldie but goodie as we see both the negative and the positive side of being on the autism spectrum. Yet, the truths are the same and the wisdom that she imparts is timeless and valuable-this has to count for so much!



Avoid Power Struggles

Why should I do it?

- It is a quick method to de-escalate a student
- It keeps you in control
- Prevents students from feeding off of the attention of the class or others
- Breaks the cycle of escalation, tension, intensity, etc.
- Reduces the likelihood of further physical, verbal, and other conflict
- Establishes your position as being outside of the student's tactics and usual attempts to get what they want
- Helps teach students that engaging in power struggles is futile and will not get them what/where they want
- Helps you, the adult, remain calm, clear headed, and more able to make good decisions and actions

When should I do it?

- When a student is trying to verbally engage you in an argument
- When a student becomes very insistent, argumentative, and will not drop the point
- When a student becomes agitated, raises their voice, becomes physically or verbally aggressive or threatening, or becomes threatening in any other way
- When the issue the student is arguing about is not essential, important, or crucial (choose your battles wisely)
- When a student can't seem to drop it
- When it seems the student is no longer interested in solving a problem, but provoking and being right
- When a student just wants to be correct, right, or win
- When a student seems to be taking it personally and cannot handle the issue, topic, etc
- When giving directives, directions, corrections, or reprimands

How do I do it?

- This technique takes a lot of patience, support, self-control and self-talk
- Keep responses brief, to the point, and succinct, and avoid lecturing, talking at length, or patronizing
- Use a calm and neutral tone
- DO NOT match the emotional level of the student, rather remain calm, cool, and collected
- State the expectation, then walk away
- Offer several choices, give a timeline to decide within, and walk away
- Try stating the expectation and consequence, tell the student the choice is theirs, and walk away
- Try re-direction if student is able to be de-escalated
- Remove student from situation and discuss the issue after time to calm down
- Use reflective listening "I am hearing that you feel this assignment is unnecessary"
- Ask open ended questions
- Use body language that represents openness: If sitting keep legs uncrossed and lean toward the student, If standing keep arms uncrossed and legs open (people often mirror their emotional response with others' body language, behavior, and words)
- Use humor
- Validate student's feelings
- Tell the student you want to hear what they have to say, but you both need a break or breather before talking
- With belligerent students who argue or engage in conflict on purpose and with intentionality, tell the student you will talk with them later when they can do so appropriately and walk away or state the expectation and walk away

- Try keeping a list of rules and expectations on the wall or other visible location, and when a student attempts to engage you in conflict, simply point to the appropriate and relevant expectation on the list and walk away (you may want to explain this strategy to the student before implementing it)
- Create a class system or protocol for bringing up grievances, disagreements, complaints, issues, problems, etc.
- Teach and practice a technique or method with the class on how to have a disagreement with others
- Ask the student trying to engage in a power struggle to go back to their seat and write their concerns on a paper, placing it on the teacher’s desk when completed

Reprinted from: www.pbisworld.com

<h2 style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">WHAT TO PUT IN A CALM DOWN BOX</h2> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small; margin: 0;">www.andnextcomesL.com</p>	
<p>Items that provide proprioceptive support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weighted lap cushion or weighted stuffed animal • Weighted vest or pressure vest • Stretchy resistance bands • Sensory tunnel • Mini massager • Body sock • Small blanket 	<p>Items for auditory sensory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise cancelling headphones • MP3 player with music • Audiobooks
<p>Items to squeeze & keep hands busy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidgets like Tangle Jr. or puffer ball • Rubik’s Cube • Play dough or silly putty • Pipe cleaners • Stress balls • Bubble wrap • Bag of tissue paper to rip • Scarves or fabric scraps • Spinning top 	<p>Items for oral motor sensory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chew toy or chew necklace • Chewing gum, hard candies, or lollipops • Snacks with a variety of textures • Whistle, harmonica, party blowers, or similar • Rescue Remedy Spray
<p>Items to support breathing & relaxation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottle of bubbles • Pinwheels • Straws and cotton balls or pom poms 	<p>Items that give kids a brain break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puzzle • Books to read • Blank notebook and writing utensils • Coloring books • Scratch art doodle pad • Small chalk board, Magna-Doodle, Etch-a-Sketch, or Boogie Board • Activity books • Photo album
<p>Items for olfactory sensory support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calming essential oil spray • Smelling bottles • Scratch and sniff stickers 	<p>Items to visually calm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual calm down cards • Sensory bottle or calm down jar • Light up toys • Flashlight • Plastic snow globe • Kaleidoscope • Hourglass • Eye mask
<p>Items to get kids moving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book of yoga poses or yoga activity cards • Skipping rope 	

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Vicki Ashker
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