

24 - Developmental fears

Developmental fears

© SPMM Course Imaginary companions are often a part of emotional development. □ Preschool years mostly (between 3 to 10 yrs age, 50% may have), □ Usually in children with above-average intelligence □ Usually in the form of persons rather than animals/things □ Usually friendly and help to reduce loneliness and anxiety. □ Mostly disappear by age 12, occasionally persist into adulthood. Developmental fears □ Fear of animals-age 3 □ Fear of the dark-age 4 or 5 □ Fear of imaginary creatures - 5 plus □ Fear of open spaces arises in later childhood or adult life □ Fears that arise in late childhood or adult life: fear of sex/open spaces. □ Teenage onwards-failure, illness and death □ Fears that show no particular age trend-fear of snakes or storms Simple fears are often linked to early negative childhood experiences or learnt from other family members (such as a sibling's fear of spiders may influence a child). Maintenance of phobias is due to avoidance of the anxiety-provoking stimuli relieving unpleasant emotions, which becomes a reward itself. Children of age 3 to 6 yrs are aware of their body and show a preoccupation with illness or injury,

- every injury must be examined and cared for – hence this phase is also called Band Aid Phase.
- were quick to express anger
- slow to distract themselves
- might try to distract themselves but only briefly
- bid to mother but angrily 18 to 24 months
- quickly bid to mother (but thru words not anger)
- were somewhat quicker to distract
- anger was briefer, distractions longer 36 months
- quickly & briefly bid to mother (verbally)
- quickly distracted themselves
- eventually focused on gift & then showed anger 48 months

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