



# First Aid for Anxiety: Helping Children through the Struggle

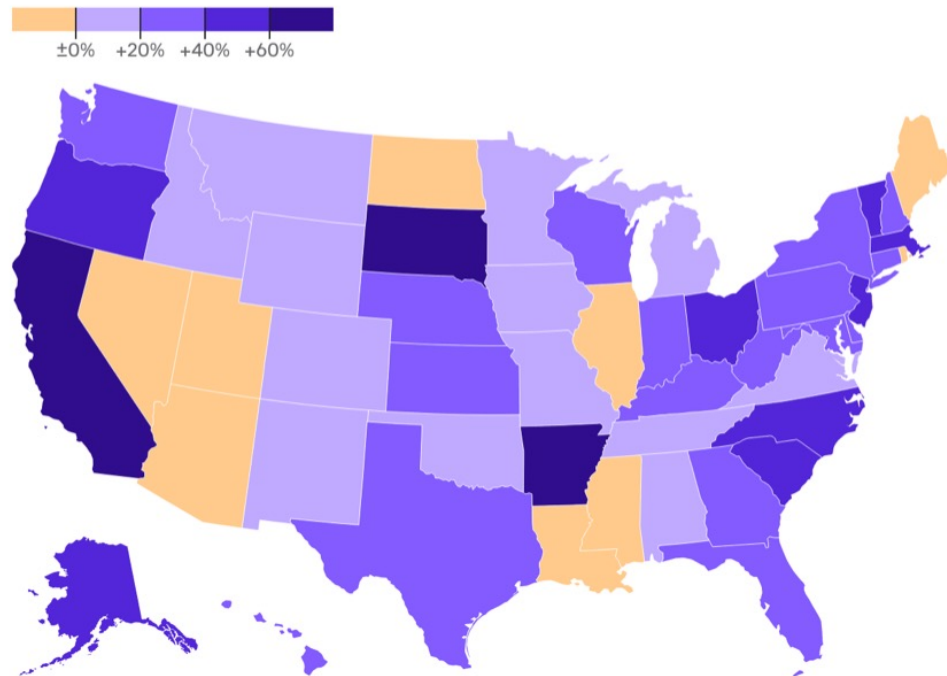
Eddie Moody  
[emoody@nafwb.org](mailto:emoody@nafwb.org)





## Percentage change in the prevalence of anxiety and depression in children

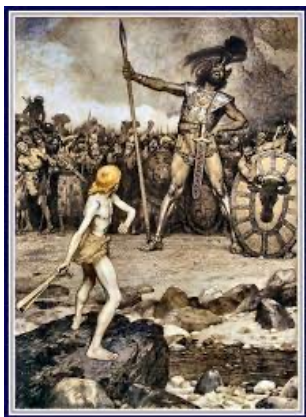
Among 3- to 17-year-olds; 2016-2020



Data: Annie E. Casey Foundation; Map: Erin Davis/Axios

**Washington**  
Percentage change  
**+33.6%**





Fear not appears 158 times in the Bible



# Can fear be good?

---

Fear God appears 134 times in the Bible

Good Fear



Action



As soon as King Hezekiah heard  
it, he tore his clothes  
and covered himself with  
sackcloth and went into the  
house of the Lord.

---

2 Kings 19:1



Bad Fear



Inaction



And there we saw the Nephilim  
(the sons of Anak, who come from  
the Nephilim), and we seemed to  
ourselves like grasshoppers, and  
so we seemed to them.”

---

Numbers 13:33



### **Fear Is a Problem When ...**

It leads to significant distress.

It impacts our body negatively (e.g., sweating, nausea, headaches).

It limits the places we go or the things we do with others.

It impairs relationships with others.

It harms school or work performance.


It leads to avoidance behaviors.

It is out of proportion to the real threat.

It lasts for more than 6 months.

It results in excessive time and energy devoted to the concern.





```
graph LR; A[Fear] --> B[Physiological Reaction]; B --> C[Urge to fight or flee];
```

Fear

Physiological  
Reaction

Urge to fight  
or flee



# Assess for . . .

## **Do You Have a History of . . .?**

Being bullied

Abuse

Fearful spells

Trauma

Being mugged or assaulted

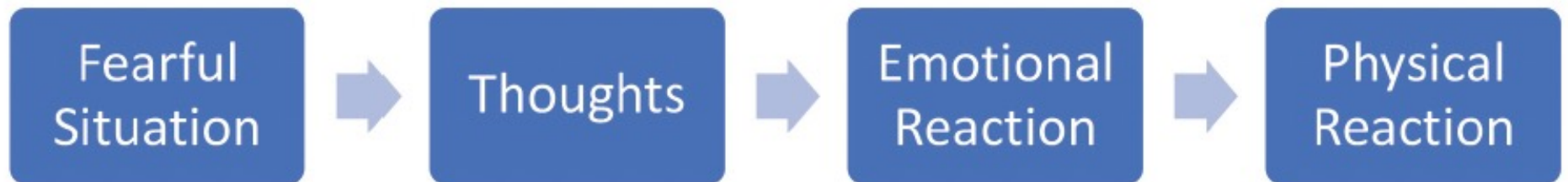
Death of a parent or sibling

Family members struggling with anxiety



# Where is the focus?

---





A large orange shape on the left side of the slide, consisting of a rectangle with a quarter-circle cutout on its right side.

## Fearful Situation

<sup>28</sup> However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. <sup>29</sup> The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

Numbers 13:28-29

A yellow dashed line in the bottom right corner, consisting of several short, curved segments.



A large orange shape on the left side of the slide, consisting of a rectangle with a quarter-circle cutout on its right side.

## Intervention

But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.”

Numbers 13:30

A yellow decorative shape in the bottom right corner, consisting of several short, curved line segments arranged in a roughly circular pattern.



A large orange shape on the left side of the slide, consisting of a rectangle with a quarter-circle cutout on its right side.

## Thoughts and Physical Reaction

<sup>31</sup> Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” <sup>32</sup> So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. <sup>33</sup> And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

Numbers 13:31-33

A series of four yellow curved lines on the bottom right of the slide, arranged in a diagonal sequence from bottom-left to top-right.



### **Sample 3**

**Situation:** I was awakened from a sound sleep by thunder and lightning and realized I must be in the middle of a severe thunderstorm.

**Thoughts:** "It's a tornado. I am going to die."

**Emotional Reaction:** I was terrified and felt panicked.

**Physical Reaction:** My heart was pounding, and I began to sweat profusely.

**Behavioral Reaction:** I am often unable to sleep or think of anything else when I hear the threat of inclement weather.

**Bad Fear:** I begin to focus on all the times and ways I am in danger from a storm.

**Good Fear:** I prepare for how I can be as protected as possible should a storm arise.



# Relaxation Training

## ***Progressive Muscle Relaxation Steps***

1. Relax the muscles of your body as best you can. (2 minutes)
2. Stop relaxing and sit quietly. (2 minutes)
3. Recall a stressful event that has happened. Think of the event and your reaction to it. (2 minutes)
4. Stop thinking about the stressful event and sit quietly. (2 minutes)
5. Recall a pleasant event that has happened. Think of the event and your reaction to it. (2 minutes)
6. Stop thinking of the event and sit quietly. (2 minutes)
7. Relax your muscles as best you can. (2 minutes)
8. Stop relaxing and sit quietly. (10 minutes)







# Devotional Meditation

---

## ***Devotional Meditation***<sup>35</sup>

1. Sit quietly and pray. (2 minutes)
2. Read a Scripture passage. (2–5 minutes)
3. Answer these questions:
  - ☐ What is the meaning of this passage? (2 minutes)
  - ☐ What does this passage mean for me? (2 minutes)
  - ☐ What does this passage promise? (2 minutes)
  - ☐ How can I apply this passage to my life today? (2 minutes)
4. Pray. (5 minutes)
5. Sit quietly and reflect. (5 minutes)



# Prayer

Fear/Worry



Fast and Pray



**4** When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and he cried out with a loud and bitter cry. <sup>2</sup> He went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one was allowed to enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth. <sup>3</sup> And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

---

Esther 4:1-3



<sup>2</sup> And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid. <sup>3</sup> I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” <sup>4</sup> Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.

---

Nehemiah 2:2-4



***Date:*** 31 A.D.

***Situation:*** In the middle of a storm, Peter saw Jesus walking on water and began to walk on water, too (Matthew 14:29). Then he began focusing on the wind (Matthew 14:30).

***Thoughts:*** Based on the context, he probably thought, "I'm walking on water, and the wind is whipping up. I'm going to drown!"

***Emotional Reaction:*** Fear, panic.

***Physical Reaction:*** Likely accelerated heartbeat.

***Behavioral Reaction:*** Peter began to sink and cried out to Jesus, "Lord save me," and He did.

***Bad Fear:*** Paralyzed and stopped.

***Good Fear:*** He looked to Jesus, asked for, and received help from Him.



# Music

---

2 Chronicles 20



Triumph of Jehoshaphat by [Jean Fouquet](#) (1470s)



**20** After this the Moabites and Ammonites, and with them some of the Meunites, came against Jehoshaphat for battle.<sup>2</sup> Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A great multitude is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the sea; and, behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar” (that is, Engedi).

---

2 Chronicles 20:1-2



<sup>3</sup> Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. <sup>4</sup> And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

---

2 Chronicles 20:3-4



<sup>18</sup> Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. <sup>19</sup> And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

---

2 Chronicles 20:18-19



<sup>21</sup> And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, "Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever." <sup>22</sup> And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, so that they were routed.

---

2 Chronicles 20:21-22



# Work on Thinking

## **Challenging Questions<sup>39</sup>**

1. What is the evidence for this thought?
2. What is the evidence against this thought?
3. Is this thought based on facts?
4. Am I focusing on something likely to happen or unlikely to happen?
5. Are my judgments based on facts or feelings?



***Abraham's Thoughts:*** Perhaps Abraham had a mental image of being killed and Pharaoh living with Sarai.



## **What Is the Relationship Between Negative Thinking and Defeating Behavior?**

*Negative Thinking*

They will kill me.

*Defeating Behavior*

Lying and bad relationship with Pharaoh



### ***Decatastrophizing Questions***

What is the realistic likelihood this will occur?

What is the best-case scenario?



What are the consequences of pessimistic or apprehensive thinking styles?



# Do Hard Things

---





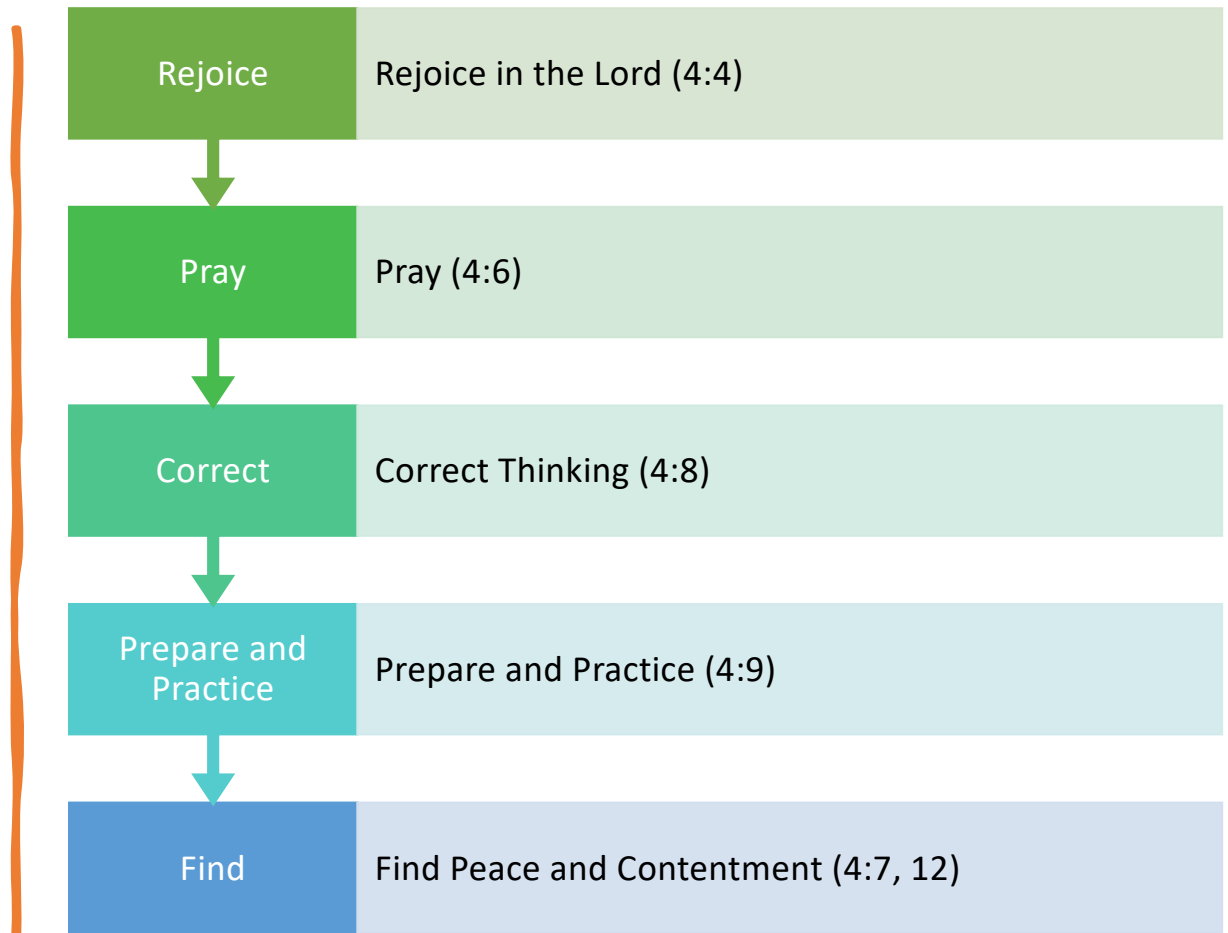
# Prepare

---

<b><i>Event</i></b>	<b><i>Automatic Thought</i></b>
Goliath described—1 Samuel 17:23–25	<i>“Who is this ... that he should defy the armies of the living God?”</i> 1 Samuel 17:26
Before Saul—1 Samuel 17:31	<i>“Let no man’s heart fail ... your servant will go and fight.”</i> 1 Samuel 17:32
Saul’s discouragement, <i>“You are not able”</i> —1 Samuel 17:33	David describes his experiences (1 Samuel 17:34–37). <i>“The LORD who delivered me ... will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”</i> 1 Samuel 17:37



# Bring It All Together (Philippians 4)





# The God of Jacob Is With You

---



Jacob wrestling with the angel  
[Rembrandt](#) (1659)





# First Aid for Anxiety

Eddie Moody

[emoody@nafwb.org](mailto:emoody@nafwb.org)

