



# ANXIETY INFORMATION PACK

## Introduction

Anxiety is a natural body response to stress. It is a feeling of fear or apprehension of what is about to come. It is a perfectly normal experience that everyone has although some of us may experience it to a level that disrupts the day on a regular basis. The key to dealing with it is managing the feelings of anxiety to more appropriate levels.

If you would like to read more about anxiety and its symptoms please visit

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anxiety-disorders-in-children/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/generalised-anxiety-disorder/>

Recently Public Health England released more guidance on mental health and wellbeing and it can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

## So what can we do and how can we help ourselves and our children?

### Resources:

- Workbooks by Dr Sharie Coombes (ages 7+)
  - ✓ Hello Happy!
  - ✓ No Worries!
  - ✓ Be Brave!
  - ✓ Stay Strong!
  - ✓ Be Positive!
  - ✓ Letting go!
- Workbook by Dawn Huebner
  - ✓ What to do when you worry too much: a kid's guide to overcoming anxiety (ages 6-12)
- Workbooks by Kate Collins-Donnelly
  - ✓ Starving the anxiety gremlin: A cognitive behavioural therapy workbook on anxiety management for young people (blue for ages 10 – 16; green for ages 5 - 9)
- Workbook by Paul Stallard (for adults to work with children)
  - ✓ Think Good, Feel Good
- Books:
  - ✓ The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside and Frank Rodgers (ages 2-5)
  - ✓ Don't Worry, Be Happy by Poppy O'Neill (ages 7-11)
  - ✓ How are you feeling today? By Molly Potter (all ages, very pictorial format therefore good for children with autism)
  - ✓ Series of books by Margot Sunderland
  - ✓ Everyday Mindfulness: 365 Ways to a Centred Life
  - ✓ Ultimate Mindfulness Activity Book: 150 Playful Mindfulness Activities for Kids and Teens (and Grown –Ups too!) by Christian Bergstrom

### Strategies:

- Become a Worry Fairy! (Ideal time for this strategy is in the evening, before bed time)

For younger children

- ✓ Prepare up to 3 stripes of blank paper



- ✓ Prepare a favourite toy which you can slide into the pieces of paper (if you have one a Worry Monster will be suitable but any toy will do)
- ✓ Ask your child to “write” down their worries on the pieces (can be 1 or 3; it does not matter if your child can write or not, they can write, squiggle, mark make or draw their worries – the idea is to put it on a piece of paper rather than what is being put on there)
- ✓ Place the “worries” in the favourite toy and place it on the bed or in the room – wherever the child wants (guide them strategically as you will need to assess the toy after they fall asleep!)
- ✓ After your child has fallen asleep remove the pieces of paper
- ✓ In the morning sit down with your child and check if the worries are still there...

For older children or young people (this also works for adults!)

- ✓ Prepare up to 3 stripes of blank paper
  - ✓ Ask your child to “write” down their worries on the pieces (can be 1 or 3; it does not matter if your child can write or not, they can write, squiggle, mark make or draw their worries – the idea is to put it on a piece of paper rather than what is being put on there)
  - ✓ Cut the paper into small pieces!
  - ✓ (Optional) Create an animal, car, house, etc. from the shredded pieces
  - ✓ Get rid of the pieces (if you have a fireplace, this is a good way of doing it, or just putting them in a “special bin”)
- Daily routine generally helps with reducing anxiety – make a plan for the day (not too complicated!) and put in some nice things that your child can expect at the end of the day
  - Practice relaxation techniques – some ideas are given below on the websites
  - Talk to your child – acknowledge their fears and worries (they do not necessarily need to explicitly explain what makes them worried – remember they may not be able to do it!)
    - ✓ If your child does not feel comfortable talking to you about it, create a character they can talk to, use a toy, object or drawing, let their imagination do the rest!
  - Anxiety is created when we cannot control things around us – allow your child to control small things in their life
    - ✓ what they want to wear on the weekend or during holidays (even if it means different socks or no matching items!)
    - ✓ give them a choice of two or three things (for snacks, games, activities, etc.)
    - ✓ create a plan of the day WITH them not FOR them
    - ✓ arrange their own room (even if it means we see a lot of mess in their mind it can be all in order)
  - There is rising evidence in mindfulness activities helping with reducing anxiety and promoting overall good mental health
  - Try to “slow down” – be mindful of the usual speed of the day – sometimes allowing more time for things can have a good effect on how we do things and it can increase the feeling of control over them

### Websites and videos

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/joinin/seven-techniques-for-helping-kids-keep-calm> (good for younger children)
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>
- <https://www.education.com/magazine/article/new-age-relaxation-techniques/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-anxiety/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O\\_5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O_5M)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7g8Atv27Q8>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBjeO9hpTxQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSR2xjg18QE>
- <https://young.scot/get-informed/national/relaxation-exercises>