

On Track



Education & Support
Cognitive Behavioural Groups

Spring & Summer 2008

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On Track

A publication of

ADAM

Anxiety Disorders
Association of Manitoba

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Well, you have survived the frigid winter and the anxiety that came with it. Now that spring is here, we, like the flora and fauna around us, have a need to stretch out and take in some good sun and nutrients.

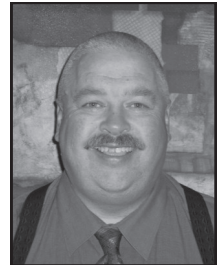
Make this the beginning to your new, healthier, mental health life style. Enjoy a good walk, relax in the sunlight, eat good nutritious foods, and enjoy family and friends.

As you dive into spring cleaning, consider also taking time to tackle some of your worries by joining us for our "Hands-on Worry Workshop" (see the back page of this issue or check out our website at www.adam.mb.ca for more information).

Do you have any "little worriers" around the house? Check out Dr. John Walker's article on "Children and Anxiety" (page 2 of this newsletter) and think about attending his series of seminars on "Helping your Shy or Fearful Child" (see page 3). Remember, early intervention not only leads to more positive outcomes, but also allows for many more worry-free years.

Have a great spring and a relaxing summer.

Bruce Sielski - Executive Director - ADAM



"It's not a case of getting rid of the butterflies, it's a question of getting them to fly in formation."

Basketball Coach,
Jack Donahue

Dying of Embarrassment?

- Difficulty eating or writing in public
- Difficulty maintaining eye contact
- Blushing, sweating, dry mouth, racing heart in social situations

We can help. Call 925-0600.
www.adam.mb.ca



ADAM Ongoing Support Group

Location: 100-4 Fort Street
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Every Monday Night

*Enter at 4 Fort Street
(corner of Fort and Assiniboine)

This is a drop in support group for anyone who has completed a cognitive behaviour program either through ADAM, St. Boniface Hospital Anxiety Disorders Clinic or other facilities. There will be a topic each evening followed by an opportunity for sharing information and experiences. There is no charge.

For more information, please call 925-0600.

CHILDREN & ANXIETY

Fear and anxiety are normal human emotions. In fact, the ability to feel anxiety is essential to our survival. Anxiety concerning our physical safety reduces the chance that we will get into or stay in a dangerous situation. Social anxiety helps us to be alert in unfamiliar social situations and encourages us to pay attention to how other people are acting.

Parents find it much more challenging to supervise a child with too little anxiety than a child with excessive anxiety. I hear stories about my mother finding me on top of a fence or roof as a preschooler! As I got older I can remember many situations where my lack of caution got me into trouble and occasionally into the emergency room. Fearless children create stressful situations for parents. Cautious children, on the other hand, vigilantly look both ways before crossing the street, carefully make use of playground equipment, and try to stay close to parents and home. These children are much easier for parents to watch over.

Psychologists see a progression in the development of normal fears as children age. Among younger children (aged 6–9 years) fears of separation from parents are very common. Concerns about death and danger are common in 10-13 year olds. Social anxiety and fears of failure or criticism are particularly common among teens in the 14-17 year range.

Bodily symptoms are a prominent way that young children experience and express their emotional distress. Parents know how often young children say they feel sick or have a stomach ache, or headache when facing difficult situations. In reality, they are feeling scared or nervous.

Anxiety is normal and most children experience common fears and worries. Some children, however, are especially prone to difficulty with anxiety and fear. Parents are often struck by how each child from the same family reacts differently to their environment. This tendency to react in certain ways is called temperament. Developmental psychologists have found that some children start life with a temperament that results in being more prone to the development of anxiety problems. Fortunately, these children can be identified during the first few years of life.

At one time parents of children with very shy or fearful temperaments were reassured that their child would “grow out of it” and that no action was required to help the child to cope. Some children do learn to manage their anxiety with help from their parents, but many children continue to have problems. Recent studies reveal that children with a shy or fearful temperament are much more prone to encounter problems with anxiety during adolescence and early adult years. Problems with anxiety during the early school years are also associated with slower development of academic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Anxiety disorders are found to start predominantly in childhood and early adolescence. In contrast, the incidence of depressive disorders increases sharply in late

adolescence and continues to increase in the early twenties. Anxiety during the adolescent years is related to an increased risk for the development of depression. Adolescents with anxiety problems are also at greater risk of smoking and excessive substance use (i.e. alcohol and marijuana).

Identifying excessive shyness and fearfulness in childhood as risk factors for developing other emotional problems in adolescence and adulthood causes some concern. At the same time, this creates tremendous excitement among child specialists. Awareness of risk factors raises the possibility of intervening early in a child’s life to reduce the chance of problems later in life. Fortunately, anxiety problems appear to be very responsive to treatment approaches based on an understanding of learning and development. Cognitive behavior therapy is a well developed approach in this area and has been applied for many years in helping children overcome anxiety.

Every child will experience some anxiety. We consider a child to have an anxiety disorder when the problem with anxiety causes considerable distress or interferes with the

child’s normal activities. About 5 to 10% of children / adolescents will experience an anxiety problem significant enough to be considered an anxiety disorder.

Several common patterns of anxiety are seen among children with an anxiety disorder. A child is said to have **Separation Anxiety Disorder** when he/she has much more difficulty than other children of the same age in separating from parents (i.e. when going to day

care or school, staying with a babysitter, or going for a sleepover). **Social Anxiety Disorder** is diagnosed when a child experiences excessive anxiety or avoidance related to social situations (or is overly concerned about embarrassment or humiliation in social situations). **Generalized Anxiety Disorder** is present when a child is more apprehensive or worried than most children about a range of possible situations. A child with this problem may be described by family members as a “worry wort.” **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** is an emotional problem that can arise after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event (i.e. a motor vehicle accident). Children with common fears of animals, insects, heights, or storms would be described as having a **Specific Phobia** if the fear causes a high level of distress or disruption of normal activities. Finally, a less common problem is **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder** where a child may have excessive worry about contamination (by dirt or germs), orderliness, or doing activities repeatedly according to a special ritual.

Dr. John Walker is a Professor of Clinical Health Psychology at the University of Manitoba and Director of the Anxiety Disorders Program at St. Boniface General Hospital. He is on the boards of the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba (ADAM) and the Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada. Presently, Dr. Walker is working with a team to develop and evaluate an early intervention program focused on helping parents of shy and fearful children (see “Parenting Seminar” on page 3).

More information about anxiety and children is available at www.adam.mb.ca in the section for “Children & Adolescents.”

Anxiety is normal, but some children are particularly prone to difficulty with anxiety and fear.

Parenting Seminar Series

HELPING YOUR SHY OR FEARFUL CHILD

FREE - 4 Session Seminar Series
with

Dr. John R. Walker

Clinical Psychologist – Anxiety Disorders Program
St. Boniface General Hospital

April 24, May 1, 8, 15
7 - 9 pm

5th Floor Auditorium – McEwen Centre
(in the St. Boniface General Hospital complex)

Pre-registration required

contact Penny Stewart at
pstewart@sbgh.mb.ca or 237-2335

Personal Story

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

Anxiety and depression took me into a dark world. I allowed them to take control and as a result I almost took my life. Anxiety has been a problem for most of my life. Thinking that it was just an upset stomach I would get out the hot water bottle and hope that would help (but it didn't).

Then I heard about ADAM's course for "Overcoming Anxiety." I believe ADAM's cognitive behavioural group program as well as the SMART program (a stress management class) helped to pull me through those dark times. Now, I take deep breaths; focus on happy times, and think of all the new friends I've made. My faith in God and involvement with the church has also played a vital role in my recovery.

Presently, I am on the Interlake Mental Health Advisory Council - I hope my input will help others who are struggling. Rejoining society has been of great help to me. I volunteer for several organizations and enjoy participating in community activities. I have been especially blessed with a loving husband who stuck by me.

I plan to be around for many more years as I continue on this journey.

J.V.

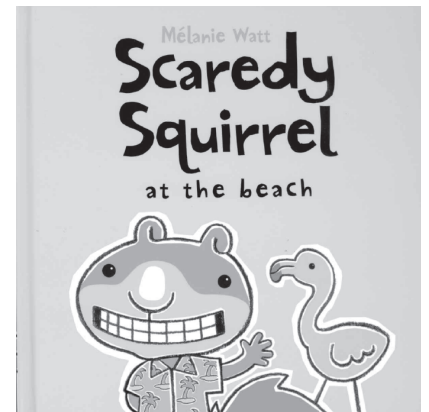
BOOK NOOK

Scaredy Squirrel at the Beach

by Mélanie Watt

Just in time for summer. Scaredy Squirrel has never gone to the beach – it's way too crowded. He could get caught in the middle of: flocks of seagulls, packs of pirates, or mobs of lobsters. So, Scaredy decides to build his own safe beach. Scaredy's beach making kit includes: an inflatable pool, kitty litter, and a plastic flamingo. But something's not quite right. In order to create the perfect shoreline getaway Scaredy must travel to the real beach to find that missing object. Join him as he ventures even further from home in his third adventure.

A wonderful book for all ages. Just a word of warning, Scaredy Squirrel requires you to wear No. 65 sunscreen when reading his book.



Different Dragons

by Jean Little

Ben is upset when he learns that he will be spending the weekend at his Aunt Rose's house. Aunt Rose is a famous author of children's adventure stories. She writes books about young boys who run away from home and discover treasure or slay dragons. Ben is sure that she won't like him at all. He doesn't like to admit it, but he is the furthest thing from an adventuresome boy. Ben is afraid of many things including: dogs, thunderstorms, and new people. He soon finds out that everybody has to fight dragons sometime. Over the course of the weekend Ben learns to conquer some of his own.

An encouraging "chapter book" for young readers who may be struggling with some of their own fears.

What if...?

A Hands-on Worry Workshop

with

Dr. Richard A. Shore,

C. Psych.

Bring your worries
(really - make a list).

Learn to identify the difference
between worry & concern.

Develop cognitive behavioural
strategies for dealing with worry.

ADAM

Anxiety Disorders

Association of Manitoba

Saturday,

May 3, 2008

9 am - 3 pm

(8:15 am arrival & registration)

Hilton Suites - Winnipeg Airport

1800 Wellington Avenue

Cost: \$60

Pre-registration required

925-0600

www.adam.mb.ca

REGISTRATION (Please Print)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Lunch will be provided - Please list any allergies or dietary restrictions (i.e. vegetarian): _____

Please enclose payment with registration and mail to: Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba
(payment may be made by cheque or VISA - unfortunately we are
not able to accept other credit cards or interac) 100 - 4 Fort Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3C 1C4

Form of payment:

() cheque - payable to Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba
or

() VISA - Card # _____ Expiry Date: ____ / ____

Cardholder Name: _____ Cardholder Signature: _____