



Parent Support Booklet

Anxiety

Determination

Honesty

Readiness

Respect

Spark

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal, human feeling of fear or panic. When we face stressful situations, it can set off our brain's in-built alarm bell system, which tells us something isn't right and that we need to deal with it. Our brain wants the difficult situation to go away, so it makes us feel more alert, stops us thinking about other things, and even pumps more blood to our legs to help us run away.

Most of us worry sometimes – about things like friendships or money – and feel anxious when we're under stress, like at exam time. But afterwards we usually calm down and feel better.

But when you're not in a stressful situation, and you still feel worried or panicky, that's when anxiety can become a problem.

Celebrity vlogger Zoe Sugg (Zoella) revealed that she often suffers from anxiety, so she's had some professional help to learn tools and techniques that help her manage it and live a calmer life.

Just remember that if your child is struggling with anxiety or panic attacks, you're not alone.

The symptoms of anxiety

You might start out just feeling generally anxious, but if your symptoms get worse or last longer than they should, it could be time to get some support. Symptoms include:

- ⇒ feeling nervous, on edge, or panicky all the time
- ⇒ feeling overwhelmed or full of dread
- ⇒ feeling out of control
- ⇒ having trouble sleeping
- ⇒ low appetite
- ⇒ finding it difficult to concentrate
- ⇒ feeling tired and grumpy
- ⇒ heart beating really fast or thinking you're having a heart attack
- ⇒ having a dry mouth
- ⇒ trembling
- ⇒ feeling faint
- ⇒ stomach cramps and/or diarrhoea/needing to pee more than usual
- ⇒ sweating more than usual
- ⇒ wobbly legs
- ⇒ getting very hot



If your child is experience any of these symptoms above, it doesn't mean they definitely have an anxiety problem. But if any of them are affecting their everyday life, it's a good idea to encourage them to talk to someone they trust about how they are feeling.

What to do about anxiety

Feeling constant anxiety can be a sign that something in your life isn't right, and you may need some help figuring out what that is.

Talk to the Pastoral team

If they think your child is suffering from anxiety, whether mild or severe, they can suggest different types of treatment that might help. They can also offer regular check-ups to see how they are doing in school.

Anxiety is a very isolating experience, but they really are not alone.

Treating anxiety

There are many ways of treating anxiety. Here are some things you might want to try with your child or try using a combination, depending on what works best for your child.

Exercise

Increase the amount of exercise your child does. Exercise requires some concentration, and this can take their mind off the fear and anxiety. This is something that you can do together as a family or your child can do alone or part of a group.

Relax

Learning relaxation techniques can help you and your child with the mental and physical feelings of fear. It can help just to drop your shoulders and breathe deeply. Or imagine yourself in a relaxing place. They could also try learning things like yoga, meditation, massage, or listen to wellbeing podcasts from specialists like MIND and Mental Health Foundation.

Healthy eating

Poor diet impacts of mental health significantly. Encourage your child to eat lots of fruit and vegetables, and try to avoid too much sugar is a good starting point. Having a poor diet can lead to blood sugar dipping this can result in feelings of anxiousness. They need to try to avoid drinking too much tea and coffee, as caffeine can increase anxiety levels.

Complementary therapies

Some people find that complementary therapies or exercises, such as relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga, or t'ai chi, help them to deal with their anxiety.

Faith/spirituality

If your family are religious or spiritual, this can give your child a way of feeling connected to something bigger than themselves. Faith can provide a way of coping with everyday stress, and attending church and other faith groups can connect them with a valuable support network.

Talking therapies

Talking therapies, like counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, are very effective for people with anxiety problems, including Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which takes you through a series of self-help exercises on screen.[16] Visit your GP to find out more.

Medication

Drug treatments are sometimes used to provide short-term help, rather than looking at the root of the anxiety problems. Drugs may be most useful when they are combined with other treatments or support.

Support groups

You can learn a lot about managing anxiety from asking other people who have experienced it. Local support groups or self-help groups bring together people with similar experiences so that they can hear each other's stories, share tips and encourage each other to try out new ways to manage themselves. In

Coping Strategies

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens. ... When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future

Get more information— www.headspace.com/mindfulness

Regulating your breathing

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because when you breathe deeply, **it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax**. The brain then sends this message to your body

Visit www.xhailr.com to help regulate your breathing when anxious

Brain dumps

the act or an instance of comprehensively and uncritically expressing and recording one's thoughts and ideas

Once they have written as much as they can to clear their mind, you can take some time to look for patterns in their thoughts and add some order to the page. There are a few things they might do once you're done writing:

- **Sort thoughts.** They can start another page and sort their thoughts in groups or categories to help them see connections between things that have been on their mind. If they don't want to start a new page, use highlighters to sort the thoughts into categories using colour!
- **Prioritize thoughts.** If they notice the dump has a lot of things they need to get done. Turn the page and start a to-do list. They can prioritise the thoughts so they have a list that can help them make a plan of action! They can even add them to their bullet journal calendar spreads!
- **Walk away.** Once they have finished their brain dump and cleared their head, they can turn the page and continue on in their journal. Sometimes the act of getting it all out of their mind is enough!

If they are going to sort through their thoughts, recommend them stepping away and taking a break after they do their initial brain dump to give their mind a break. Then come back and do a bit of organizing to help turn it into something even more helpful. I also think it's important to mention another thing — **They don't have to do something with every item they put on paper in your brain dump!**

Students can find Brain dump sheets in our Wellbeing library or wellbeing room.

Journaling

Journaling is the act of keeping a record of your personal thoughts, feelings, insights, and more. It can be written, drawn, or typed. It can be on paper or on your computer. It's a simple, low-cost way of improving your mental health. It is something your child could do.

It isn't easy to start journaling. It can feel like work, and the expectation of writing every day may deter some people. But the positive effects of journaling can be felt even if it's not done daily.

Whether they are dealing with stress from school, burnout from work, an illness, or anxiety, journaling can help in many ways. **It can reduce anxiety.** Journaling about feelings is linked to decreased mental distress. **It helps with brooding.** Writing about an emotional event can help break away from the nonstop cycle of obsessively thinking and brooding over what happened — but the timing matters. Some studies show that writing about a traumatic event immediately after it happens may actually make you feel worse.

There are many ways of treating anxiety. You might try one, or end up using a combination, depending on what works best for you.

Exercise

Increase the amount of exercise you do. Exercise requires some concentration, and this can take your

Journaling

Journaling is the act of keeping a record of your personal thoughts, feelings, insights, and more. It can be written, drawn, or typed. It can be on paper or on your computer. It's a simple, low-cost way of improving your mental health. It is something your child could do.

It isn't easy to start journaling. It can feel like work, and the expectation of writing every day may deter some people. But the positive effects of journaling can be felt even if it's not done daily.

Whether they are dealing with stress from school, burnout from work, an illness, or anxiety, journaling can help in many ways. **It can reduce anxiety.** Journaling about feelings is linked to decreased mental distress. **It helps with brooding.** Writing about an emotional event can help break away from the nonstop cycle of obsessively thinking and brooding over what happened — but the timing matters. Some studies show that writing about a traumatic event immediately after it happens may actually make you feel worse.

There are many ways of treating anxiety. Your child might try one, or end up using a combination, depending on what works best for them.

Exercise

Increase the amount of exercise they are doing. Exercise requires some concentration, and this can take their mind off the fear and anxiety.

Relax

Learning relaxation techniques can help them with the mental and physical feelings of fear. It can help just to drop their shoulders and breathe deeply. Get them to imagine them selves in a relaxing place. they could also try learning things like yoga, meditation, massage, or listen to wellbeing podcasts from specialists like MIND and Mental Health Foundation.

Healthy eating

Encourage them to eat lots of fruit and vegetables, and try to avoid too much sugar. Eating too much sugar can result in dips in their blood sugar this can give them an anxious feeling. Try to avoid them drinking too much tea and coffee, as caffeine can increase anxiety levels.

Complementary therapies

Some people find that complementary therapies or exercises, such as relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga, or t'ai chi, help them to deal with their anxiety.

Faith/spirituality

If you or your family are religious or spiritual, this can give them, a way of feeling connected to something bigger than themselves. Faith can provide a way of coping with everyday stress, and attending church and other faith groups can connect them with a valuable support network.

Talking therapies

Talking therapies, like counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, are very effective for people with anxiety problems, including Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which takes them through a series of self-help exercises on screen.[16] Visit their GP to find out more.

Medication

Drug treatments are sometimes used to provide short-term help, rather than looking at the root of the anxiety problems. Drugs may be most useful when they are combined with other treatments or support.[

Support groups

They can learn a lot about managing anxiety from asking other people who have experienced it. Local support groups or self-help groups bring together people with similar experiences so that they can hear each other's stories, share tips and encourage each other to try out new ways to manage themselves. In school they can talk to the wellbeing team and they can help to refer them for some support in school.



BRAIN BUMP



Helping your child with anxiety

Tip 1: Respond to their anxiety in the right way

This may sound intuitive, but as a parent dealing with a child who has anxiety it's important you remain as calm and hopeful as possible. The way you respond to your child's thoughts and behaviors can have a significant impact on their ability to cope.

Talk to your child about their worries

Start a conversation with your child by asking them to express their feelings about their worries. Simply telling a child not to worry or to stop thinking about their problems is neither supportive nor validating. It's better to reassure your child that it's okay for them to be scared, and emphasize that you will be there to help them every step of the way.

If your child has difficulty explaining how they feel, ask them to communicate this in the form of a story. By stepping outside of themselves, your child may feel more comfortable and better able to describe their feelings and emotions.

Show concern and understanding

Expressing encouragement and compassion, combined with a collaborative approach to find workable solutions, can be a powerful tool. Research indicates that maternal empathy has a significant impact on alleviating distress in children.

Let your child know that anxiety is nothing to be ashamed of and that you're there to help them understand what makes them anxious and find ways to manage it. This teamwork approach is a shared bond between you and your child, while also fostering your child's ability to tolerate their own anxiety.

Be supportive but not controlling

The key is to help your child manage their anxiety but not be too overprotective in an attempt to eliminate it. By listening attentively and expressing empathy, you're already providing a great deal of support.

You can also talk through ways of handling different situations. If your child has [separation anxiety](#), for example; was at a friend's house and feeling worried about getting back home, brainstorm appropriate responses. Your child could ask the friend's mom what time you'll be picking them up, for example, or they could ask the mum to call you to find out what time you'll be there. Having strategies like these in place can help reassure your child and reduce feelings of anxiety.

Build your child's coping skills

Rather than avoiding your child's anxiety triggers, you can help them develop effective coping strategies. Giving frequent positive feedback will encourage your child to feel more capable and self-confident. Set small goals that are both realistic and achievable. Each time a goal is reached, you can say "I'm so proud of the way you handled the situation and worked through your anxiety."

Make a point of praising your child's effort whenever they exhibit any type of resilience or face their fears. If a setback occurs, reassure your child that this is not a failure but a learning experience that will help them overcome future obstacles. Talk to them about what they could change the next time around to have a better outcome. They'll feel more empowered as they take control of the situation

Helping your child with anxiety

Tip 2: Be a positive role model for your child

Your child looks up to you and needs your guidance in showing them how to manage stress and anxiety. The way you deal with frustration and express anger is a prime example. Try to remain calm and patient as possible when dealing with problems and challenging situations. The way you speak and what you speak about can also have a huge influence on even a difficult teenager's values and behavior.

Parents who take care of themselves by getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and eating a healthy diet can encourage their children to do the same. If you practice yoga, meditation, or other relaxation techniques, your children are likely to pay more attention to their own well-being. Avoid making negative comments about your own body, though, since this can lead to poor self-image and body shaming.

Modeling a healthy approach to life can also teach your children valuable lessons. We all make mistakes and children should realize that although parents have flaws, they can still successfully overcome adversity. This can help remove unnecessary pressures that may contribute to your child's anxiety.

Tip 3: Practice relaxation techniques with your child

Offer to do some deep breathing or meditation exercises with your child. This will acknowledge how they are feeling and provide proactive relaxation strategies that you can try together. When children are anxious, their breathing usually becomes shallow. You can try deep belly breathing in which your child places one hand on their chest and the other on their belly. When they inhale their belly should expand and when they exhale, their belly should contract.

Mindful breathing consists of focusing on breathing and bringing attention to the present moment. Have your child close their eyes and breathe slowly in and out. While they breathe, they can scan their body for areas of tension. They can then visualize a feeling of warmth and comfort to ease the discomfort in these areas.

Older children and teens may also enjoy exploring various types of yoga, meditation, guided imagery, and other relaxation techniques.

Turning off cell phones and social media and tuning into their "happy place" is great skill to practice each day. Your teen can summon up a specific memory or situation that makes them feel calm, secure, and content. Maybe this is associated with spending time on the beach, a vacation spot that was peaceful, or being surrounded by nature. Using visualization of beautiful images or pleasant sounds is an ideal way to tap into this state of relaxation.

Helping your child with anxiety

Tip 4: Promote good sleep hygiene

Since anxious children often have trouble sleeping, establishing a predictable and relaxing sleep routine is essential. Set a regular sleep schedule, curtailing exercise and reducing exposure to light close to bedtime, and avoiding caffeine.

Make sure your child feels comfortable and safe at bedtime, with minimal distractions to help them fall asleep. Their bedroom should be cool, quiet and cozy. Screen-time on computers, phones, TVs, or video games should be curtailed at least one hour before bedtime. This is an ideal time to read to your child or listen to soft, calming music. A younger child may also feel more secure with a nightlight on or having a stuffed animal or soft blanket to comfort them.

Tip 5: Encourage healthy social media use

Since studies reveal both its beneficial and harmful effects, having discussions with children about the pros and cons of social media is a good place to start.

Instead of simply trying to force your child to put their phone away—which may only add to their anxiety—there are more positive steps you can take:

- Set a good example to your child by limiting your own screen time and involvement with social media.
- Encourage your child to socialize more with friends in person and participate in creative activities rather than focus on the number of “likes” their social media posts attract. If screen exposure doesn’t become a habit early on, children will learn how to occupy themselves in other ways.
- Set aside a designated time when the whole family is screen-free from phones and computers. This can be a daily activity for a short period of time, or over a weekend when you’re occupied with family activities.
- Remind teens especially that the images they see on social media are often digitally altered and not an accurate representation of real-life. Similarly, posts about parties or events they weren’t invited to are often made to look more fun than they really were.
- Encourage your child to cut ties with those who post negative comments about them and urge them to be responsible when posting comments about others. Teens especially can be impulsive and not realize the content they’re sharing may be hurtful or inappropriate.

Decrease screen time if social media is impacting your child’s schoolwork, sleep, or involvement in outside activities.

Helplines and phone support available for your child

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger



Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis

If you need urgent help text YM to **85258**

All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors

Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Samaritans



If you're in distress and need support, you can ring Samaritans for free at any time of the day or night.

Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland):

116 123 (24 hours)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Childline



If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem big or small

**Freephone 24h
helpline: 0800 1111**

[Sign up for a childline account](#) on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address

Chat 1:1 with an [online advisor](#)

The Mix



If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.

**Freephone: 0808 808 4994
(13:00-23:00 daily)**

SupportLine



Offers confidential emotional telephone support in the UK for men, women, children and young adults.

Helpline: 01708 765200

Email: info@supportline.org.uk

SHOUT UK



Text SHOUT to 85258 for free 24/7 crisis support.

Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Linked to the Heads Together Campaign.

HOPELINE UK



Run by Papyrus – the charity for prevention of young suicide

For children and young people under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide

For anyone concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and practical advice.

Call: 0800 068 4141

Text: 07860039967

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Opening hours:

9am – 10pm weekdays, 2pm – 10pm weekends, 2pm

– 10pm bank holidays

MARPLE HALL SCHOOL WELLBEING SUPPORT

Check Your Battery

How are you feeling?



MENTAL health CHECK IN:

How I feel	
How I feel	
How I feel	
How I feel	
How I feel	
How I feel	
How I feel	
How I feel	

There are lots of ways to get help for your wellbeing at school and to get involved in wellbeing activities. Our wellbeing strategy is all about building the tools to **look after ourselves, look after each other and to seek help when we need it.**

There is lots more information on the website, around the school, on the Pastoral Hub, in tutor periods and from members of staff. If you have any questions please contact your **form tutor, Pastoral Manager, Head of Year, the Wellbeing team, any member of staff** of email wellbeing@marplehall.stockport.sch.uk you can also follow our wellbeing on Instagram @mhswellbeing

Counselling services online

Your online mental wellbeing community
Free, safe and anonymous support

www.Kooth.com

kooth

Support for parents of children with mental health concerns

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger



Call our Parents Helpline for detailed advice, emotional support and signposting about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

You can call us for free on 0808 802 5544 from 9:30am - 4pm, Monday - Friday.

- **Our Parents Helpline is available in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.**
- **You'll get through to a trained adviser who will listen and talk through your concerns in complete confidence.**
- **Your adviser will help you to understand your child's behaviour and give you practical advice on what to do next.**

If you need further help, they'll arrange for one of our independent, experienced professionals to call you for a 50-minute telephone consultation within seven days

Turning Point



They offer a variety of different levels of support for parents/carers and the child.

Please visit the website on -

www.turning-point.co.uk

Fill in the contact form for more assistance.

Facebook



There are lots of support groups that have been set up by professionals to help assist parents/carers with their children's mental health. These are a great source of support for you as a parent/carers.

Suggested groups—

Parenting Mental Health

Parenting helping their teen daughters' mental health

CAMHS and Mental Health Services Support Group for Parents.

Charities



Parenting Mental Health is a registered charity that supports, connects and educates parents of young people with mental health issues.

www.parentingmentalhealth.org