

# ACCOMPANYING AN ANXIOUS CHILD: RITUALS, BREATHING, GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

For parents, grandparents, family caregivers, and relatives of anxious children

Concrete tools to soothe anxiety in daily life

<b>Duration</b> : 2 to 3 hours	<b>Modules</b> : 5 modules
<b>Lessons</b> : 25 lessons	<b>Audience</b> : Parents, grandparents, family caregivers
<b>Format</b> : 100% online, asynchronous	<b>Provider</b> : N° 11757351875
<b>Certification</b> : Qualiopi	<b>Price</b> : On request

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## Course description

This training allows you to understand what happens in the brain of an anxious child and why they react this way. You will discover how to establish safety rituals that provide predictability and control, and you will learn effective breathing and grounding techniques to help your child return to calm. Through concrete explanations and immediately applicable strategies, you will know how to respond to anxious thoughts and turn difficult moments into opportunities to strengthen your child's confidence. You will leave with concrete tools: rituals, breathing techniques, grounding exercises, and strategies that can be applied at home starting tonight.

## Module summary

<b>MODULE 1</b>	Understanding Anxiety in Children	5 lessons
<b>MODULE 2</b>	Establishing Security Rituals	7 lessons
<b>MODULE 3</b>	Breathing, Grounding, and Returning to Calm	6 lessons
<b>MODULE 4</b>	Helping the Child Manage Anxious Thoughts	6 lessons
<b>MODULE 5</b>	The COCO THINK and COCO MOVE Application	1 lesson

## Learning objectives

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- Differentiate stress, anxiety, and anguish and understand when to intervene
- Identify the symptoms of anxiety: physical, behavioral, and emotional
- Understand what happens in an anxious brain and why you cannot reason with a child in crisis
- Establish calming rituals: morning, transitions, and evening routines
- Create an anxiety-friendly environment: predictability, visibility, simplicity
- Teach abdominal breathing and the 4-7-8 technique
- Practice the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique to cut off anxious thoughts
- Respond appropriately to 'What if...' questions and validate emotions
- Apply the little detective method to examine anxious thoughts
- Transform negative thoughts into softer and more realistic formulations
- Keep a journal of successes and courage to strengthen confidence
- Know when to consult a professional and whom to turn to

## General information

<b>Duration</b>	2 to 3 hours
<b>Target Audience</b>	Parents, grandparents, family caregivers, and relatives of anxious children
<b>Prerequisites</b>	None, training accessible to all adults

<b>Pricing</b>	Sur devis - TVA non applicable (article 261-4-4° du CGI)
<b>Certification</b>	Qualiopi - Attestation de fin de formation
<b>Organization</b>	DYNSEO - N° de déclaration d'activité : 11757351875

**Lesson 1 - Difference between stress, anxiety, and anguish**

- Stress: normal and temporary reaction, disappears after the event
- Anxiety: diffuse and persistent worry, can last for weeks
- Anguish: maximum intensity, panic attack with intense physical symptoms
- Stress does not require intervention, anxiety requires strategies, anguish requires professional help

**Lesson 2 - Impact of Anxiety on Daily Life**

- Sleep: difficulty falling asleep, racing thoughts, nightmares, chronic fatigue
- Homework and school: blockages, excessive perfectionism, procrastination, school refusal
- Social interactions: avoidance, fear of being judged, isolation, irritability

**Lesson 3 - Symptoms to Identify**

- Physical: stomach aches, headaches, nausea, muscle tension, nervous tics
- Avoidance behaviors: refusal of activities, repeated requests for reassurance, need to control
- Visible emotions: irritability, anger, frequent crying, agitation or withdrawal

**Lesson 4 - What Happens in the Anxious Brain**

- The amygdala scans the environment for threats and becomes hypersensitive
- Body response: increased cortisol, accelerated heart rate, rapid breathing
- Prefrontal cortex goes into sleep mode: impossible to reason with the child in crisis

**Lesson 5 - The 5 Typical Anxiety Situations**

- School and performance: stomach aches, panic before tests, fear of failing
- Separation: crying at departure, repeated calls, fear for parents
- Homework: procrastination, erasing and starting over, complete blockage
- Novelty: refusal to try, need to know everything in advance, rigidity
- Performances: avoidance, excuses, giving up before trying, fear of judgment

**Lesson 1 - Why Rituals Are Essential**

- Anxiety grows in unpredictability: the anxious brain hates not knowing
- Rituals bring predictability and the child knows what will happen
- Rituals provide control through active participation
- Rituals create security through reassuring landmarks

**Lesson 2 - The Morning Ritual (10-15 minutes)**

- Gentle wake-up: calm music, gradual light, dawn simulator
- Three stretches in bed: arms, legs, back to gently wake the body
- Positive phrase in front of the mirror: 'Today, I will do my best'
- Predictable breakfast and visual checklist with tasks to check off

**Lesson 3 - Managing transitions with the three announcements rule**

- First announcement (15 min before): 'In fifteen minutes, we are leaving'
- Second announcement (5 min before): 'There are five minutes left'
- Third announcement (time of transition): 'It's time, let's go'
- The child can anticipate, adjust their pace, and anxiety decreases

**Lesson 4 - The Sleep Shield - Evening Ritual (45 minutes)**

- Tidying up and preparing things for the next day (5 min)
- Hygiene: bath or shower, brushing teeth, pajamas (10 min)
- Quiet time without screens: reading, drawing, calm discussion (20 min)
- Breathing exercise (5 min) and bedtime ritual with reassuring phrase (5 min)

**Lesson 5 - The Three Anxiety-Friendly Guidelines**

- Predictability: display schedule, announce changes, maintain stable rituals
- Visibility: visual planning with pictograms, visible timer, event calendar

- Simplicity: short instructions, limit choices to two, tidy home

### Lesson 6 - Practical Tools - Before, During, After

- Before: explain what will happen, anticipate concerns, prepare together
- During: provide concrete references, encourage, suggest short breaks
- After: debrief positively, acknowledge every effort, note in success journal

### Lesson 7 - The Stress Relief Bag and the Calm Space

- Stress relief bag: pouch with stuffed animal, soft fabric, stress ball, family photo, positive card
- Calm space: corner with cushions, soft blanket, dim lighting, soothing books, sensory games
- The calm space is never a punishment: it is a positive refuge chosen by the child

## MODULE 3

### Breathing, grounding, and returning to calm

6 lessons

#### Lesson 1 - Why Breathing Works

- Anxious breathing: rapid, shallow, thoracic sends danger message to the brain
- Slow and abdominal breathing sends safety message, activates parasympathetic system
- Heart rate slows down, muscles relax, anxiety decreases
- Breathing is the only system we have direct control over to influence emotional state

#### Lesson 2 - Abdominal breathing - The balloon in the belly

- Position: sitting or lying down, one hand on the belly
- Inhale through the nose while inflating the belly (count to 3)
- Exhale slowly through the mouth while deflating (count to 5)
- Repeat 5 times, place an object on the belly to visualize

#### Lesson 3 - The 4-7-8 Breathing (from 7 years old)

- Inhale through the nose while counting to 4
- Hold your breath while counting to 7
- Exhale through the mouth while counting to 8
- Repeat 3-4 times, the exhalation should always be longer than the inhalation

#### Lesson 4 - The 5-4-3-2-1 Anchoring - The Five Senses Game

- 5 things to see: name 5 visual elements around you
- 4 things to touch, 3 things to hear, 2 things to smell
- 1 thing to taste: notice what you perceive in your mouth
- 2-3 minute exercise, doable anywhere

#### Lesson 5 - Physical Anchoring Exercises

- The solid chair: sit up straight, feet flat, lean slightly, imagine roots
- The weight game: standing, feet apart, imagine feet filled with sand
- These gestures bring attention back to the body and cut off anxious thoughts

#### Lesson 6 - Indoor Weather

- Sunny: happy, calm, confident - enjoy the day
- Cloudy: a bit worried or tired - breathing or quiet break
- Rain: sad, worried, upset - talk, hug, comforting activity
- Storm: very anxious, angry - calm space, breathing, support
- Create a visual chart, point to your weather each morning or evening

## MODULE 4

### Helping the child manage anxious thoughts

6 lessons

#### Lesson 1 - How to React to 'What if...' - What Not to Do

- Do not say 'Stop worrying': the child cannot do it on command
- Do not say 'There is no reason to be afraid': their fear is real to them
- Avoid excessive reassurance: it reinforces anxiety and the need for attention

#### Lesson 2 - How to Respond to 'What if...' - The Right Approach

- Validate the emotion: 'I see that you are worried, that's normal'
- Gently question: 'What could help you if that really happened?'

- Bring back to reality: 'Has that ever happened?' (often no)
- Limit reassurances: respond clearly once, then redirect to an activity

### Lesson 3 - The Little Detective Method

- Question 1: 'Is it true?' (e.g., 'Everyone' really?)
- Question 2: 'What is the proof? Has it happened before?'
- Question 3: 'Is there another explanation?'
- Question 4: 'What is the probability on a scale from 1 to 10?'
- Doing the exercise on paper together helps to gain perspective

### Lesson 4 - Transforming Anxious Thoughts

- 'I'm going to fail' → 'I'm going to do my best'
- 'Everyone is looking at me' → 'Most people are thinking about themselves'
- 'It's too difficult' → 'It's difficult, but I can ask for help'
- 'I'm not capable' → 'I don't know yet, but I can learn'
- Find together a softer phrasing, repeat it 3 times out loud

### Lesson 5 - The Journal of Successes and Courage

- Every evening, write down 3 things in a notebook
- A success: 'Today, I managed to...' (even a small one)
- A moment of courage: 'I was scared but I still...'
- Something positive: 'Something that made me feel good...'
- For the little ones: draw pictures, read together once a week

### Lesson 6 - When to Consult a Professional

- Anxiety lasting for more than 6 months without improvement
- Strong impact on daily life: school, sleep, relationships
- Significant avoidance behaviors, regression, frequent panic attacks
- Severe eating or sleeping disorders, exhausted parent
- Who to turn to: doctor, psychologist, child psychiatrist, psychomotor therapist, sophrologist

## MODULE 5

## The COCO THINK and COCO MOVE Application

1 lesson

### Lesson 1 - Discover COCO for Anxious Children

- Mandatory sports break every 15 minutes: movement releases tension and regulates stress
- Visual and attention games: memory, puzzles, associations to focus on the positive
- Calm mode: guided breathing exercises, soothing music, relaxing visuals
- Structure and predictability: timed sessions, the child knows what to expect
- Integrate 10-15 minutes of COCO after school as a transition and decompression

## Teaching methods

- 100% online training, accessible from your computer or tablet
- You progress at your own pace, whenever you wish, without time constraints
- Concrete explanations and immediately applicable strategies
- Effective rituals, breathing, and grounding techniques
- Bonus: Discover the COCO PENSE & COCO BOUGE app with calm mode and sports breaks