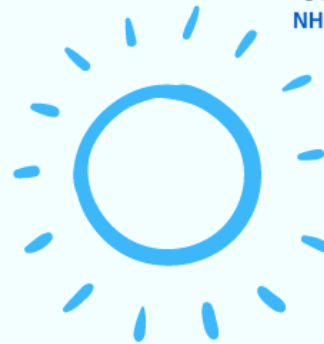




Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust



Mental Health
Support Team

Recognising and supporting young people with anxiety

Today's agenda

Defining anxiety

Signs of anxiety to look out for

How you can support anxiety

Anxiety



Defining anxiety

It's normal to feel anxious sometimes. It's how we respond to feeling threatened, under pressure or stressed: for example, if we have an exam, job interview or doctor's appointment.

Anxiety isn't necessarily a bad thing. It can spur us on, help us stay alert, make us aware of risks and motivate us to solve problems

However, anxiety can be a problem if it impacts our ability to live our life. If anxiety is ongoing, intense, hard to control or out of proportion to the situation, it can be a sign of a mental health problem.



Signs of anxiety to look out for

Thoughts

- Expressing lots of 'what if' thoughts and questions
- Negative thoughts

Physical feelings

- Tummy aches and feeling sick
- Heart racing
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tense and fidgety

Emotions

- Constantly worrying
- Quickly getting angry or irritable, and feeling out of control during outbursts

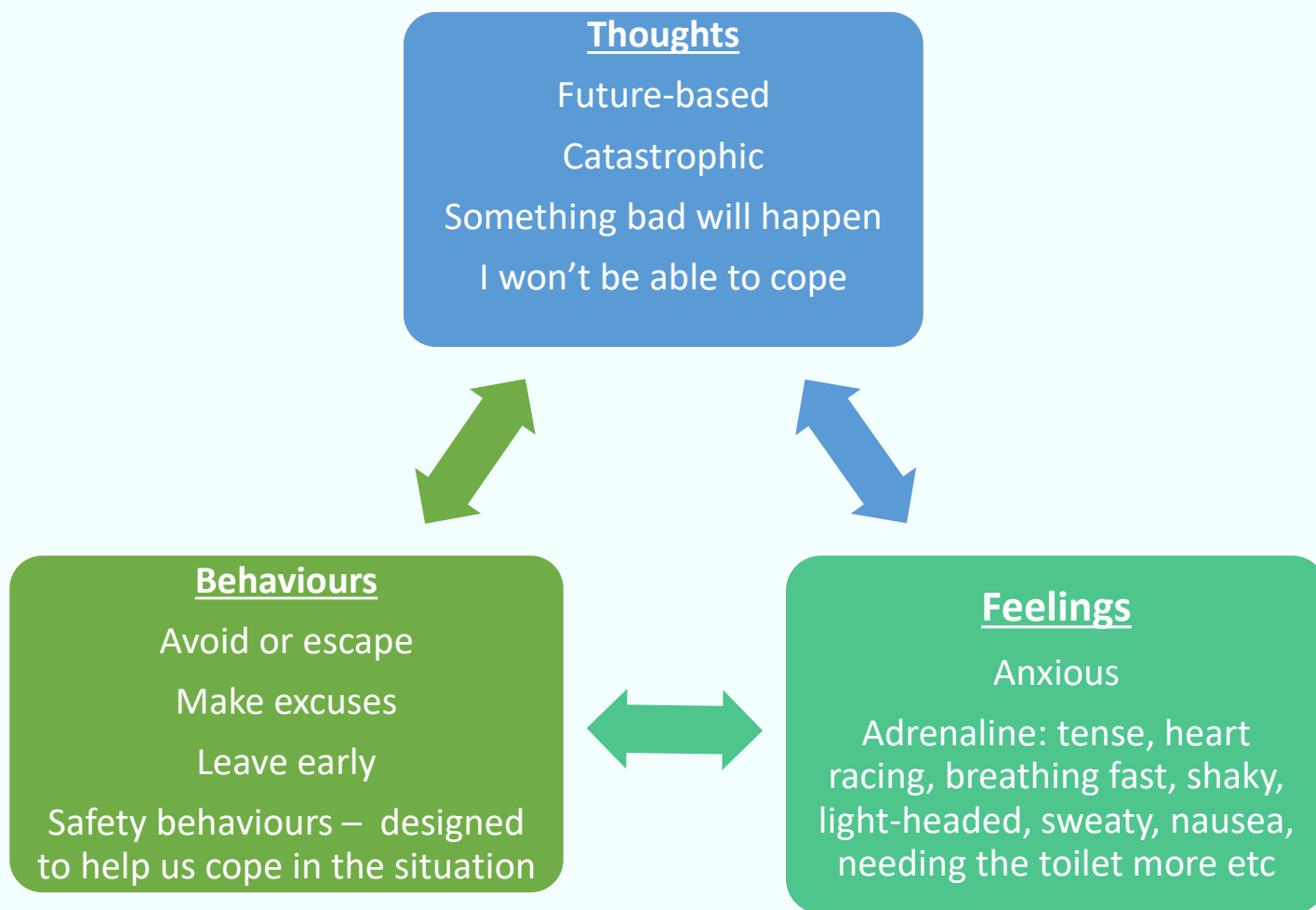
Behaviours

- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Difficulty sleeping, or waking in the night
- Eating more or less than usual
- Using the toilet often
- Asking lots of 'what if' questions
- Seeking reassurance
- Being clingy, especially in younger children
- Avoidance

Types of anxiety

- Separation – more common in younger children
- Social – worrying about what others think and feeling judged, difficult to be around other people
- GAD – worrying about lots of different things
- OCD – having compulsive thoughts and needing to carry out specific tasks to help manage the thoughts
- Panic – intense feelings of physical symptoms, such as difficulty breathing.
- Phobia – extreme fear of something
- Health – feelings of anxiety about own health and catastrophise

The anxiety cycle



Neurodiversity and mental health

We know that neurodiverse young people are more vulnerable to experiencing increased stress and mental health difficulties compared to neurotypical young people.

Of the young people referred into the mental health support teams across Wiltshire and BaNES, 40% have a diagnosis of, or suspected neurodiversity.”

Autism

Attention Deficit
Hyperactive
Disorder (ADHD)

Dyspraxia

Dyslexia

Dyscalculia

Acquired
Neurodiversity

Tourette's
Syndrome

7 ways to support children and young people who are worried



1. Create a space
for conversation



2. Demonstrate
calm



3. Empathise
and validate



4. Introduce
alternative
perspectives and
ways of thinking



5. Reduce
environmental
stresses



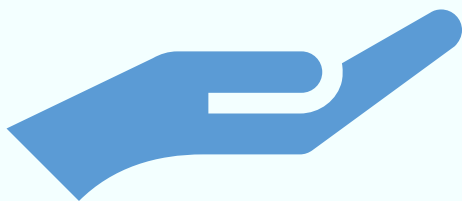
6. Problem
solving and
coping



7. Check in and
monitor
progress

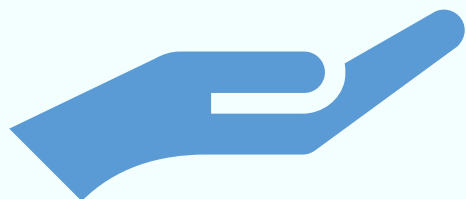
<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/7-ways-to-support-children-and-young-people-who-are-worried/>

How you can support



- Ask them – what is the impact on their day-to-day life (home/hobbies etc)? How often is it occurring? How long has it been going on for?
- Use ‘active listening’
- Remain calm and comforting
- Show empathy e.g. it sounds like that is really difficult for you, to help validate their feelings
- Try to encourage them to talk and think about what they could do rather than directly telling them

How you can support continued



- Try not to dismiss their feelings e.g. saying things like 'it's not that bad' or 'it will be ok, cheer up' or 'you're being too sensitive'. This could stop them feeling able to share their feelings without feeling judged or shame.
- Encourage them to develop a routine, including exercise, socialising, regular meals and getting enough sleep
- Consider social and environmental factors at school

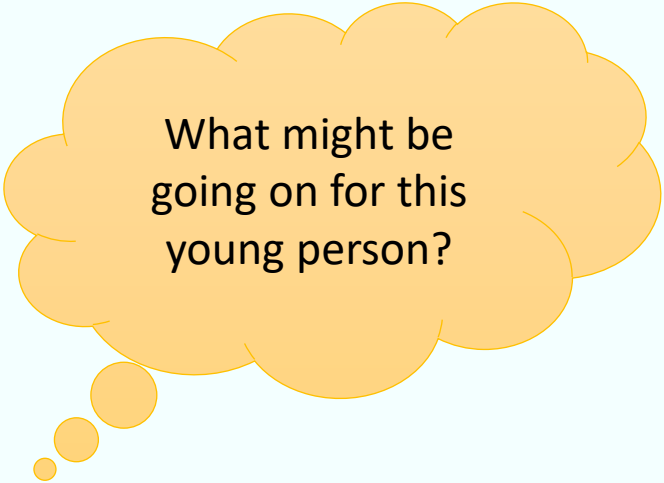
Graded exposure

- Identify a list of feared situations
- Rate the level of anxiety for each situation
- Create a hierarchy ladder from least anxiety provoking situations to the most anxiety provoking situations
- Start with the least anxiety provoking situation and gradually work up the hierarchy ladder
- Repeat the exposure until the level of anxiety reduces before moving on to the next step

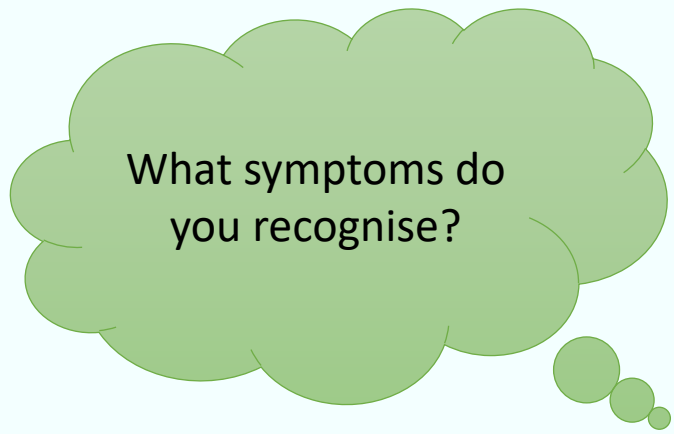
Scenario

- Charlotte is 14 years old. She lives at home with her mum, stepdad and older sister (16). Charlotte spends alternate weeks with mum and dad.
- For the past month or so, Charlotte has started to find reasons to leave the classroom, particularly in maths and geography.
- This has now turned into occasional absences from school, which are starting to become more frequent. Mum reports that she is off with a stomach-ache.
- When discussing potential GCSE options with Charlotte, Charlotte's form tutor said she asked a lot of 'what if' questions, for example 'but what if I don't get my options sir and I have no choice but to take geography and then I fail and then I don't get into sixth form'. Charlotte's other teachers and parents report similar exchanges.
- Charlotte's parents report that she is struggling to get to sleep at night and can be up until the early hours of the morning.


Scenario



What might be
going on for this
young person?



What symptoms do
you recognise?



What could you do
to support them?

Resources

- Anna Freud Schools and College Resources [School and college resources | Anna Freud](#)
- Mentally Healthy Schools [Home : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)
- Oxford Health CAMHS [Oxford Health CAMHS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service](#)[Oxford Health CAMHS](#)
- Autism and EBSA [Perfect storm: emotionally based school avoidance in the post-COVID-19 pandemic context](#)
- [Autism and mental health – Mind](#)
- [Tips for everyday living | ADHD and mental health | Mind – Mind](#)

Related MHST workshops

- Transition workshops (Y6)
- Post transition to secondary school workshop (Y7)
- Exam stress
- Managing anxiety workshop
- Mental Health and Wellbeing workshop
- Parent – Understanding children's anxiety (BANES)
- Staff – Introduction to MHST
- Staff – Recognising low mood and anxiety in the classroom

Support Services

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES & FURTHER HELP



Child-line: confidential
help and advice -
childline.org.uk (1:1
chat online) tel:
08001111



Kooth.com: free
on-line counselling
resource for young
people

Shout: Free, 24/7 mental health
text support | Text 'Shout' to
85258. (giveusashout.org)



Mindshift:
change how you think
about anxiety. offers
strategies to cope and
relaxation exercises.

Moodgym: interactive
programme based on CBT.
Learn and practise skills to
prevent and manage
symptoms of depression and
anxiety.



YOUNGMINDS
YoungMinds: Crisis Messenger,
free 24/7 text support | Tel:
85258 | (youngminds.org.uk)

Samaritans: offer a safe place to talk at
any time (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)
| tel: 116 123 | (samaritans.org)



Mind: online mental health
information and support | Tel:
0300 123 3393 | (mind.org.uk)



**Mental Health
Support Team**
Bath and North East Somerset



Headspace: guided meditation,
mindfulness and sleep stories.

SAM: self help to manage
mental wellbeing and to
share your mental health
story.



The Mix: online support
community and crisis
messenger. Free helpline and
counselling service | Tel: 0808
808 4994 | (themix.org.uk)

Any questions?

