



Thought-Full
helping you think it through
mental health support teams in schools



Kingsham Primary School

Parent Session Strategies to support Anxious children

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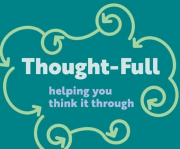
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Take what you need tokens





HEALTH, PEACE, FUN, BRAVERY, Belief, Love, PATIENCE, CONFIDENCE, TRUST, COMPASSION, POSITIVITY, ADVENTURE, DR. KAREN TREBMAN SAFE HANDS THINKING HANDS, A BREAK, CONNECTION, HAPPINESS, TIME, ENERGY, LUCK, COURAGE, PRIDE, A HUG, A BREATH, LAUGHTER, WHAT ELSE?, UNDERSTANDING, FORGIVENESS, STRENGTH

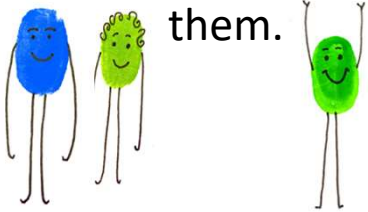


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Aims

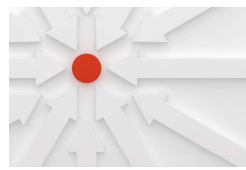




Every child is unique. You know your child best and what may work for them.



To share a range of strategies

Talking, Thinking, Feeling and Doing






There are no right or wrong ways to parent an anxious child there are things that will

- *work from the outset
- *handy on the short term – maybe not long term
- *monumental disaster from the beginning


BUT
What they all have in common come from and motivated by love



The aim is not to get rid of all anxiety, but to ease it back to a level that feels okay. On or Off is often all an anxious child knows.





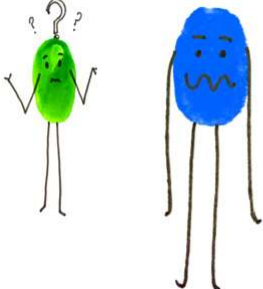
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Usual anxieties/ difficulties

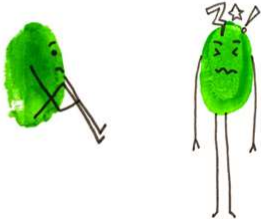


<p>Toddler to middle childhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty separating from givers • Sleeping alone • Nightmares and bedwetting (monsters, heightened imagination) • Fear of new people and things
<p>Middle childhood to late childhood</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety around transition- new schools, new friends etc. • Anxious to please friends • Some but fewer nightmares- able to distinguish between reality and imagination. • Fears of getting lost, kidnapped, trapped, burglars, dentists, injury, heights.
<p>Late childhood to adolescence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety around social exclusion, being embarrassed, public speaking, dating, academic, their future. • Difficulties with emotional regulation around trusted caregivers. 

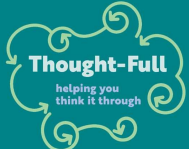


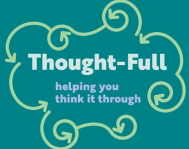







What can parents/carer and families do to help?



Talking



What to say to an anxious child



I am here; you are safe

What do you want to tell your worry?

Tell me about it

Let's change the ending

I can't wait to hear about...

Can you draw it?




What do you need from me?

How big is your worry?

This feeling will pass

I am going to take a deep breath

It's scary AND...

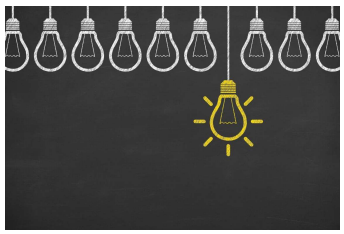






Model helpful coping

Don't just tell your child how to overcome emotions – show them. When you get anxious or stressed, verbalise how you're coping with the situation:
 “This looks a bit scary, but I'll give it a go.”
 And hey, you might even knock off one of your own fears.



Be upfront about scary things

Lots of children have worries about death, war, terrorism or things they see on the news. This is all really normal. Talk through their fears and answer any questions truthfully. Don't sugar-coat the facts – try and explain what's happening in a way that puts their fears in perspective.



Conversation cards

<p style="text-align: center;">LOOK AROUND THE ROOM AND FIND 10 BLUE THINGS</p>	<p><i>Slowly breathe in through your nose, hold for 5 seconds, release through your mouth- Repeat 5 times</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Go through the test and answer all of the questions that you know first.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Focus on yourself. Your best effort is all that matters. You are smart and capable.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Engage your senses. What do you see, smell, hear, and feel?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THIS FEELING OF BORDOM, STRESS, AND FRUSTRATION WILL PASS. PUSH THROUGH AND SHOW YOURSELF THAT YOU CAN DO IT!</p>

“ Who do you admire and why? ”

“ What makes you unique? ”

“ What can you do if you don't feel good about something you see or hear? ”

“ What would you do if you were being bullied? If you saw someone else being bullied? ”

“ Which superhero would you most like to be? Why? ”

“ Which 3 words best describe you? ”

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

Are you afraid of what will happen when you start feeling anxious?

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

Have you ever experienced an anxiety or panic attack?

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

Which coping skills work the best for you? Why do they work so well?

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

Which coping skills do not work for you at all? Why not?

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

What is something that is guaranteed to make you feel anxious every time?

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

Name someone who makes you feel anxious every time they're around.

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

What type of people make you feel anxious?

ANXIETY Conversation Cards

What type of situations make you feel anxious?

4








Suggestions for anxiety cards





- Everyone feels scared sometimes
- It will all be okay in the end
- You will feel better again
- You are not alone
- Mistakes are the best way to learn
- We can find a way around this
- There is always someone who can help
- You have strengths and skills
- You don't have to be like everyone else
- You can always control the way that you react
- This is only temporary and things will get better









Coping self talk








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Encourage positive thinking



Young people with anxiety often get stuck on the worst-case scenario or 'what ifs' in any situation. You can help them shift these thinking patterns by:

- reminding them of times they've dealt with similar issues in the past and how things worked out OK
- helping them to challenge the scary thought with facts and evidence. For example, we know that crocodiles can't survive under our bed
- make a plan for how they'll respond if things don't go as they'd like.

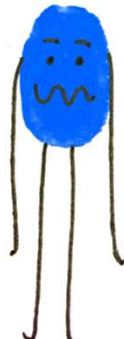





Thinking

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How to think realistically

Catching thoughts-Identify what the thought behind the emotion is by asking yourself "What is making me feel this way?" "Why am I worried?" and "What do I think will happen?"

Evaluating and challenging- How likely is the thought? Look for evidence for the thought and evaluate it. List some alternative possibilities regarding your worrying thoughts.

Evaluating and challenging- How bad could the situation be? Ask yourself "What is the worst that could happen?" You will probably realise that what you imagine as the worst outcome, isn't that bad after all

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Catching unhelpful thoughts

Catch the unhelpful thought

'I cant do this'

'Its too hard'

'They will laugh at me'

Crumple it up and throw it in the bin

Replace it with a positive thought:

'I've got this'

'I can do it, I've got a plan'

'I can try it and see'

'It will only last 5 minutes'

Make it relevant to the child, use humour, or things that they enjoy.

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Climb the ladder

Instead of skirting the scary situation, you could try a technique called 'laddering' – breaking down worries into manageable chunks and gradually working towards a goal.

Let's say your child is afraid of water and swimming. Instead of avoiding the pool, create some mini-goals to build their confidence.

Start out by just sitting and watching other kids swimming.

As they feel more comfortable get them to try dangling their legs in the water, then standing in the shallow end, and so on.



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Solution-focussed thinking



- “If you had a magic wand...?” can be a helpful question
- Identify small, practical steps that can be taken
- The steps won’t address the underlying problem but will help alleviate the “symptomatic” behaviours or worries
- Use a thermometer scale to assess change

GOAL!



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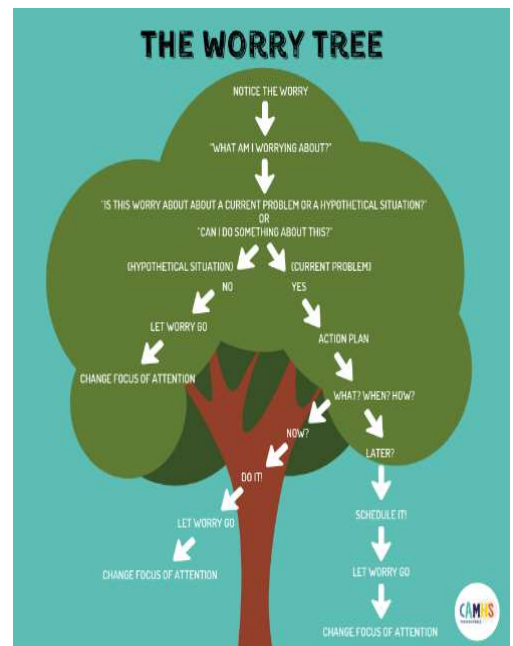
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The Worry Tree

The Worry Tree aims to validate how the young person is feeling and to support them in managing their worries by:

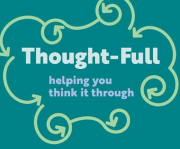
- 1, Identifying whether a worry about Practical worry e.g. about a current problem or a hypothetical worries e.g. about something that might happen.
- 2 Working out what to do with those worries
 - Letting go of hypothetical worries
 - Problem solving practical worries










Using Worry Time

- Set up a worry time daily with your child for 10 minutes – try to avoid bedtime
- Agree the time with your child – preferably the same time every day
- Knowing that the time is set up and that it is stuck to will help you child hold their worries until this time
- If they try to talk about worries at other times, remind them of worry time and try to get them to think about other things




Worry Time




Write down worries and put the in the worry jar (let go)

Plan when to have worry time



Do something else (distract)



Worry time – Go through the worries one by one.





Special time –for when you child creates worries because they love worry time!

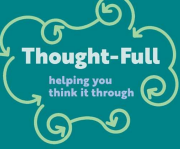
For 10 minutes a day





Join your child in their play or activity.

Benefits

- Improves the parent and child relationship
- Improves trust and communication
- Enhances your child’s play or interests.
- Improves concentration.
- Improves self esteem
- Improves problem solving skills.



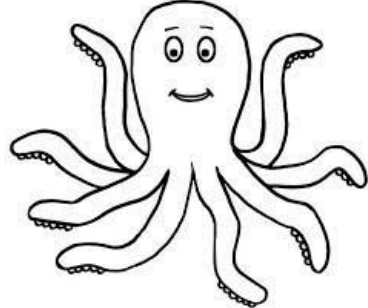
The problem solving octopus

1, Write down the problem in one or two sentences

2, On each tentacles write a possible solution, starting with your child’s ideas.

No matter what it is!!




3, Discuss each possible solution, weighing up the pros and cons before choosing one to try



4, Make a plan including

- Choose a possible solution
- When you will do it
- How you will do it
- Who will might you do it with
- What will help to overcome difficulties

5, Make a time to review how it went, together and decide what’s next.



More Problem Solving

Problem Solving Worksheet

What is the problem? (break it down into smaller problems if you need to).

What do I want my solution to achieve (aim/goal)?

1. What are all the possible solutions? 2. what are the pros/cons of each (and how well would each achieve my goal)?

Possible Solution	Pros/Cons (Advantages)	Approximate Probability

Which solution am I going to try?

What's my plan?

What are the steps to solving the problem (what do I need to do)?	Has this ever happened before?	How would you feel if this happens (what are the pros/cons)?

How did it go? Did you achieve any progress, however small, towards your goal? What have you learned?

If it did not go well could I do something different with that solution? Should I try a different solution?

Name: _____

Think of a problem that you may experience in the future. Use the problem solving steps to solve it.

What was the problem?

What were three possible solutions to your problem?


Which solution did you choose?

What happened afterward?

How did you feel afterward?



LIST OF EMOTIONS



HAPPY

- Hopeful
- Glad
- Excited
- Enthusiastic
- Cheerful
- Charmed
- Bright
- Blissful
- Amused

BAD

- Sordid
- Rotten
- Odious
- Infamous
- Grievous
- Disheartening
- Disagreeable
- Awful
- Atrocious

SAD

- Gloomy
- Mournful
- Sorrowful
- Tearful
- Unhappy
- Hateful
- Heavy
- Miserable
- Upset

EXCITING

- Inspiring
- Moving
- Powerful
- Rousing
- Shocking
- Mind-blowing
- Startling
- Stimulating
- Stirring

HURT

- Wound
- Offend
- Victimize
- Mistreat
- Crush
- Injured
- Tortured
- Bleed
- Ache

SAD

- Fit
- Healthy
- Fit as a fiddle
- Forceful
- Harsh
- In good condition
- Intense
- Lusty

CONFUSED

- Shy
- Pessimistic
- Upset
- Doubtful
- Uncertain
- Unsure
- Embarrassed
- Hesitant

TIRED

- Exhausted
- Weary
- Powerless
- Run-down
- Drained
- Fatigued
- Worn out
- Spent
- Overtired

ANGRY

- Aggrieved
- Annoyed
- Cross
- Displeased
- Enraged
- Exasperated
- Fuming
- Furious
- Galled

Feelings

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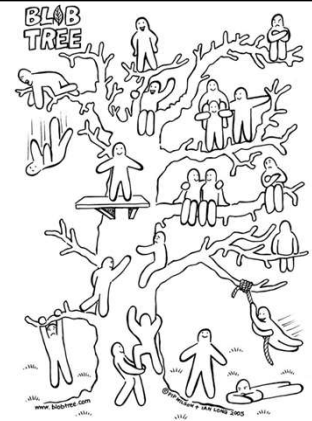
How am I feeling?

3. Think about how you tend to feel physically when you get anxious. Highlight or colour in any of the following that apply to you.

CHECK IN

5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

The 5-Point Scale and Anxiety Curve Poster
Kari Dunn Buron, MS, and Mitzi Curtis



How Are You Feeling Today?

Regulating Emotions

Emotion regulation is important because our emotions are closely connected to how we think and feel. Our thoughts and feelings help us to decide how to respond to a situation and what actions to take. In other words, our thoughts and feelings influence our behaviour. If we learn skills to regulate our emotions then instead of acting impulsively and doing something we might later regret we are able to make smart choices. Making smart choices makes our life easier and helps with our mental health.

Emotion Regulation Skills

- Mindful Awareness**
Mindfulness is a special state of being. It is noticing one's own present experience.
- Cognitive Reappraisal**
This involves altering the way we think.
- Self Compassion**
Setting time aside to evaluate your emotional well-being is an excellent way to build your emotion regulation skills.
- Adaptability**
Emotion regulation requires us to adapt to different life changes and modulate our behavior accordingly.
- Self Awareness**
Just being aware of what exactly you are feeling is all you need to control your mind.

MIND JOURNAL | MIND HELP

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General anxiety management: Practical

These can help with anxiety in the moment but, if practiced regularly can help give a calmer “baseline”

Grounding techniques:

- 5 senses game (5 things you can hear; see; smell etc)
- Body scan (apps to support e.g. Headspace)

Breathing exercises:

- 5 finger breathing
- Breath in for 5 out for 6



Doing

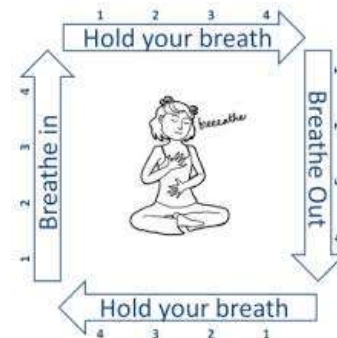


Breathing strategies


- 7/11 Breathing Pattern - the opposite of hyperventilation

- **Breathing**, not into your chest but deep into your tummy. The out breath must be longer than the in breath. This causes stimulation of the part of your nervous system responsible for relaxation.
- Sit down and close your eyes for a little while. Just become aware of your breathing, and breathe in to the count of seven, and breathe out to the count of eleven.
- You can hold for a couple of seconds at the bottom of the out breath if that's comfortable for you.
- It may be a little difficult at first, but doing this **regularly** causes your general anxiety level to come down.
- Hyperventilation responds very well to this technique. It can also give you much more control over panic attacks.

- Square Breathing




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Distraction techniques

- Counting backwards from 10 to 1?
- How many colours of the rainbow can you see?
- How many animals can you think of from the jungle?
- What are your favourite foods?
- How many different types of cartoon characters can you think of?
- How many people can you see with yellow clothes?
- Do something different , bake, exercise, art, etc

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Calm Box: create together

Massage – foot or shoulder rub – gentle pressure

Look at a photograph album or selected pictures/postcards

Using a wipe board – it is not permanent

Make a pizza. The key adult draws a circle on the child's back and uses different touches to represent pizza toppings of the child's choice

Sort wooden blocks into colours

Laughter - forced

Read a story

Colour a pattern in a colouring book

Whispering

Listen to a relaxation audio for 5 minutes


Play with fidget toy for five minutes

Take five deep breaths.



Fabric touch feely board

Singing together Happy music

Sensory play. Mould aroma dough in your hands. Smell it. Make something out of it and put it back. Smell your hands to remind yourself what you did



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Things parents need to watch out for



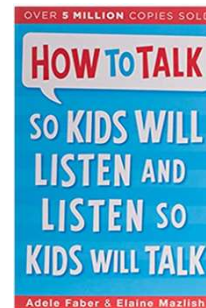
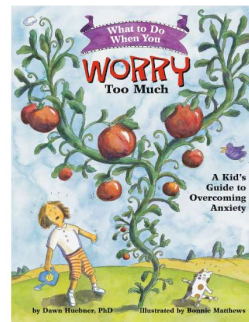
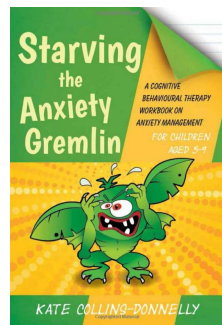
Giving too much reassurance: All parents reassure their children and at times it can help to reduce stress. However, reassurance does not tend to help reduce anxiety in the long run. Reassurance can be addictive-the more parents offer it, the more children want it. Children need to be able to feel that they can deal with their fears on their own and test them out for themselves whether or not their worried thoughts are accurate. Instead of reassurance, you can use empathy to validate your child's feelings.

Providing children with all the answers: Instead of answering question, ask them. It helps children to think for themselves and helps them to remember the conclusions drawn as they have worked them out themselves. This also puts children in control.

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Resources to support parents



What zone am I in?

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving slowly	Happy Calm Okay Focused Ready to Learn!	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Some Loss of Control	Headstrong Sneaky Yelling/Whining Threats Defiant Escapes

How can you help yourself?

The BLUE zone	The GREEN zone	The YELLOW zone	The RED zone
How might you feel? sad tired bored moving slowly	How might you feel? happy calm focused ready to learn	How might you feel? nervous confused silly not ready to learn	How might you feel? angry frustrated scared out of control
What might help you? Talk to someone Stretch Take a brain break stand Take a walk Close my eyes	What might help you? The goal of this exercise is to get to the GREEN zone. Talk to someone Count to 20 Take deep breaths Squeeze something Draw a picture Take a brain break	What might help you? Talk to someone Count to 20 Take deep breaths Squeeze something Draw a picture Take a brain break	What might help you? Stop what I'm doing Make sensible choices Take deep breaths Ask for a break Find a safe space Ask for help


Beneath every behaviour is a feeling. And beneath every feeling is a need. And when we meet that need rather than focus on the behaviour, we begin to deal with the cause not the symptom.

Ashleigh Warner, psychologist

"When you're feeling anxious, remember that you're still you. You are not your anxiety."
~ Deanne Repich

"HAVE PATIENCE WITH ALL THINGS, BUT CHIEFLY HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF..."
— Saint Francis de Sales

"Children's emotions are as real as yours. Just because they might get sad over the colour of their cup, does not make their feelings any less real."
~ Rebekah Lipp



References

