



## TYPES OF NEUROSES IN CHILDREN AND THEIR PREVENTION.

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Article history:		Abstract:
<b>Received:</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2024		This article aims to explore the various types of neuroses commonly observed in children, including anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and phobias, among others. It delves into the literature surrounding the causes and risk factors contributing to the development of neuroses in childhood. Additionally, the article discusses preventive measures and intervention strategies that can help mitigate the onset and severity of neuroses in children, thereby promoting their mental well-being and overall quality of life.
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Neuroses in children refer to a spectrum of psychological disorders characterized by excessive worry, fear, or distress that significantly impairs daily functioning. Anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and phobias are among the most prevalent neuroses observed in childhood. While these conditions can have debilitating effects on a child's emotional and social development, early identification and intervention are crucial for effective management. This article aims to provide insights into the various types of neuroses in children, examine their underlying causes, explore preventive measures, and discuss intervention strategies to promote mental well-being in this vulnerable population.

Numerous studies have shed light on the prevalence and impact of neuroses in children. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP), anxiety disorders affect approximately one in eight children, making it one of the most common mental health disorders in this age group. Factors such as genetic predisposition, environmental stressors, and traumatic experiences contribute to the development of neuroses in children.

Furthermore, research suggests that early intervention is key to preventing the progression of neuroses into more severe and chronic conditions. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), exposure therapy, and pharmacological treatments have shown efficacy in reducing symptoms and improving functioning in children with neuroses. However, access to mental health services remains a significant barrier for many children and families, highlighting the need for improved resources and support systems.

This article synthesizes information from peer-reviewed research articles, clinical guidelines, and reputable sources to provide a comprehensive overview of neuroses in children. Literature searches

were conducted using electronic databases such as PubMed, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "neuroses in children," "anxiety disorders," "OCD," and "prevention strategies." Relevant articles published within the last decade were included in the analysis.

Neuroses in children encompass a range of psychological disorders characterized by anxiety, obsessive behaviors, phobias, and other maladaptive coping mechanisms. Some common types of neuroses in children include:

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** Children with GAD experience excessive worry and anxiety about various aspects of their lives, such as school performance, relationships, and health.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** OCD in children involves recurrent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) that lead to repetitive behaviors (compulsions) aimed at reducing anxiety. These behaviors can interfere significantly with daily activities.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a mental health condition characterized by a cycle of obsessions and compulsions that can significantly interfere with a person's daily life. This disorder can manifest in children as well as adults.

In children, OCD often involves recurring, intrusive thoughts or urges (obsessions) that cause distress or anxiety. These thoughts can be about a wide range of topics, such as contamination, harm coming to oneself or others, perfectionism, or forbidden or taboo thoughts.

In response to these obsessive thoughts, children may engage in repetitive behaviors or mental acts (compulsions) in an attempt to alleviate the anxiety or prevent a feared event from happening. These



compulsions can take various forms, such as repetitive handwashing, checking, counting, arranging objects in a specific way, or seeking reassurance from others.

It's important to note that while many children may experience occasional obsessive thoughts or engage in repetitive behaviors, children with OCD experience these symptoms to a degree that significantly disrupts their daily functioning and causes distress.

Early identification and treatment of OCD in children are crucial to helping them manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life. Treatment often involves a combination of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), specifically a type called exposure and response prevention (ERP), and sometimes medication, particularly selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Therapy aims to help children understand their thoughts and behaviors, gradually face their fears, and learn healthier ways of coping with anxiety.

- **Phobias:** Phobias are irrational fears of specific objects, situations, or activities. Common childhood phobias include fear of the dark, animals, or certain social situations.

Phobias are indeed fascinating and complex psychological phenomena. They can manifest in various forms and intensities, affecting people differently. Childhood phobias often stem from a combination of genetic predispositions, learned behaviors, and individual experiences.

Fear of the dark, known as nyctophobia, is quite common among children. This fear typically arises from a fear of the unknown, as the dark obscures familiar surroundings and can trigger imaginative thoughts about potential dangers lurking in the shadows.

Animal phobias, such as fear of spiders (arachnophobia) or snakes (ophidiophobia), are also prevalent in childhood. These fears might develop due to negative experiences with certain animals or through learned behaviors from observing others' reactions.

Social phobias, like fear of speaking in front of a group (glossophobia) or fear of being judged (social anxiety disorder), can also emerge during childhood. These fears often stem from a fear of embarrassment, rejection, or scrutiny by others.

Understanding and addressing childhood phobias require patience, empathy, and sometimes professional intervention. Gradual exposure to the feared object or situation, along with techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, can help individuals overcome their phobias and lead fuller lives.

- **Separation Anxiety Disorder:** This disorder involves excessive fear or anxiety

about separation from caregivers or loved ones. Children may experience distress when anticipating separation or when separated from attachment figures.

- **Panic Disorder:** Children with panic disorder experience sudden and intense episodes of fear or panic, often accompanied by physical symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, sweating, and shortness of breath.

Preventing neuroses in children involves a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects of their lives:

- **Promote a Secure Attachment:** Building a secure attachment between children and caregivers during infancy and early childhood can provide a foundation of emotional security that reduces the risk of developing anxiety disorders later in life.

Building a secure attachment between children and caregivers during infancy and early childhood is crucial for healthy emotional development. A secure attachment forms when caregivers consistently meet the child's needs, provide comfort, and create a safe environment for exploration and growth.

Here are some key points to consider when promoting secure attachment:

**Responsive Caregiving:** Caregivers need to be attuned to the child's cues and respond promptly and sensitively to their needs. This includes feeding, comforting, and comforting them when they are distressed.

**Emotional Availability:** Creating a nurturing and supportive environment where the child feels loved, valued, and understood fosters a secure attachment. This involves showing affection, expressing positive emotions, and being emotionally available for the child.

**Consistency and Predictability:** Establishing consistent routines and caregiving practices helps children feel secure and develop a sense of trust in their caregivers. Predictability reduces anxiety and creates a stable foundation for emotional growth.

**Safe Exploration:** Encouraging safe exploration and independence allows children to develop confidence and autonomy while knowing they can rely on their caregivers for support and reassurance when needed.

**Communication and Connection:** Building strong bonds through meaningful interactions, such as playing, talking, and engaging in activities together, strengthens the attachment between children and caregivers.

**Recognizing and Responding to Distress:** Acknowledging and validating the child's feelings, even



when they are upset or anxious, helps them learn to regulate their emotions and develop coping strategies. By prioritizing these principles, caregivers can lay the groundwork for a secure attachment that promotes emotional security and resilience, reducing the risk of anxiety disorders later in life. The benefits of a secure attachment extend far beyond childhood, influencing the child's social, emotional, and psychological well-being throughout their lifespan.

- **Teach Coping Skills:** Teach children healthy coping mechanisms for managing stress and anxiety. This includes relaxation techniques, mindfulness exercises, and problem-solving skills.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Create an environment where children feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. Open communication can help identify early signs of anxiety or other neuroses and facilitate timely intervention.
- **Establish Routine and Structure:** Consistent routines and structure provide children with a sense of stability and predictability, which can help reduce anxiety and promote emotional regulation.
- **Limit Exposure to Stressful Situations:** Minimize exposure to stressful or traumatic events whenever possible. Shielding children from excessively distressing experiences can help prevent the development of anxiety disorders.

Limiting exposure to stressful situations, especially for children, is crucial for their mental and emotional well-being. Excessive exposure to stress or trauma can indeed increase the risk of developing anxiety disorders and other mental health issues. Shielding children from overly distressing experiences can support their healthy development and resilience.

Parents and caregivers can play a significant role in creating environments that minimize stressors for children. This can involve:

**Creating a Safe Environment:** Ensuring that children feel physically and emotionally safe in their surroundings can provide a foundation of security. This includes maintaining a stable and nurturing home environment.

**Healthy Communication:** Open and honest communication can help children understand and cope with challenging situations. Parents can encourage children to express their feelings and concerns while providing reassurance and support.

**Setting Boundaries:** Establishing clear boundaries and routines can help children feel secure and reduce uncertainty. Consistent rules and expectations can provide a sense of stability and predictability.

**Modeling Coping Strategies:** Adults can model healthy coping strategies for managing stress and adversity. Demonstrating problem-solving skills, resilience, and self-care sends positive messages to children about how to navigate difficult situations.

**Monitoring Media Exposure:** Limiting exposure to distressing news or media content can prevent unnecessary stress and anxiety, especially for young children who may have difficulty processing such information.

**Encouraging Healthy Habits:** Promoting activities that support physical and mental well-being, such as regular exercise, adequate sleep, nutritious diet, and creative expression, can help children build resilience to stress.

While it may not always be possible to shield children from all sources of stress, taking proactive steps to minimize exposure can significantly benefit their overall mental health and development. Additionally, being attuned to children's emotions and providing support when needed can help them navigate challenging situations with greater resilience.

- **Model Healthy Behavior:** Children often learn by observing the behavior of adults and other significant figures in their lives. Model healthy coping strategies and demonstrate effective ways of managing stress and anxiety.

Modeling healthy behavior for children is essential for their development, especially when it comes to coping strategies and stress management. Here are some effective ways to demonstrate healthy behaviors:

**Practice Self-Care:** Show children that taking care of oneself is important. This includes getting enough sleep, eating nutritious foods, exercising regularly, and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation.

**Communicate Openly:** Encourage open communication about emotions and stressors. Let children know that it's okay to express their feelings and that you are there to listen and support them.

**Demonstrate Problem-Solving Skills:** When faced with challenges or conflicts, demonstrate how to approach them calmly and rationally. Involve children in the problem-solving process, teaching them to brainstorm solutions and consider consequences.

**Manage Stress Proactively:** Model healthy ways to manage stress, such as deep breathing exercises, mindfulness techniques, or engaging in hobbies that



promote relaxation. Avoid using unhealthy coping mechanisms like excessive drinking or avoidance.

**Set Boundaries:** Teach children the importance of setting boundaries and saying no when necessary. Show them how to prioritize tasks and responsibilities, and demonstrate assertive communication skills when dealing with difficult situations or people.

**Seek Support When Needed:** Show children that it's okay to ask for help when feeling overwhelmed. Whether it's talking to a trusted friend, family member, or seeking professional support, demonstrate that reaching out for assistance is a sign of strength, not weakness.

**Lead by Example:** Remember that children are always observing your behavior, so strive to be a positive role model in how you handle stress, conflicts, and everyday challenges. Your actions speak louder than words.

By modeling these healthy behaviors, you can help children develop the skills they need to cope effectively with stress and adversity throughout their lives.

- **Seek Professional Help When Needed:** If a child exhibits persistent symptoms of anxiety or other neuroses that significantly interfere with their daily functioning, seek professional help from a qualified mental health professional. Early intervention can prevent the escalation of symptoms and promote positive outcomes.

By implementing these strategies, caregivers can help foster emotional resilience in children and reduce the risk of developing neuroses later in life.

While significant progress has been made in understanding and treating neuroses in children, several challenges remain. Stigma surrounding mental health issues may prevent children and families from seeking help, leading to underdiagnosis and undertreatment. Additionally, disparities in access to mental health services exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly among marginalized populations.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated mental health concerns among children, with increased rates of anxiety and depression reported globally. School closures, social isolation, and economic instability have disrupted routines and exacerbated stressors, underscoring the need for targeted interventions and support systems.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

In conclusion, neuroses in children represent a significant public health concern that requires a multifaceted approach to prevention and intervention.

By promoting awareness, reducing stigma, and increasing access to mental health services, we can help mitigate the impact of neuroses on children's lives and empower them to thrive. Collaborative efforts between healthcare providers, educators, policymakers, and community organizations are essential to address the complex needs of children with neuroses and ensure equitable access to care for all. By investing in early intervention and fostering supportive environments, we can nurture the mental well-being of our future generations.

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