

Anxiety: Rewarding Bravery

It takes courage, determination and hard work to fight back against anxiety. As your child starts to take important steps towards bossing back his/her anxiety, they will start to notice improvements. However, for some youth, taking the first important steps in this “battle” can be hard. As a result, you may decide that it’s necessary to create a points plan to incentivize and reward hard work.

Rewards

It is important to select rewards that you feel comfortable giving and that are readily available. Additionally, options that are identified should only be made achievable within the points plan. Some options are:

Getting out of chores:

- A night off from doing dishes
- Does not have to take out trash
- Does not have to walk dog
- A day/week of not having to clean room/make bed

Privileges:

- Bed-time postponed by 30 minutes
- Special time with a parent
- Invite a friend to dinner
- Help parent with a hobby (gardening, fixing a car, etc.)
- Gets to have pet sleep in room overnight

Rewards:

- Pencils, stickers, other small office supplies
- Nail polish, lotions, etc.
- Movie ticket
- Favorite soda/ice-cream/snack supplied at home
- Spa bath (favorite bubbles, music, etc.)

Anxious patterns of thinking and acting can take time to change, especially if they have been around for a long time. Learning to overcome anxiety is like exercise – your child needs to “keep in shape” and practice his/her skills regularly. Make them a habit. Remember, coping with anxiety is a lifelong process.