

Anxiety, Worries and Stress

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With thanks to Dr Emma Sinclair, Clinical Psychologist (First Steps).



What would you like to get out of today?

- What would we need to talk about to be helpful for you?
- What questions do you have about anxiety/stress/worries?



Ground Rules



- Mental health is an emotive issue
- Please take time out if necessary
- Use of personal material
- Confidentiality -what's shared, stays in the room

Mental Health is a Spectrum..



Healthy

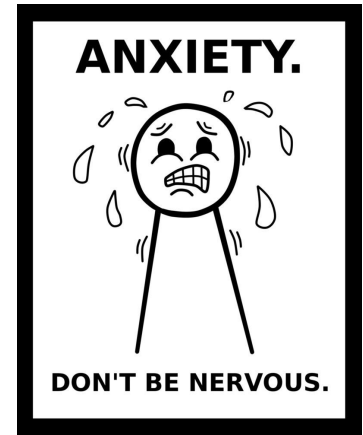
Coping

Struggling

Unwell

What is Anxiety?

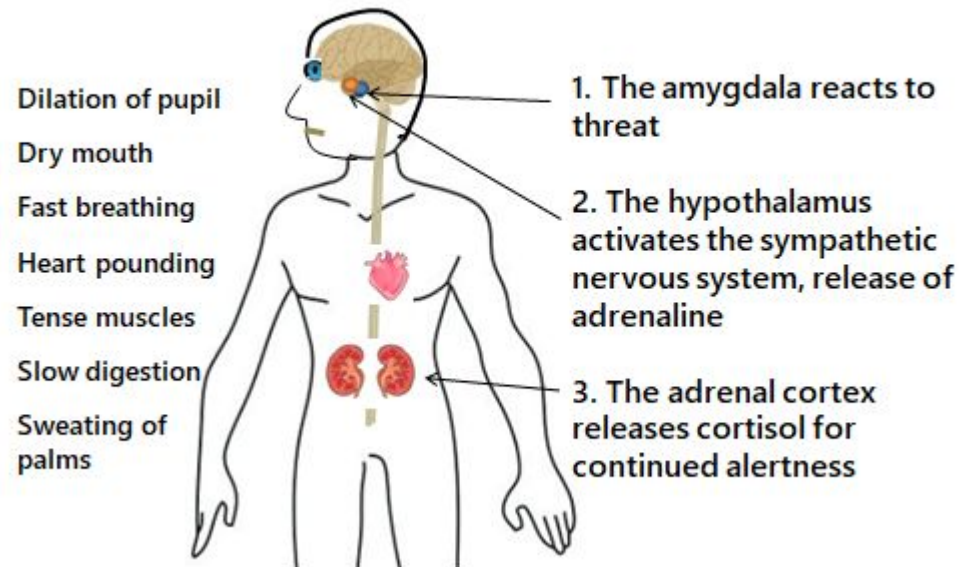
- What words/thoughts/images come to mind when you hear the word anxiety?



What is anxiety?

- Normal response to something stressful
- Fight/Flight response
- Becomes a problem when it causes a problem

The fight or flight response



Anxiety at different ages



- Infants and toddlers

Loud noises, abrupt movements, separation (8-10 months), strangers (6-8 months), anything outside their control (1 year)



Preschoolers (3-6 years)

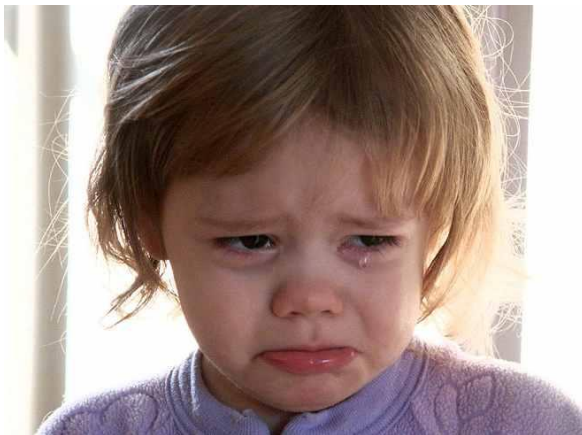
Change, monsters under the bed, scary things on tv/films, separation, the dark.

Anxiety at different ages

- 7-11 years
Something bad happening to loved ones, death, being rejected/not accepted by peers



What might anxiety look like?





**What can we do to
support Anxiety?**

Behaviour as a communication

Three key questions to think about:

- What is the developmental age and stage of the child?
- What changes in the environment have occurred no matter how small?
- What is the child's ability to communicate their needs (what is your child trying to tell you through their behaviour?)



Containment

- Containment is where a person receives and understands the emotional communication of another without being overwhelmed by it and communicates this back to the other person. This process can restore the ability to think in the other person.
- Our role may be to help children contain their anxieties and stresses.



Less helpful strategies

Tell me what's wrong, what is it, use your words, I can't help if I don't know what's wrong...

Don't be silly

Let's not do that again

You'll be fine

Helpful Strategies

Why don't we check
under the bed and
have a cuddle and
then go back to bed

How is this
making me feel?

How are you feeling?
Are you feeling
worried about
something?

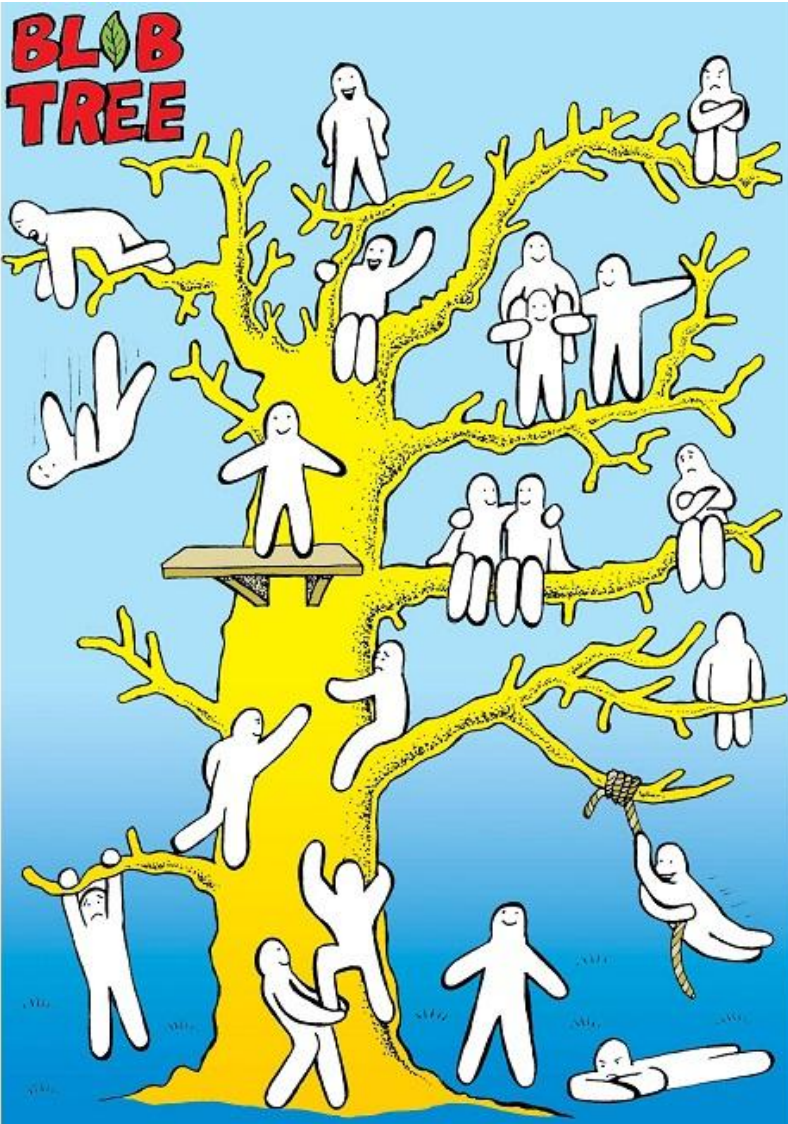
Why don't we try
and do it again
together?

I know it feels scary,
why don't we plan how
we're going to say hello
again when I pick you
up?

The oxygen mask principle



If a child finds it hard to talk..



Happy



Sad



Silly



Proud



Annoyed



Surprised



Excited



Angry



Worried



Scared



Love



Sick



Calm



Bored



Sleepy



Hungry



Embarrassed



Ashamed



Jealous



Worn-out

Externalising



'Externalising' can help to explore a child's relationship with an emotion or behaviour, which changes over time

How can the child gain more control of their emotions?

When were the times they were able to feel more in control?

Strategies to help reduce anxiety

CALM DOWN WITH TAKE 5 BREATHING

1. Stretch your hand out like a star.
2. Get your pointer finger ready to trace your fingers up and down.
3. Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
4. Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
5. Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down. Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.



How do you feel now?
Are you calm or would you
like to take another 5 breaths?

Strategies to help reduce anxiety

Belly Breathing

1. Stand, sit or lie down comfortably in a quiet place.



2. Close your eyes and loosen any tense muscles. Make sure to relax your shoulders.



3. Place one hand on your upper chest and another on your belly button.



4. Breathe in slowly through your nose for *three seconds*. Feel your stomach expand. Your chest should remain still.



5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for *three seconds*. Feel your stomach move back.



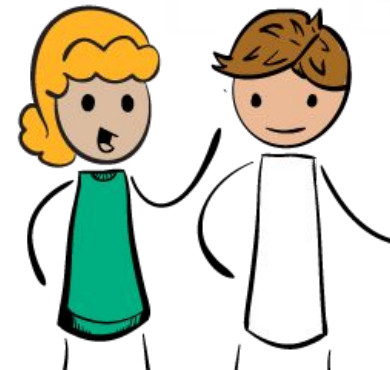
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5. Gradually increase the time you take to breathe in and out.

Four seconds in and four seconds out, five seconds in and five seconds out.....

Strategies to help reduce anxiety



**3 minute
moan**





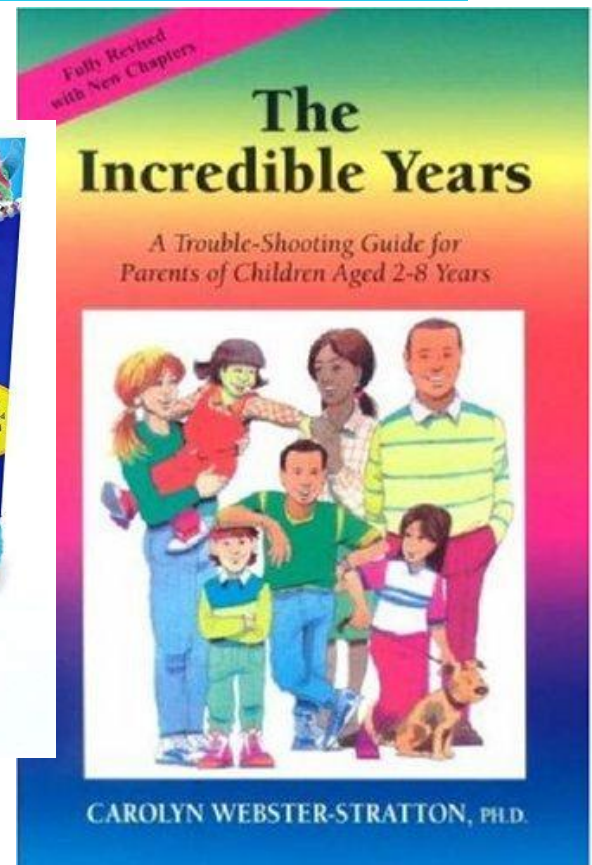
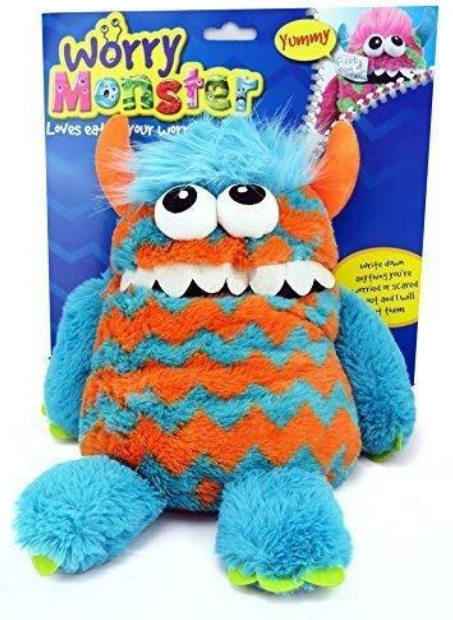
Mind Full, or Mindful?

Resources

Little Parachutes - www.littleparachutes.com

The Incredible Years

Worry Monsters



Who else can help?



Thank you!

Any questions?

