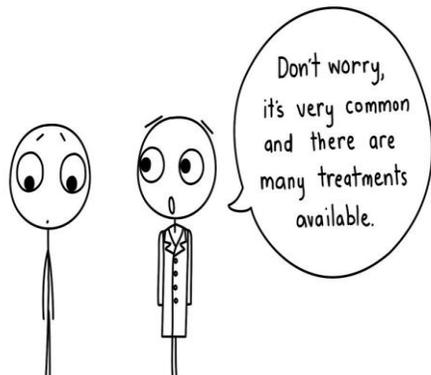


Childhood Mental Health Statistics

Did you know?

- o 3 pupils in every classroom suffer from a diagnosable mental health condition, rising to 1 in 4 when you include emotional distress
- o 90% of school leaders have reported an increase in the number of students experiencing anxiety or stress over the last five years
- o **80% of young people say that exam pressure has significantly impacted their mental health**
- o 50% of mental health problems are established by the age of 14 (*Hagell 2015*)
- o 1 in 6 young people are affected by an anxiety problem at some point in their lives (*Childline*)

*Young Minds - Wise Up campaign
April 2017 - Prioritising Wellbeing in Schools*



Further Help

Useful Websites

www.minded.org.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.samaritans.org.uk
www.familylives.org.uk
www.nspcc.org.uk
www.childline.org.uk
www.nice.org.uk
www.wheresyourheadat.co.uk

Useful Books

Overcoming your child's fears and worries - by Cathy Creswell & Lucy Willetts
Starving the Anxiety Gremlin - by Kate Collins-Donnelly
Huge bag of Worries - Virginia Ironside & Frank Rodgers
What to do when you worry too much - Dawn Huebner & Bonnie Matthews



Is my child Anxious?

Self-Help Guide for Parents

Partners in the Christchurch Family Partnership Zone
have devised this resource

Anxiety – What is it?



Anxiety is a normal human emotion felt by everybody; it is a feeling of fear or panic experienced by most people in reaction to stressful circumstances. Everybody has a natural built-in stress reaction – **'Fight, Flight or Freeze'**. We can experience this response when we are confronted with real or imaginary threats. The purpose of these stress reactions is to alert us to danger.

Anxiety is down to how we **perceive** situations. Some people's reactions can be overly sensitive, triggering an anxiety response that is out of kilter with the perceived threat. Anxiety causes problems when anxious feelings remain or become stronger even after the stressful situation or event has passed. We can manage these feelings by facing the threat, removing ourselves from the situation, or recognising that there is actually nothing to worry about.

What to do if you spot an Anxiety Problem?

Is it normal?

Many parents/carers are unsure if their child's behaviour is something to be worried about or if it is normal behaviour for a child their age.

Anxiety is a normal emotion felt by everybody and there are times when it is to be expected, e.g. around exam time or when transitioning between teachers or schools.

Normal worries might also include concern over going to a party alone or the ability to form new friendships and fit in.

Remember, worrying is normal! Everybody worries and feels anxious at certain times in their lives.

Some people may feel panicky or experience symptoms that leave them feeling like they might be sick. Other examples could include: angry outbursts, low confidence, thinking bad things are going to happen, avoidance of situations, difficulty concentrating, clinging to parents/carers, seeking reassurance, poor sleep, feeling shaky, legs turning to jelly, stomach aches, breathing fast, tearfulness, or having headaches ...

Anxiety can also affect learning at school, motivation and personal relationships.

Normalise the anxiety. Explain that everyone worries and feels anxious at times. Listen to your child; try to understand what they are feeling anxious about and whether it is causing problems in their daily life. Praise their ability to talk about their worries to you. This can be difficult to carry out but it is a very important first step in overcoming anxiety.



What else can help?

- o Talk it through so they feel calmer and more comfortable
- o Encourage writing a diary or keeping a 'happy thoughts' journal
- o Challenge negative thoughts and boost their confidence
- o Use relaxation techniques, breathing exercises can control panic attacks
- o Problem solve, explore solutions together and choose the best one
- o Distraction through walking, reading or hobbies. Reduce technology/tablet/phone use.
- o Live healthily can improve moods, so remove caffeine, energy drinks and reduce sugar intake
- o Encourage plenty of exercise and a good sleep routine
- o Encourage rewarding themselves when they manage their anxiety