



Mental Health and Wellbeing

A Guide for Parents and Carers



Facts & Figures

- One in ten, 5 to 16 year olds suffers with their Mental Health, a number which is rising.
- At least 3% of children suffer from anxiety disorders but relatively few are referred for treatment
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from depression. Over 8000 children under the age of 10 suffer from severe depression.

What is anxiety?

- An emotion
- A type of fear or strong feeling about a situation
- A sense of uncertainty
- Lasts a short time or can be more prolonged
- There are many types of anxiety and everyone's experience of anxiety can be different




Fear

Panic

Dread

Uncertainty

Tension



Anxiety is normal.

It is the basis of Survival because it prepares our bodies to cope with danger-Humans are primed for survival to respond to situations where there are dangers or threats.

Some of us, including some children, react more quickly or more intensely to situations that might indicate danger.

- ▶ Sometimes stressful events trigger problems with anxiety.
- ▶ Learning may also play a part in the development of an anxiety disorder. They may learn that the world is a dangerous place.
- ▶ Family member's responses to the world can contribute to the child's ideas about what is dangerous or not.

Types of Anxiety

- ▶ **Generalised anxiety disorder** –worrying about everything and anything, such as things that might happen, past behaviours, schoolwork or how popular they are. Feeling always on edge or restless.
- ▶ **Panic attacks**-intense and overwhelming feeling of panic, terror or fear. Lasts for a short time. Difficulty breathing, heart palpitations, dizzy and faint. Feeling of loss of control.
- ▶ **Specific phobias**-an exaggerated feeling about the level of danger from a situation, thing or object. Common phobias for children-needles, water, the dark, being sick or vomit, animals and insects.
- ▶ **Complex phobias e.g. Social phobia** –extreme shyness and fears of being seen in a negative light or judged. Fear of making a fool of themselves.
- ▶ **Separation anxiety** –fear and distress at being away from a member of the family. Commonly a fear that something bad will happen to a loved one when they are separated. Refusing to go to school and not wanting to sleep alone.
- ▶ **Health anxiety**-focusing obsessively on their health, body and symptoms, worrying about dying.
- ▶ **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder** –repetitive, intrusive and unwanted thoughts, often about dirt or germs, something bad happening, causing harm to others or failing to prevent harm. May have compulsions or rituals they feel they need to do otherwise something bad will happen.

Signs of anxiety in school

- Wanting things to be perfect
- Reluctance to ask for help
- Difficulty joining in social activities with peers
- Stomach pains and headaches
- Fearful of test situations or performing in front of others
- Upset when leaving parents

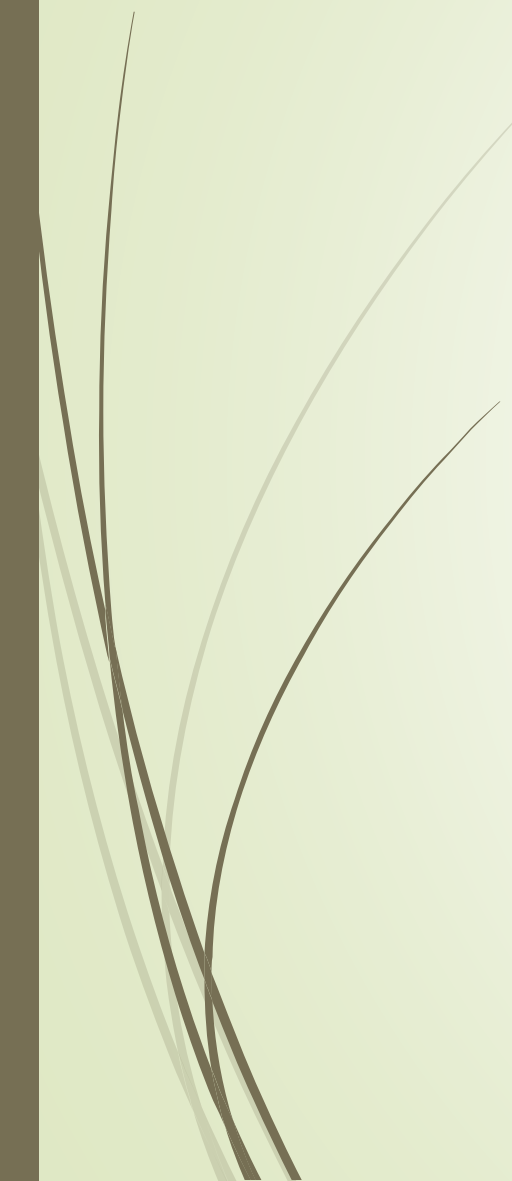
In anxiety, the main feelings are of insecurity or fear.

As well as unpleasant feelings, anxiety can affect children in many other ways such as:

- Hyperventilating, rapid heart rate, dizziness,
- trembling, nausea, stomach aches, head ache,
- bed wetting , difficulty with sleeping,
- nightmares, tics....
- Difficulty with concentration, distractability etc



How we can help...

- ▶ Encourage your child to talk about how their body feels when they experience different types of feelings
 - ▶ Share examples of your own body clues.
 - ▶ Notice your child's physical complaints
 - ▶ If they complain of a tummy ache/headache etc, explain that it might be their body's way of telling them something e.g. are they feeling worried or nervous about something?
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Encouraging a Positive Mindset

- **Red THOUGHTS** vs. **Green (POWERFUL) THOUGHTS**
- **“I’m dumb”**
- **“I’m ok at lots of things”**
- **“I give up”**
- **“If I try I’ll get better.”**
- **“I hate my sister/ brother”**
- **“I find my brother/ sister annoying sometimes, but other times they are fun to play with”**
- **“I have no friends”**
- **“I have 2 people I play with and my dog is my friend”**



What you can do to help your child with anxiety or anger

- ▶ **Be prepared to allow time for them to work things through**
- ▶ All children go through stages of feeling anxious or angry and they can show this in lots of ways, for example, tantrums, crying, sleeping problems or fighting with siblings. They might be adapting to a change in the family or in their school life, or just trying out new emotions, and will generally grow out of worrying behaviour with family support
- ▶ **Spend time talking about feelings and behaviour**
- ▶ Talk to your child: Even young children can understand about feelings and behaviour if you give them a chance to talk about it. Take it gently and give them examples of what you mean, for example, 'When you can't get to sleep, is there anything in your mind making you worried?'
- ▶ **Be consistent**
- ▶ Try and sort out how to deal with the behaviour with the child's other parent together so you are using the same approach, and can back each other up. Children are quick to spot if parents disagree, and can try and use this to get their own way.
- ▶ **Young Minds - PARENTS HELPLINE-0808 802 5544**



Teaching about Resilience

- ▶ Not all stress is bad e.g. a bit of adrenaline is good to enable high performance in sports /exams
- ▶ Teach Coping Strategies for times when things are not going well
- ▶ Help individuals to recognise their strengths
- ▶ Teach how to externalise problems
- ▶ Problem Solve with them -Actively listen -help them to think about all possible approaches
- ▶ Encourage rehearsal for how they would manage a stressful situation
- ▶ Teach relaxation techniques

Childhood Depression

Childhood Depression


- Depression occurs when **sad feelings** do not go away, and when they overwhelm a person and stop them from doing the things they normally do.
- Children and young people may show it in a different way to adults.
- The defining characteristic of depression, and what sets it apart from anxiety (and grief) is **lowered self-esteem**.

Signs of depression may include:

- Marked loss interest in activities/school refusal.
- Irritability and moodiness beyond the normal range/tearfulness
- Defiance or violent outbursts/disruptive behaviour at school
- Lack of confidence; low self esteem; blaming themselves if things go wrong
- Becoming very withdrawn
- Self-injury
- Sleeping very little or too much



Protective Factors

- ▶ **Attachment/Affection**
 - ▶ **How we pay attention**
 - ▶ **Positive thinking style**
 - ▶ **Support networks** (extended family, community and friendships)
 - ▶ **Health factors** (sleep, daily physical activity, healthy eating)
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Where else can you access support?

- •The School Nurse
- •G.Ps
- •Paediatricians.
- •Educational Psychology services.
- •Family support workers.
- •Social workers
- •Counsellors/therapists.



Support in School

BE SUPPORTIVE AND UNDERSTANDING

- **Recognise that everyone experiences life challenges that can make them vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support.**

HAVE A POSITIVE SCHOOL ETHOS

- **Promote a mentally healthy school environment through a positive and caring ethos, promoting our values and encouraging a sense of belonging.**

TRAIN OUR STAFF

- **Make sure all teachers are able to recognise the signs and triggers to look out for regarding emotional difficulties or mental health problems.**

TRACK WELLBEING NOT JUST ACADEMIC PROGRESS

- **Identify difficulties and track pupil's wellbeing needs and progress**

IDENTIFY EXTERNAL SPECIALIST SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT

Understanding Emotions

- We will help children learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them.





Any Questions?

► Contacts and Support

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

www.actionforchildren.org.uk

