

# What is Anxiety



Some anxiety is OK, and it is needed in your life. It is a normal body reaction to perceived danger. Too little, you lose motivation and too much the you can feel overwhelmed. Anxiety affects both your mind and body. When your body begins to feel anxious it goes into a fight, flight and freeze response to protect you. The emotional part of brain floods your thinking part of your brain with cortisol. This cortisol goes from your brain to your body and can go to your:

- Head giving you headache
- Chest and will make you feel like having a tight chest and finding it difficult to breathe
- Stomach, making you feel sick
- Can lower your blood sugar, making you look pale, feel dizzy and shaky

How anxiety affects you in your body is unique to you. Where do you feel anxiety in your body?

## Ways to help with Anxiety

To turn off the switch that controls your brain filling your body with cortisol is to turn on the switch to your five senses that is in your brain.

- Hearing
- Seeing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch

When you are feeling anxious you can ask yourself where you are –

- what are 3 things I can see here and now,
- 2 things I can hear
- Say 1 thing that I can feel

## Activity

An activity you can do with your parent or carer at the beginning and when you begin to recognise when you are feeling anxious you can work through the steps yourself.

Parent/Carer to place a tic tac sweet on the table and ask child to look before child picks this up. Explain to the child to notice how it looks on the table, notice its colour, size, how lights reflect, how it looks on table (**USING SIGHT**)

The parent/carers ask the child to pick up the tic tac – notice the weight how it feels against your skin, roll it between fingers or roll it on their hand and notice its texture – notice if it is soft, smooth, firm, etc (**USING TOUCH**)

The parent/carer ask the child to hold the Tic Tac to their nose and pay attention to its smell, what does it smell of (**USING SMELL**)

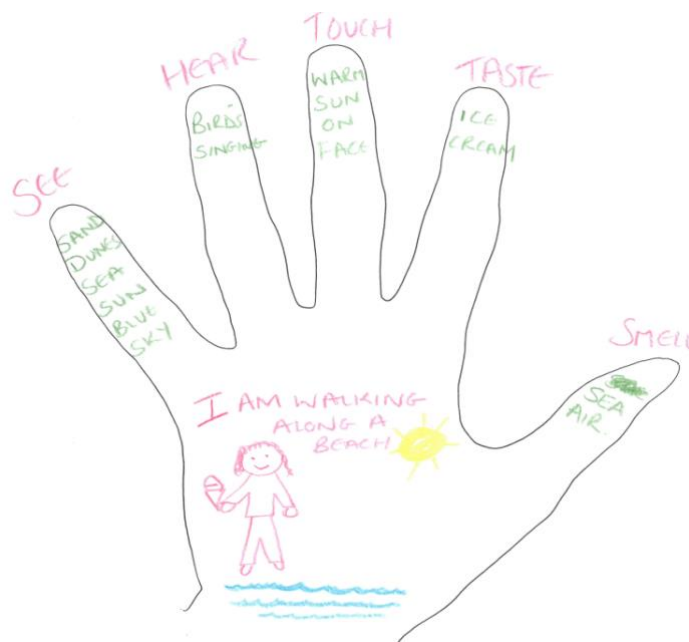
Can your child please place it in their mouth on tongue but don't eat it. How does it feel in your mouth? Please can you begin to chew it slowly, the parent/carer asks the child to pay attention to how their teeth sink into it and do they feel any sensation in their mouth? (**USING TASTE**)

## **An activity to do when you are not anxious but will support when you are feeling anxious.**

- 1) Trace your hand on a sheet of paper.
- 2) Think of a positive memory that would help you to feel safe and calm to remember even during stressful and triggering situations.
- 3) Write each of the five senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling) on each of the five fingers.
- 4) Draw and or write about the memory in the palm of the hand.
- 5) Identify how the memory is experienced using each of the five senses on each finger and write or draw a picture for each.
- 6) Last but not least talk about how thinking of this memory can help the person feel a sense of safety and inner calmness despite outer life circumstances.

This nice activity can support you and help you visualise by looking at your hand when you are feeling anxious.

The child could also draw or write the memory on a small stone to hold in his or her palm to help feel more grounded when remembering the positive situation.



**I can carry a positive memory with me in my hand. I can remember it with all my senses to make it real in my mind**

### **Signs to Look out for:**

- **Lack of Energy and motivation**
- **Sleeping too much or too little**
- **Eating too much or too little**
- **Uncontrollable emotions or lack of emotions**
- **Withdrawing from friends and family**

### **Ways on how to challenge thoughts and thinking when you are feeling anxious:**

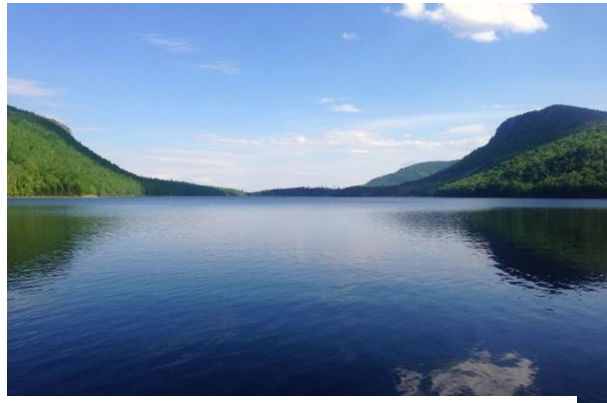
Ask yourself:

What evidence do I have to support this?

What are the best and worst scenarios to this situation

Have you experienced this before, if yes – tell yourself, I made it before, I am still here.

**List all your negative feelings that have happened today and put them in a swamp and then list all your positive feelings and put them in a pond**



**Everyday has a swamp and a pond but you have a choice what you focus on.**

**WHAT DO YOU CHOOSE TO LOOK AT TODAY?**

When you feel anxious or under stress your thinking becomes rigid.

## **Activity**

Write down a negative belief, for example, I am not good at Maths and then write a few sentences describing what your day will be like believing that belief, such as, I am going to feel worried and stressed when I have a maths lesson, I cannot concentrate on the lesson as I keep thinking I cannot do Maths. I do not do any work in the maths lesson and fall behind in my work.

Draw a line and write what might be the other story. I might not be good at Maths, but I know how to learn and write sentences on how that feels to believe that. For example, I will listen to the teacher and I have the ability to learn. I am able to ask for help and support if I need too. Even though I struggle I will try my best and that will be good enough. I feel calm as I do not feel a huge amount of pressure on me as there are people there that help me.

### **There are always two sides to a story**

Negative Thought what might the story be:	Helpful thought, what might the story be:

**Change is the only constant thing – It is Important to remember that all things will pass.**

**Your feelings, emotions and experiences are like buses on a journey, they can stop for a while and then they move on.**

# Gratitude

Feeling grateful for things has a huge impact on your mental well being. If you look at things and say positive things to yourself for 30 days every day it has a huge impact on your neurochemistry, developing a more positive mindset.

Before you go to sleep at night ask yourself these two questions:

- what has been the best moment of the day.
- What was the best thing I did today.

Giving yourself 3 affirmations every day – stick this on your wall and complete the below questions.

I can.....

I am .....

I have.....

## Activity

### 30-day Gratitude Challenge

Every day for 30 days. To celebrate what you are grateful for corresponding to the days theme. You can draw, write or take a photo.

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 01. Home                              | 16. Sunshine                           |
| 02. Nature                            | 17. Food                               |
| 03. Hobbies                           | 18. Sharing                            |
| 04. Family                            | 19. Technology                         |
| 05. Friends                           | 20. Something that I did today         |
| 06. Quiet time                        | 21. Music                              |
| 07. Kindness                          | 22. Myself                             |
| 08. Something that has made you smile | 23. Your skills/Talents                |
| 09. Something that makes you laugh    | 24. Weekends                           |
| 10. Home                              | 25. Pets/animals                       |
| 11. Memory                            | 26. Evenings                           |
| 12. Books                             | 27. Kind words                         |
| 13. Health                            | 28. Love                               |
| 14. Peace                             | 29. Memory                             |
| 15. Challenges                        | 30. Something that fills me with love. |

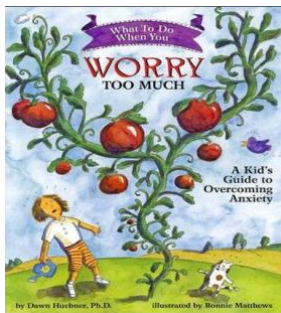
# Worries

## How to manage worries:

Worries are normal. Worries can be like little snow balls, but it is important not to let the worry build up more snow to make a huge snowball.

## Activity

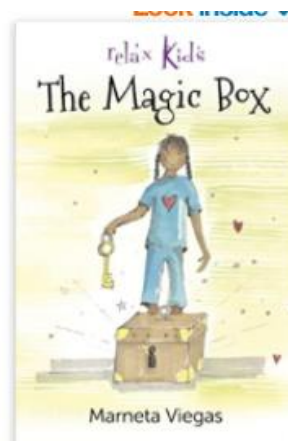
Build, draw, think of a box where your worries can go. You can decorate it how you like. Look at ways of locking the box as we do not want the worries to come out before our worry time, for example, imagine, draw a lock. Allow the same time everyday with a parent/carer to open your box and explore your worries for 15 minutes. When you look at a worry, imagine you are taking it to court, is there any truth to this worry? If worries come to you say to the worry “it is not time to look at you now I am going to place you in the box and I will look at you when it is my worry time”. A great book to support children who worry is “What to do when you worry too much” By Dawn Huebner.



# BODY SCAN

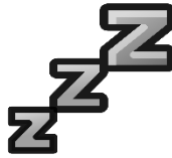


Useful tool before going to bed at night. Lie on bed, close your eyes, focus on the sensations in the following order. A good book to read to children before bedtime is “Relax Kids – the magic Box”



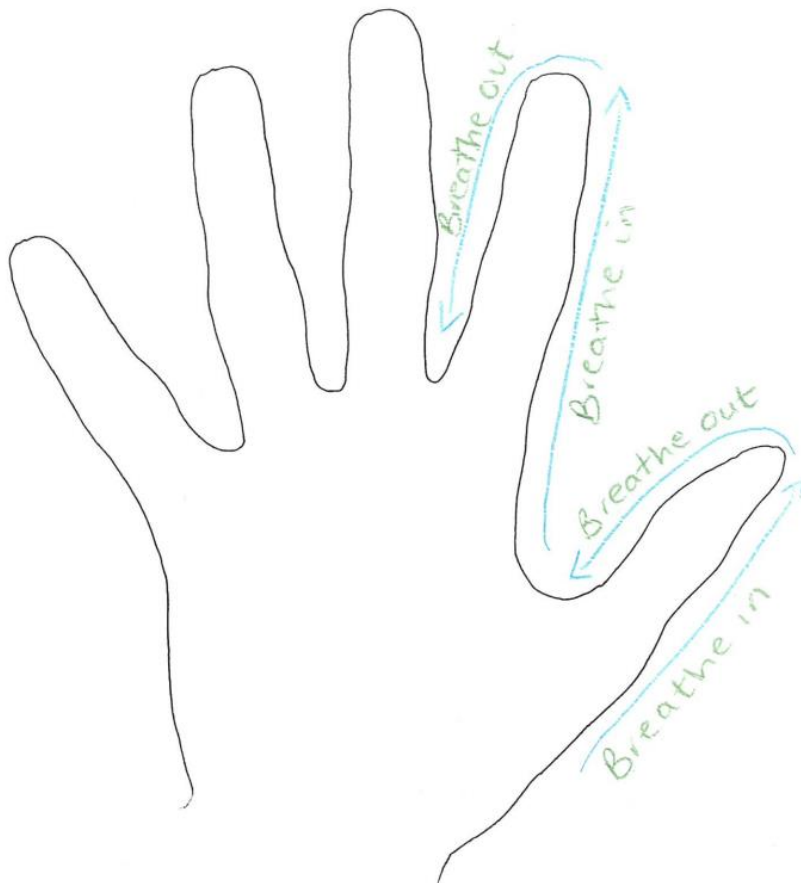
## General mental health well-being

- Take regularly exercise
- Eat healthy diet
- Go to bed at regular, reasonable time
- Spend time speaking with friends and family
- Be kind to yourself
- Smile – TRY LAUGHTER YOGA
- Do an activity every day that you enjoy.
- Give yourself a hug.



## Breathing

Breathing is really important for managing all emotions. A useful breathing technique is to use your index finger to stroke your thumb and finger on the other hand. When you are stroking up thumb /finger breathe in and when you are stroking thumb/finger down breathe out.





## Activity

### What you need: Paper, crayons, scissors and plasters.

When you need help with your physical health you go to the doctor and they look at ways to help you so it is important to find ways to help your mental health

Get the child to draw and colour a heart on a piece of A4 paper. Cut up the heart into pieces (but not too many!!) Place the heart pieces in a tin and out of sight.

When looking at a doctor medical kit there are certain things that are included to look at person to check their physical health. Parent/carer speak to your child

The doctors use the stethoscope to check that your lungs are working OK



Otoscope to check that they are nothing wrong with your hearing



Reflex hammer is used to check that there is nothing wrong with their head



They use the thermometer to check to see whether you have a temperature and if you have an infection.

When the doctor see you have an infection they give you medication to make you feel better.

All these things help and care for you physically.

Give the heart pieces to the child - Even when you are sad, and you feel you heart has been broken into pieces, let's explore ways in which the heart can be made to feel better. Allow the child to put the pieces of the heart together with the plaster – writing on the plaster how that part of the heart is fixed. For example – child may say friends, family help me feel better, walking outside etc.

I often tell the children about the story about a broken bowl in Japan. A Japanese man broke his favourite bowl and sent it away to China to be fixed, it returned with ugly staples, the man was so unhappy he asked local people if they could find a better way to repair it. They returned it having laced the cracks with gold, highlighting the bowls imperfections and flaws.

Even though the bowl is broken it can still act as a bowl. We are like the bowl, even though there maybe parts of us that are broken, we still have a purpose and place in life. Our imperfections make us stronger and more beautiful, just like the Japanese bowl, which is a famous art form.



## **Useful links**

Anxiety – [www.anxiety.org.uk](http://www.anxiety.org.uk)  
[www.nhs.uk/apps-library/thinkninja](http://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/thinkninja)

Bereavement – [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)  
[www.onceuponasmile.org.uk](http://www.onceuponasmile.org.uk)  
[www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)

Support for both parents/carers and child on variety of mental health issues  
[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Eating disorders [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

If the child is wanting online support with counsellors to use [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

Abuse support and prevention [www.stockportwithoutabuse.org.uk](http://www.stockportwithoutabuse.org.uk)

Suicide Prevention and support [www.stockportsuicideprevention.org.uk](http://www.stockportsuicideprevention.org.uk)

Self harm [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

Drug and Alcohol support [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)  
[mosaic@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:mosaic@stockport.gov.uk)

Signposting and support [counsellingsupport@stockport-academy.org](mailto:counsellingsupport@stockport-academy.org)