

### **Self-Talk for Anxious Situations\***

- ▶ I've done this (or something similar) before, so I can do it now
- ▶ I can't predict the future, so I might as well hope for the best
- ▶ It's just my worried mind (or my 'worry monster') talking
- ▶ I can carry on despite my worries (or 'there's more to me than my worries')
- ▶ Anxiety always goes away eventually
- ▶ Just breathe! (If it's hard, box breathe: in to a count of 4, hold to a count of 4, out to a count of 4, wait to a count of 4 & repeat—slows your breath and focuses your mind on counting)
- ▶ I know I will be OK
- ▶ I know I can deal with this when the time comes, so no point thinking about it now
- ▶ Things are often not as dangerous as they seem to me
- ▶ I can focus on something else
- ▶ I can do something to prepare
- ▶ I can always ask for help if needed
- ▶ There are many explanations that have nothing to do with what I fear
- ▶ The chance of my worry coming true is one in a million (for serious outcomes)
- ▶ What's the worst that could happen? (if the feared outcome is not so serious)
- ▶ I will feel great when it's over!

### **How to Use It**

- ▶ Have the child pick a few favorites and put on a card or slip of paper to be kept in the backpack, or wherever child gets anxious; encourage decorating it/personalizing it
- ▶ Explain that people do not think on the spot when anxious, so that's why you are providing this reminder card
- ▶ Including a favorite picture or other reminder of home is also helpful for some children
- ▶ The more realistic the fear, the more the statements on the card need to emphasize personal strength rather than probabilities

*\*For further ideas on applying the above, please see "Keys to Parenting Your Anxious Child" on 'Books' page*