

Sonning Church of England Primary School



Wellbeing Support Pack

What is this pack?

This pack contains information and strategies to use at home or in school to deal with stress and anxiety. As a school we are here to help you and we are always here for you no matter what. Mental health is something that we do not like to talk about and it can often not be seen by anyone other than the person dealing with it, but it should not be like that. You should be able to get support and help from people in school, but we know that sometimes you may need extra support from other agencies so we have included some of the links to these below. The rest of the pack has been developed to support you with strategies that you can use at home during this difficult time, nobody expected us to be off school for so long or for a virus to take over our lives, but we will be back together soon and remember we are here to support you throughout.



ChildLine is available to you if you have any concerns about:

- 1) Bullying
- 2) Abuse (physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, neglect)
- 3) Your body and self esteem
- 4) Your feelings
- 5) Friendships
- 6) Sexual advice
- 7) Home life and families



Young minds helps young people and adults who need support with their mental health.

This includes feeling low about things such as:

- a. Body Image
- b. Bullying
- c. Eating problems
- d. Stress
- e. Grief or loss
- f. Anger

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



Your online mental wellbeing community

Free, safe and anonymous support

<https://www.kooth.com/>



Contents Page

1. Dealing with Worries	Page 4
2. Anxiety Thermometer	Page 5
3. Worry Jar	Page 6
4. Worry Resolution Activity	Page 7
5. Sentence Starters	Page 9
6. Understanding Our Brain	Page 10
7. Our Bodies Reaction	Page 12
8. My Body and My Thoughts	Page 13
9. Mental Health Thermometer	Page 14
10. Suggested Strategies and Breathing	Page 15
11. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Grounding Technique	Page 16
12. Calm Bottle/Jar	Page 17
13. Calm/Safe Space and Trusted Adults	Page 18
14. Using Stories to Support Emotions	Page 19
15. Activity Books and Useful Apps	Page 20
16. Useful Websites and Books for Adults	Page 21
17. The Five Ways to Wellbeing	Page 22
18. Safeguarding and Wellbeing Contacts	Page 23

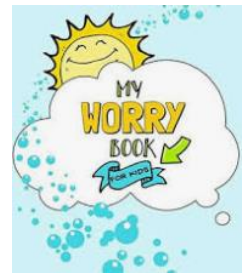
Dealing with Worries

Worries are a part of everyday life and often things will seem worse when you are alone or at night. This is because during the day and when you are in other people's company your mind is kept busy. You might think about the things that are worrying you, but they come and go. At night your brain has time to think and overthink things that have happened and you are in your own company. You might begin to panic and things happen to your body, such as you start to sweat, your heart begins to beat faster and you may even struggle for a breath. This is normal and we all go through this from time to time, but it is good to have strategies to deal with this when it happens. Here are some strategies that could help and a worry jar on the next page that you can use straight away.

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1. A worry book

This is a book that belongs to you and only you, you can write all of your worries in it as they come into your head. Getting them down on paper and looking at them can help as it allows them to leave your body and be something real rather than just in your head. If you want, you can invite someone you trust to read your worries at the end of the day, or whenever you want. This will give you a chance to talk about your worries and then get the advice of another person. You have to invite that person to read your book though as it belongs to you. A good idea would be to set some time aside each day, maybe even the same time to go through your worries.



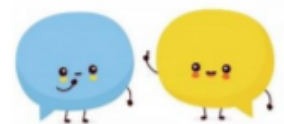
2. A worry monster

A worry monster is a soft toy that is very similar to the book above, the idea is that you write your worries on a piece of paper and then you put it inside the monster and zip up its mouth. This means that the monster has taken your worries from you and it now has them and you can see the monster taking your worries off you. You can buy the worry monsters with the zipped up mouths here <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Worry-Monster-Plush-Softorange/dp/B010NDN2IU> and on other websites. If you cannot buy a monster or to with a zip on its mouth, you could also just write your monster a note or tell it your worries. These are great as they do not judge you and all you are doing is offloading onto the monster. You can use other sealed items such as jars or money boxes and then the worries are locked away.



3. Talk to someone

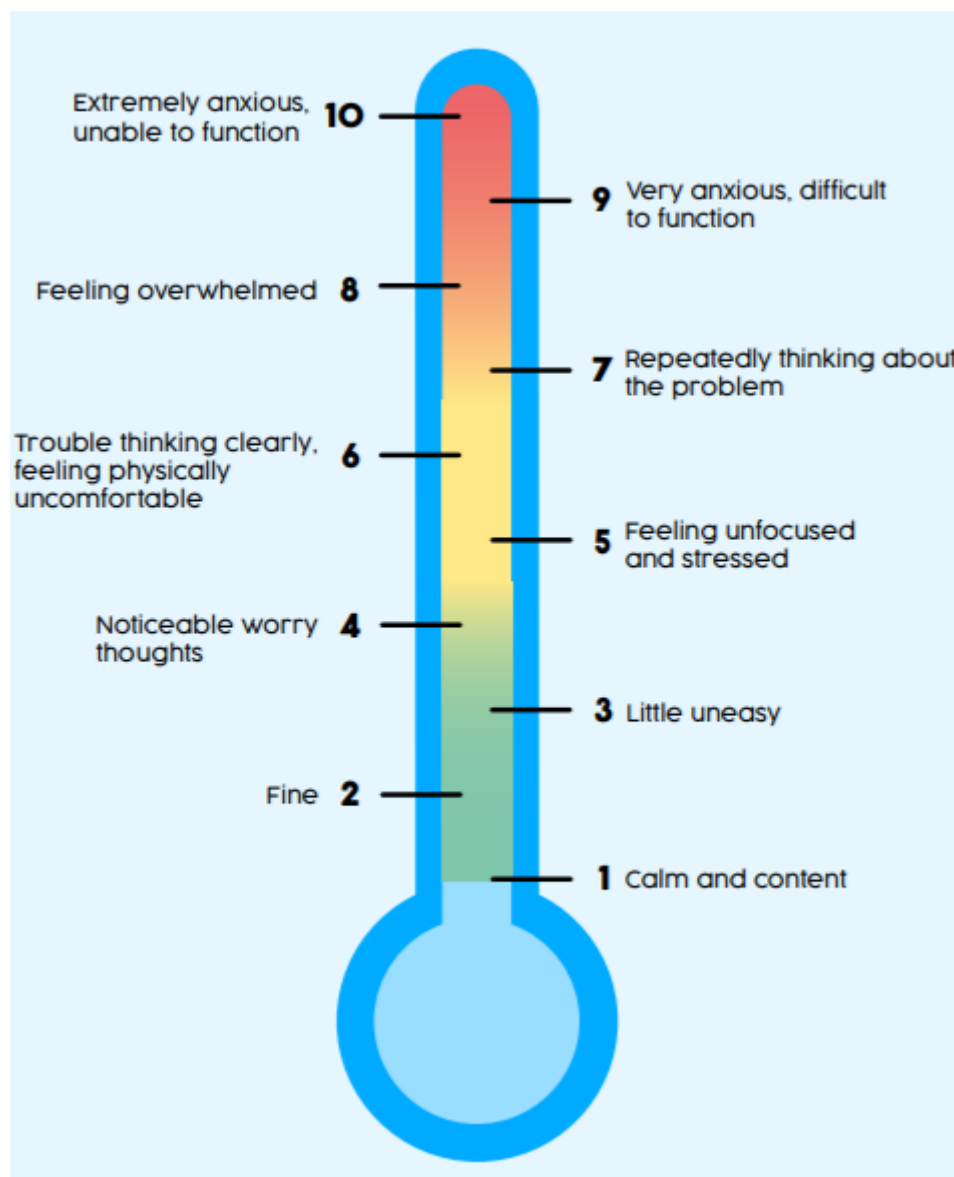
This is by far the best thing to do, but only if you feel comfortable with it and with someone that you trust. Opening up and speaking to someone allows you to get their views and support on what is happening. They may be able to offer you advice or get you some support from another professional. Bottling up your worries is not a good thing to do as they become overwhelming and can affect your mental and physical health.



Anxiety Thermometer

For child or young person Using a feelings thermometer is a great tool to help us recognise what feelings we might be experiencing in any given moment. Here is an Anxiety Thermometer. We can experience anxiety at different levels and intensities, and at times it can feel really uncomfortable and scary. A helpful strategy is becoming aware of what level our anxiety is at. If we can develop an understanding of our anxiety or worries, then this is the first step in learning strategies to manage or cope better. Anxiety may be triggered by different situations, and so using this tool can also help us recognise what situations make us feel more anxious or worried than others.

For adults It can be helpful to plan in advance with the pupil what strategy will be helpful for them, if they were to move up the thermometer. So for example, if they rate their anxiety as 3, 4 or 5, it may be that practicing some breathing techniques is a helpful strategy. However, if they are further up the scale, they may require more support. This may need some further planning and so it is important to use this Anxiety Thermometer tool in conjunction with other resources and supports.



A Worry Jar

This is a worry jar, if you are feeling stressed and worried about something then put it in the jar by writing it down. The top of the jar is sealed so that the worry cannot get out of it. Once it is locked in the jar it is time to think about the positives and negative of the worry and there can be positives that come from a worry, just think really hard, write these down and use two different colours to write them down, choose your favourite colour for the positives and another colour for the negatives. If you want, you can even share your worry with someone else so that they can help you, but you have to be comfortable to do this.



Worry Resolution Activity

This activity is good as a starting point to talk through emotions and worries you are having and hopefully find some resolve or solutions. It is helpful because it has a two-sided approach which helps to balance good things and worries/challenges. Writing our worries down clears the mind and helps to ease the way they can spin round at times. Taking each worry and talking about it with someone (or to yourself) helps find solutions. This task helps us to have control and not feel overwhelmed by everything and consider self-calm activities too.

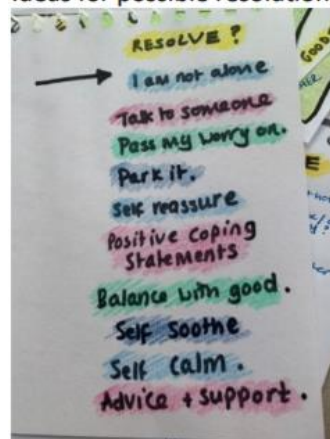
There are two stages to this activity.

1. Take the situation you are finding difficult (e.g. Covid-19, Returning to School, Transition, or anything) and create two lists of challenges and good things too. You could do this as using the hand template or as two lists. No age limit on either!

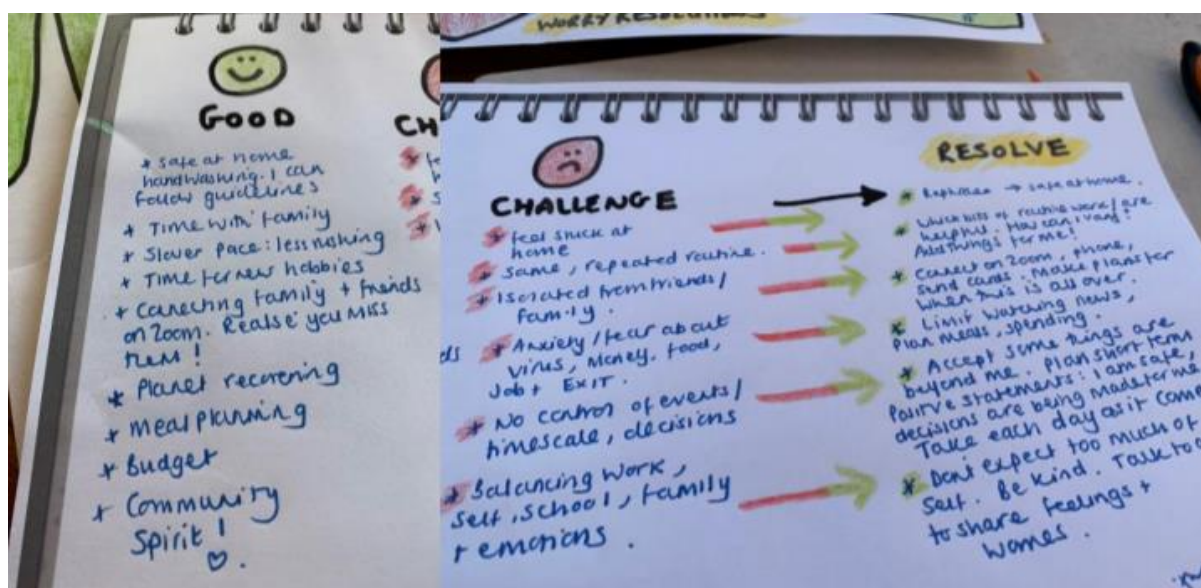


2. Talk about each worry or challenge individually. It helps to do this with someone else – but you can do it with yourself (It is ok to talk to yourself and answer by the way). For each worry – talk about what might help. Solutions or actions are different for all of us – and remember not all worries or problems have an instant solution. Talking about them though can help as can accepting that some things we cannot change.

Ideas for possible resolutions are:



An Example of Using the Worry Resolution Activity for COVID-19:



Sentence Starters

Sentence starters can be useful prompts for children who are struggling to order their thinking or express the way they feel. Children and young people can use them to communicate verbally or to write down their thoughts and feelings. They can also be used to encourage students to identify actions they can take to support their wellbeing and if written down they can refer back to them in times of difficulty. It could be helpful for this activity to be modelled by adults, with the adult completing a few of the sentences before the child completes theirs.

I feel...

I wish...

I need...

I hope...

I want...

I want to do more...

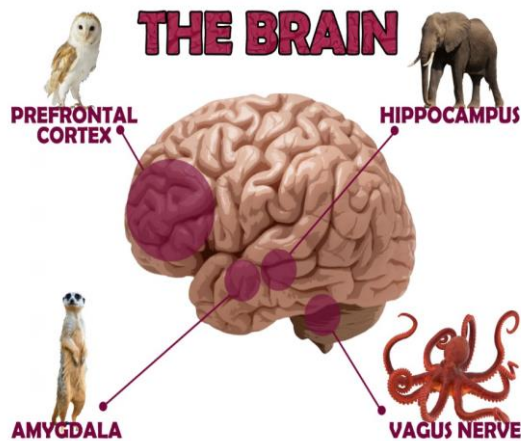
I want to do less...

I want to feel...

To feel this way I will...

If I get stuck I'll remember...

Understanding our Brain



Here are the 3 key areas of the brain:

The Amygdala (Meerkat)

This is our internal alarm centre which keeps us safe. This part of the brain is very reactive and whenever we feel under threat and upset it sends a message which releases adrenalin and cortisol, this is the fight, flight freeze response. It is important to know our brain reacts the same to a perceived threat as it would to a real threat and feeling threatened can mean many things to different people. When we are in a state of fear we cannot think of anything, our attention and focus is on survival.

The Hippocampus (Elephant)

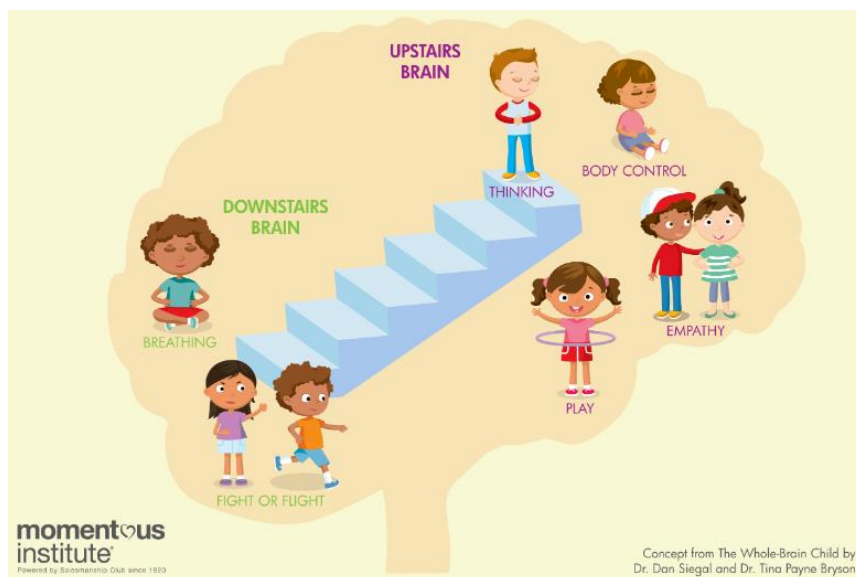
This part of the brain stores memories and how things made us feel. This is very important because it's how we associate relationships, objects, sounds, smells, places and how they made us feel. It has a big impact on how we store information.

The Prefrontal Cortex PFC (Owl)

This part of the brain is the most evolved and it is where we do our thinking, creating, organising, problem solving, imagination and language. This part of the brain is not fully developed until we are about 25 and slightly older for men. It is not fully online when we are young and needs to lots of help and support from caring, calm adults to be responsive and attuned. Here's the catch, in order for us to fully access the prefrontal cortex the amygdala has to be calm! We cannot fully access the PFC when we are stressed, upset and feel threatened.

When we feel stressed our bodies react in two ways, this is often called fight or flight. These are the body's natural defence mechanism and is something that our ancestors learnt a long time ago. When we are feeling good our brain is working in perfect harmony, this means that all the part of our brain are working together. The pictures and descriptions below should help you to understand your brain a little bit more through the 'Upstairs and Downstairs Brain' and 'Flipping your Lid' Hand Model.

Upstairs and Downstairs Brain



Our upper brain is working to process all of the information that is coming in as it is able to communicate with the mid brain as they are connected. This part of the brain is used for reasoning, making judgements and being able to socialise.

Our mid/lower brain is being hugged by the upper brain and so it is being protected and it is feeling safe. This part of the brain is often referred to as the 'cave man' part of our brain.

This part of our brain is responsible for our big emotions and when we lose control. Because it is being kept safe and communicating with the top part of our brain we feel calm.

Flipping Your Lid Model



Our upper brain has become overwhelmed with information and is no longer protecting our mid/lower brain and they are no longer connected. This means that it no longer has any influence over our emotions.






Our mid/lower brain is now free and our big emotions are now being displayed, this means that we may shout at people, hit out and say things that we do not mean.

Until the upper and lower brain are connected again, there will be no rational thought and it takes time for you to feel safe again and for the upper brain to hug the lower/mid brain again.

Sometimes we cannot control our emotions and we all have outbursts of emotion, this is okay, but we all need to learn our own triggers, our tolerance levels and also how to calm ourselves down. We all have strategies to do this and we all have things that we need and enjoy. Try to remember that things will settle down and you will feel calm again.

Our Body's Reaction

Our bodies react in different ways to stress and sometimes we need to work out what is happening to us and how we can deal with it, different parts of our body can be affected by stress. The next two sheets will help you think about what is going on in your body and how to come up with ways to control how you are feeling. On this sheet fill in any gaps and circle the statements that apply to you, green is okay and red means that you are not feeling as good as you could.

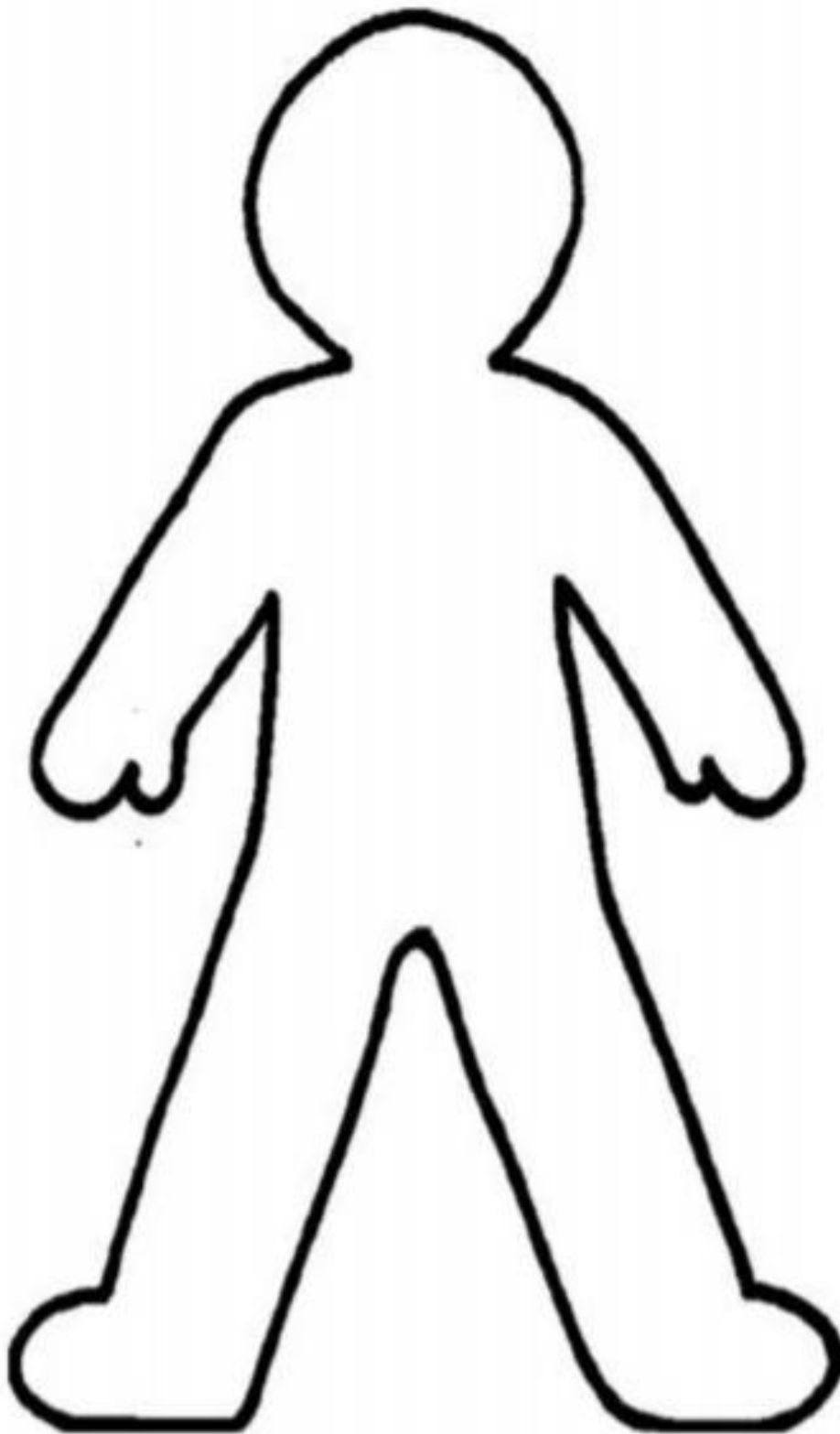
	<p><u>Brain</u></p> <p>Our brain is where we think about our worries and anxieties. If we are calm we can think clearly, if we feel anxious our brain overthinks everything</p>	<p>I am feeling really calm and in a good place. My thoughts are clear and I can think about good things that make me happy.</p>	<p>I am not feeling calm and I have lots of different thoughts in my head right now and I am worrying about things. I want to escape and get away from my thoughts</p>
	<p><u>Heart</u></p> <p>Our heart can tell us a lot about how we are feeling. Normal heart rate is 60/80 beats per minute. When we feel anxious our heart beats faster.</p>	<p>My heart is beating at a normal rate and rhythm. Measure your heart rate by finding and counting your pulse</p> <p>Heart rate _____bpm</p>	<p>My heart is beating faster than normal and it feels really in my chest. Measure your heart rate by finding and counting your pulse</p> <p>Heart rate _____bpm</p>
	<p><u>Tension</u></p> <p>We often feel stress and anxiety in our muscles and they might feel tight or like there is a ball in part of our body</p>	<p>My muscles do not feel any different and I feel okay</p>	<p>I feel like I have a tension in my muscles and a ball of worry in my body and it is _____</p> <p>(where in your body?)</p>
	<p><u>Hands and feet</u></p> <p>When we are stressed or anxious we tend to move our hands and feet more. We can pick or bite our nails or tap our feet against the floor or something we are by.</p>	<p>I am in control of my body and I feel calm, my hands and feet are not moving and I do not feel the need to fidget.</p>	<p>My body feels restless and I feel like I need to fidget with something, or bite or pick my nails or tap my feet against something. My legs and hands might even feel painful.</p>
	<p><u>Voice</u></p> <p>The way that we talk can change when we are stressed or anxious. We can either talk really quietly and not very much or very fast and a lot.</p>	<p>My voice is fine and I am talking normally.</p>	<p>I really don't want to talk to anyone and feel like I can't or I am talking really fast and talking about so much at once and some of it makes no sense.</p>

Other things that your body may also feel if you are anxious or stressed are:

<p><u>Sweat</u></p> <p>You will sweat more when you are stressed or anxious</p>	<p><u>Shaking</u></p> <p>Your body will shake more when you are stress or anxious</p>	<p><u>Feeling hot or cold</u></p> <p>Your body may feel hotter or colder if you are stressed of anxious</p>	<p><u>Emotions</u></p> <p>You may feel more emotional and cry if you are stressed or anxious</p>
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My Body and My Thoughts





On the outline of the body below, write down how your body feels and the changes that you have noticed. On the outside of the body write down all of the thoughts that you are having. This get you to think about how these thoughts are impacting upon your physical and mental health.



Mental Health Thermometer

This is a tool that can help you think about how stressed, anxious or frustrated you feel. The aim is that you know how you are currently feeling, can describe this and then think of things that will help you calm down and feel better. We ideally want to be in the green zone as this is our happy place. Write down your strategies to take you down to the next level on the scale.

Scale	How I am feeling	Strategies to support me
5	I feel really stressed and anxious I feel really angry and unhappy I feel like I am going to explode I feel like I may hurt someone or break something	
4	I feel slightly stressed and anxious I feel like something is bothering me I feel agitated and want to fidget I feel like the smallest thing might make me angry and even more stressed.	
3	I feel okay, some things are annoying me, but I can deal with them. I feel like I can cope and get on with my day. I feel like I could be in a good place if things carry on this way.	
2	I do not feel stressed or anxious and things are going really well today. I feel happy and I am in my good place People are not annoying me today and I am enjoying their company.	
1	I feel tired today and I cannot be bothered with anything or anyone. I feel down and depressed. I feel agitated by things.	

Suggested Strategies

Below are some suggested strategies that you could use and put into whatever box you like to support you, remember this is personal and each strategy is personal to you and only you.

Give me some space	Give me some space	Do not talk to me
Do not ask me how I am feeling	Ask me questions	Ask me how I am feeling
Let me listen to my music	Give me something else to talk about	Get me a drink
Let me eat something	Let me draw something	Do not make me do work
Get me something to take my mind off this	Get me to a safe space	Let me read
Do not challenge me	Get me my favourite toy	Get me my worry book
Get me to my trusted adult/member of staff	Do not speak too loud	Let me go and play sport
		Let me play with my fidget toy

These are only suggestions, but you can think of your own strategies or things that will help you and put them into the boxes on the chart on the previous page. If you need any help with this, ask an adult.

Breathing Practice

Breathing for calm is an amazing thing to try. Not just when we are feeling upset or anxious but also as part of our everyday routine. Controlling your breathing makes you feel calm, allows you to think about very little and treat your lungs and mind at the same time. It can also help at night-time when we are in bed and our minds become unhelpfully wide awake.

Try to use some easy breathing techniques that work for you, so that when you feel worried you can calm yourself down. Practice these so you know they work when you need them to. Our brain needs to practice the thoughts and actions we want to make them stick. *By making breathing an integral part of our daily routine like brushing our teeth it helps us recognise the calming effect on our body.*

Most children will resist the power of breathing saying it doesn't work. It won't take away the thoughts that create the difficult emotion but it will calm the body down enabling us to access the thinking part of our brain. Breathing draws in oxygen that immediately stimulates the body's rest and digest system (parasympathetic nervous system) and brings the thinking and feeling parts of the brain back together giving us the opportunity to decide what to do next. It presses the **PAUSE and RESET** button.

Taking a deep 'tummy' breath helps calm the body down to allow our brain to think again and respond positively. Start by breathing in through your nose, hold for two counts then out through your mouth for three counts and repeat.

3 ideas for you to try:

Take 5 Hand Breathing: Using spread out fingers on your hand, trace your fingers whilst you breathe in and exhale. Breathe in going up the finger and exhale going down – repeat to trace the hand backwards and forwards.

Hot Chocolate Breathing: Cup your hands as though you are holding a mug of hot chocolate in both hands. Gently breathe in as if you are smelling the beautiful chocolate scent and slowly breathe out as if you are cooling it. And repeat.

Square Breathing: Picture a square and travel up, across and down the sides as you breathe. Breathe in (inhale) as you go along one side, and exhale along the other. Inhaling and exhaling as you move along the sides.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Technique

A simple grounding technique to ease your mind when you are stressed or worried. Start with 4-5 deep breaths and then acknowledge the following:

5-4-3-2-1 JOURNAL EXERCISE

5 THINGS YOU CAN
SEE

4 THINGS YOU CAN
HEAR

3 THINGS YOU CAN
FEEL

2 THINGS YOU CAN
SMELL

1 THING YOU CAN
TASTE

Calm Bottle/Jar

This is a very simple stress reliever that you can make at home or in school. This jar is yours and you can design it in any way that you wish and that will help you. Below are instructions and the equipment that you will need to make this simple stress bottle/jar. This is something that you can use as a strategy above.

Equipment Needed

- ★ An empty bottle with a lid
- ★ Warm Water
- ★ Clear PVA Glue
- ★ Food Colouring
- ★ Glitter
- ★ Craft Stars, Gems, Sequins or other small objects (optional)



Instructions

- ★ Clean out the empty bottle and remember to keep the lid. Rinse it out so that no soap is left in it.
- ★ Add Clear PVA Glue into the bottle and glitter and mix it up.
- ★ Add the warm water and food colouring, but don't fill it right to the top.
- ★ Put the lid on and give the bottle a shake.
- ★ Let the mixture settle for a minute or two.
- ★ Add any craft stars, buttons and gems into the bottle.
- ★ Put the lid back on and give it another shake.
- ★ If you need to then add further water and clear PVA glue so it fills almost to the top.
- ★ *Adding more clear PVA will slow the glitter and objects down resulting in a slower, calming effect.

How to Use

Every time you feel worried, stressed or anxious or when you can feel your emotions building up, grab your calm jar and give it a good shake to get all of your anxiety and tension out.

Place the bottle on a flat surface, sit down and watch the inside of the bottle begin to calm and settle down.

Do this as often as you like and for as long as you need.

A Calm/Safe Space

When we are stressed or anxious it is good to have a calm/safe space to go to. This needs to be a place where you can think and relax and that will allow you to calm down. This could be your bedroom and you could hide under the covers or put some music on, it could be in your garden or your local park where you can just breathe and take in the oxygen you need to self-regulate. This means that you are able to calm yourself down. When you are in your safe space you should focus on you and people need to know that this is your safe space and that you should not be disturbed, but remember to tell someone where you are, just so they can check on you from time to time. When they do check in on you, make sure that you respond to them, you can tell them to leave you alone, but do it in a way that lets them know that you are okay, but you still need some space.

Note to Parents

Help your child create their space to relax. It is important we feel secure in our environment and that it promotes feelings of positivity, comfort and calm. Encourage your child to use cushions, pictures, colours, books, music, apps – whatever they need to fill their space with things that they love, enjoy and can connect with.

A Trusted Person

It is a really good idea to have someone that you can talk to if you are worried about anything, they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves, especially if you are in any danger, they have to make sure that they tell someone else who can help you. This is scary, but you must trust them that they are helping you.

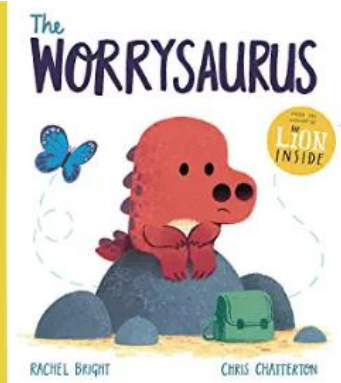
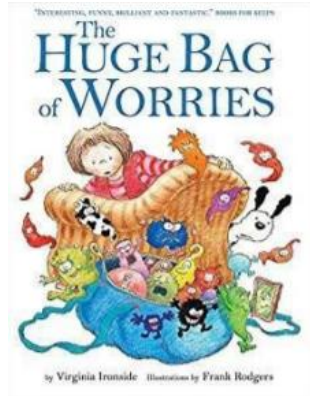
Make sure that you remember that this person is someone that you trust and they are not going against you by telling someone else, but they only have to tell someone if you are in any danger or they are concerned for your physical or mental health.

If you are sharing your worries all the time it might be good to have a time to talk about them, you can call this 'Worry Time', Maybe 15 minutes a day if somebody has time to listen.



Using stories to support difficult emotions in younger children

Reading stories together with our children enables us to raise issues within the safety of the story characters to explore feelings. Reading together creates the opportunity to pick out elements from the story that you feel may support your child with their anxiety, and worries. Or it may be a subtle way to support your child without actually telling them - 'This is what you need to do'. Engaging with stories can enable children to relate to heroes and heroines, a problem or challenge and how to find a solution, asking for help, finding a resolution or happy ending and applying these to their own life.

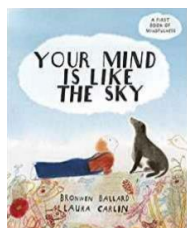


Using stories to support difficult emotions in older children

The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse is a lovely book for older children full of simple wisdom and beautiful illustrations.



What to Do When You Worry Too Much is an interactive self-help book designed to guide 6-12 year olds and their parents through the cognitive-behavioural techniques most often used in the treatment of generalised anxiety. Engaging, encouraging, and easy to follow, this book educates, motivates, and empowers children to work towards change.



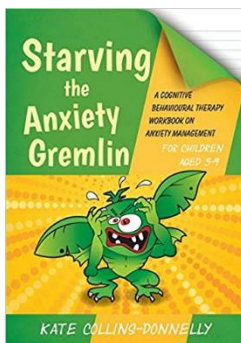
Your Mind is like the Sky. Sometimes it's clear and blue - but sometimes a raincloud thought comes along and makes everything seem dark. So what can we do about rainclouds?

Hey Warrior. Understanding why anxiety feels the way it does and where the physical symptoms come from is a powerful step in turning anxiety around. Anxiety explained, kids empowered. Key themes of: anxiety, self-care and positivity.



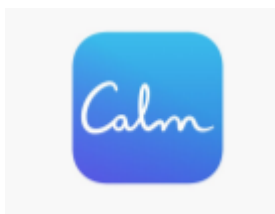
Practical Activity Books

Simple activities and exercises tackle anxiety, sadness and stress; children will enjoy using their creativity to combat negative feelings, work out why they feel worried and how to put stress back in its place through writing, colouring, doodling and drawing.



Based on cognitive behavioural principles, this workbook uses fun and imaginative activities to teach children how to manage their anxiety by changing how they think and act – getting rid of their Anxiety Gremlins for good! Bursting with stories, puzzles, quizzes, and colouring, drawing and writing games, this is a unique tool for parents or practitioners to use with children aged 5 to 9 years.

Useful Apps



Calm is the #1 app for meditation and sleep. It has a wealth of options for visualisation, music, sleep stories, improving focus and promoting a sense of calm.

<https://www.calm.com/>



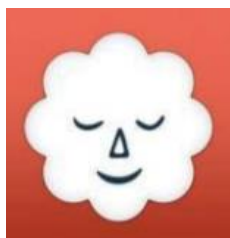
Headspace has hundreds of themed sessions on everything from stress and sleep to focus and anxiety.

Bite-sized guided meditations for busy schedules.

<https://www.headspace.com/>



Relax offers effective and rapid stress relief in five minutes. De-stress with our guided breathing and meditation exercises that use calming music to promote relaxation.



StopBreatheThink is a friendly app to guide people through meditations for mindfulness & compassion. <https://www.stopbreathethink.com/>

Useful websites for Information and Support

EveryMindMatters: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/>

Place2Be: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

Anxiety UK: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Young Minds: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

Action for Happiness: <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/>



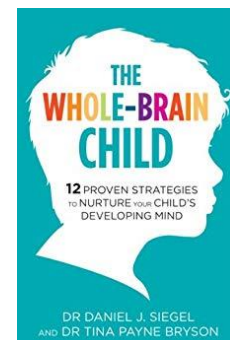
Books on Anxiety for Parents



Written by two of the UK's foremost experts on childhood anxiety, this extremely useful guide will enable you to understand what is causing your child's worries and to carry out step-by-step practical strategies to help him or her to overcome them, including:

- Addressing specific fears and phobias as well as general anxiety and 'worrying'
- Using case studies, worksheets and charts

A pioneering and practical book for parents that explains the new science of how a child's brain is wired and how it matures.





There is a strong evidence base for this mental health equivalent of five portions of fruit & veg per day for physical health.

CONNECT: Building and Maintaining constructive relationships with people is an important part of wellbeing. Spending time around positive and supportive people means you are more likely to have a better self-image, be more confident and feel able to face difficult times. In return, if you are caring and supportive to other people, you are more likely to get a positive response from them.

BE ACTIVE: Regular exercise can lift your mood and increase your energy levels. It doesn't have to be strenuous or sporty to be effective. Pick something you enjoy so you're more likely to stick with it.

TAKE NOTICE: Take time during your day to savour the moment. Whether it is pausing for a cup of tea or talking to a friend, be aware of the world around you and reflect on what you are feeling. It will help you appreciate what's going on around you.

KEEP LEARNING: Setting challenges and learning new things can help improve your confidence and inject some fun into your day. Why not rediscover an old hobby, sign up to a course or take up an instrument? Learn a new skill to mix things up and engage with something exciting.

GIVE: Altruism is a wonderful way to look after your wellbeing. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Allow yourself some time to recognise how your role gives something back to your community.

Safeguarding Support in School

We are always here for you if you need any help or support and we have a dedicated safeguarding team who are available throughout the school week, please contact the team at school or via the school office: spsadmin@sonning.wokingham.sch.uk.

Safeguarding Team

Headteacher: Mr Henderson

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Kelsall

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Miss Reid

SEND, Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

For any queries or further information please contact me at scombe@sonning.wokingham.sch.uk and look out for wellbeing tips @SarahCombe



Relax Kids Sonning with Sarah.