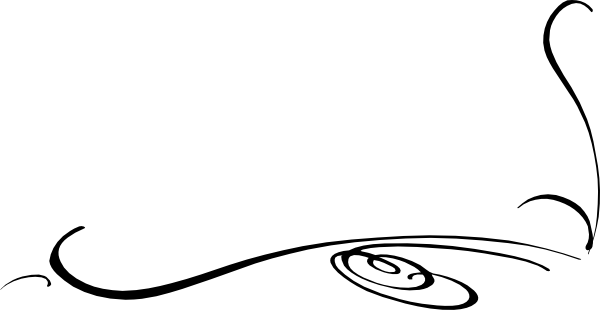
**Daily Practices That Reduce Anxiety**

* **Get enough sleep**
  + Lack of sleep increases cortisol – a stress hormone
  + Lack of sleep also contributes to impaired memory, less productivity, and increased irritability
* **De-clutter**
  + Physical clutter = mental clutter
  + Have a “command center” in your home that stays clutter-free for important notes, reminders, calendars, and lists
* **Express gratitude**
  + Keep a family gratitude jar – add things each member is grateful for daily or weekly. Reread them as an end-of-year tradition, or when you just need a boost!
  + Write things you’re grateful for in a journal. Research shows that regularly practicing gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression.
* **Eat well**
  + Studies have linked vitamin B with good mental health, and omega-3s may help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.
  + Whole-grain carbs help regulate levels of [serotonin](http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/serotonin-and-foods), the “feel-good” neurotransmitter that helps us remain calm.
  + Sugary and processed foods can increase symptoms of anxiety.
* **Breathe** 
  + Short, shallow breaths signify stress and anxiety in the [brain and body](http://www.calmclinic.com/anxiety/symptoms/shallow-breathing).
  + Taking deep breaths breath helps [send signals](http://www.npr.org/2010/12/06/131734718/just-breathe-body-has-a-built-in-stress-reliever) to the brain that it’s okay to relax.
  + Free, helpful app – Breathe2Relax
* **Incorporate calming practices like mediation or yoga**
  + Meditation increases the amount of gray matter in the brain, essentially rewiring the body to stress less.
* **Be silent**
  + Disconnect from electronics for a set amount of time daily or weekly.
* **Normalize worry** 
  + Some stress and worries are normal.
  + Avoid dismissing or minimizing worries. Allow children space to express their feelings.
  + Create “worry boxes” where children can write down and store their worries.
* **Plan ahead**
  + Prepare for each day ahead of time – lay out clothes, assignments, lunches, keys, etc. to make mornings smooth.
* **Reach out for support**
  + Socializing stimulates the production of oxytocin – an anxiety-reducing hormone.