

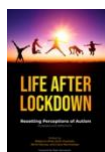
## Managing Anxiety in the Current COVID-19 Climate

Excerpt from *Conquering Anxiety* by Maureen Bennie

Entering back into the outside world after lockdown can cause a whole new set of worries or exacerbate old ones. After spending over a year at home, some individuals will experience separation anxiety. They may have become used to spending every waking hour with their parents and other family members, and feel fearful that something will happen to them once they leave for work or go out. Separation anxiety is driven by fear and is initially triggered by a negative event, such as COVID-19. In most cases, separation anxiety will be short-lived but for some individuals, this will linger. It can even start for the first time in adulthood. Separation anxiety can be addressed by using small steps (see the chart below).

### Steps for managing anxiety:

- Practice going out. Start by just going out in the backyard or walking down the street and back. Gradually increase the time gone.
- Say goodbye before you go out. Do not sneak away unnoticed.
- Do what you say you will do. For example, “I am going to the grocery store. I’ll be back in one hour.”
- Create a Social Story™ to let the person know what will happen to them while you are out and what they are expected to do. Social Stories™ create predictability, which will ease anxiety (For more information on Social Stories™ see <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/> ).
- Use visuals to say where you are and when you will be back.
- Have children engage in calming activities before a separation happens.
- Give children a special job or preferred activity to do to distract them from anxious feelings.



<https://www.amazon.com/Life-After-Lockdown-Resetting-Perceptions/dp/1956110038>