



## “Head-lines” Episode 1: Social Anxiety

### Conversation starters

Hey adults! The “Head-lines” crew wants to make it easy for you to keep the conversation going after watching this week’s episode about anxiety. Here are some questions you can ask to stimulate further dialogue between you and your kiddos.

**Please note:** If this is the first time you’re having these conversations as a family, be kind to yourself — it can be hard to get our kiddos to open up. It’s OK if they’re hesitant at first. But over time and with practice, we hope that your family can build trust, develop productive ways to share more about mental health and grow closer. After all, we’re all fronds here!

- What did you think when Zev, the kid in the episode, told Lora the parrot that he was nervous about going to the parade?
- How do you feel when we’re getting ready to go to parties or family dinners? Do you ever feel nervous but are scared to tell me?
- Do you know it’s OK to tell me when you’re nervous or feeling scared?
- Is there ever a time when you tried to tell me you were nervous at a party and I didn’t hear you? Do you want to talk about that?
- I know how it feels to not want to go somewhere because we’re tired or nervous. What do you think would help you feel less nervous?
- What does “nervous,” “anxious” or “scared” mean to you? (Adults: We recommend picking one of these words, not all three; pick whichever word you think your child might most connect with.)
- Is there a place in your body where you feel the nervousness? (Give an example of where you feel anxiety, like in your chest or stomach to help the child understand)

### Let’s get crafty!

One of the best ways to better understand your anxiety and other big feelings is to draw them. As a family, sit down with several pieces of paper and crayons, markers and whatever else is handy and instruct your kiddo(s) to think about what their scary or hard feelings look like. Is Anxiety a little mean gross guy? Or perhaps a big fluffy rude dude? Whatever the case, draw it out and see how it feels to look those feelings in the face. Do they feel a little less powerful? Use this as an opportunity to talk more about how everyone in the family deals with difficult emotions. And, if you’d like, share your drawings with the “Head-lines” team by tagging us on Instagram at [@latimesforyourmind](https://www.instagram.com/latimesforyourmind). Onward and upward, fronds.



## Your home practice

### Breathing exercise

As you learned in our episode, sometimes it can really help to take some breaths. Here's the breathing exercise we practiced in the episode:

1. Listen to your breath. In and out. Try to count to 3 with every breath.
2. In 1, 2, 3, and out 1, 2 and 3.
3. Let's try again: In, 1, 2, 3 and out, 1, 2 and 3.
4. Feel your toes or fingers wiggle.
5. Try to relax them.
6. Shake your head "yes," slowly. Now shake your head "no," slowly.
7. Feel the tension leaving your body.
8. Now gently open your eyes when you're ready. Notice how you feel now.

### Grounding exercise

Sometimes when we're feeling anxious, it's almost like we start to float away. This is when it's helpful to practice a technique called "grounding," in which you check in with all five senses (you can do these in any order)

- What do you see?
- What do you hear?
- What do you feel? (on your hand, under your feet, anything that's touching you)
- What do you smell?
- And what do you taste?
- Now take three slow deep breaths, in through the nose, out through the mouth.

## Resources to continue your practice

Headspace, a meditation and mindfulness app, is free for all L.A. County residents.

Join here: <https://www.headspace.com/lacounty>

Includes specific meditations for children (Search: "kids" in the app)

Free virtual family yoga via People's Yoga, an East L.A.-based community studio:

<https://www.peoplesyoga.org/classes>

This L.A. Times free resource guide includes free and low-cost therapy options and other mental health-related activities (no paywall, free access)

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-09-22/mental-health-resources-to-help-yourself-or-anyone-else-how-to-save-a-life>