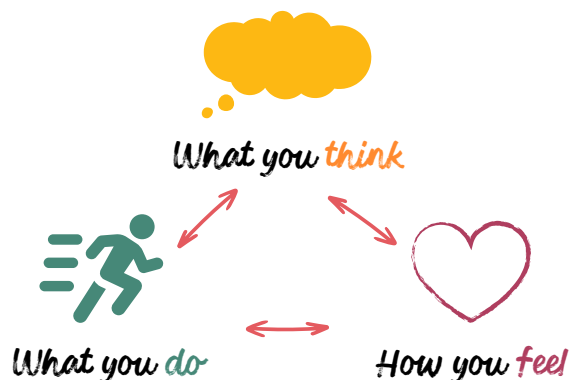




Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour



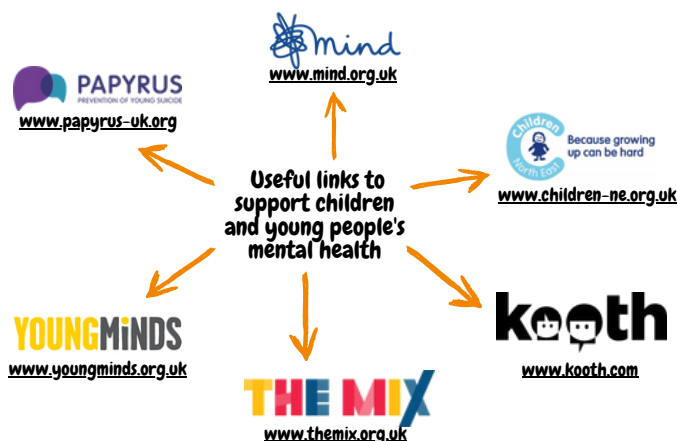
When we worry it usually starts with a thought. These thoughts are often unhelpful, negative thoughts. When our thoughts take over, they can grow and make our emotions feel very big. We get big feelings in our body such as tummy aches, butterflies, tenseness, dizziness, our heart racing and we may feel we can't breathe. The way your child feels can then change how they behave or what they do. They may cry, lash out, hide, run away, scream or shout.

Thought Challenging



Helping your child challenge their thoughts is really important. It is important to help them see things as they are rather than how they think they are. This can break the cycle and change how they feel, and how they behave.

Further Support and Information



A Guide to Helping Your Child with Anxiety and Worries

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes.

All children experience worries. If these worries begin to impact their mood, or stop them doing what they want to do or should be doing, then they may need some support to manage their worries.

Fight, Flight, Freeze Response



When we have big emotions, it is often due to the human instinct to keep ourselves safe. This is called Fight, Flight and Freeze Response. Fight Flight Freeze is our reaction to danger. Sometimes we can react as if we are in danger when we are not. It is important to recognise when we are responding like this.

Although we are quite safe, our body has an internal alarm that sometimes goes off when we need to keep safe. Our body also produces adrenaline which causes changes in the body.

Helpful Apps



Headspace
A meditation app that acts as a personal guide to health and happiness.



MoodGym
An online cognitive behaviour therapy program for depression and anxiety.



Smiling Mind
A meditation program to help bring mindfulness into your life



Calm Harm
An app that helps young people manage the urge to self-harm.



ThinkNinja
Designed for children and young people (10-18 years old) to help with anxiety and low mood.



Clear Fear
An app that helps you face your fears and reduce the physical responses to anxiety.

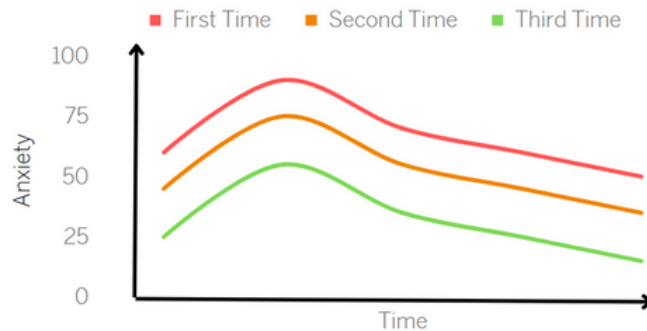


Facing Our Fears



When we avoid doing the things we are scared of, our anxiety goes down quickly, which makes it feel like avoiding them is the right thing to do.

However... Next time we try and face the thing we fear, we will feel just as scared, if not more!



When we face the things we are scared of, our anxiety goes down more slowly, but staying in the situation helps us learn it isn't as scary as we thought.

Next time we face the situation, we will feel less anxious... then even less the next time, and even less the time after!

Reassurance

- Giving your child reassurance is a natural response and can sometimes reduce distress in the short-term.
- Anxious children often seek out reassurance, however it does not help them to feel less anxious in the long run.
- Reassurance can be addictive; the more a child gets reassurance, the more they will want it or think they need it.

Asking Questions, Not Giving Answers

Try asking your child questions instead of providing reassurance. This can help both you and your child to recognise where the anxiety is coming from. It can also help validate your child's feelings and prevent them feeling silly or wrong. Often, answering these questions will help a child to realise for themselves that their fear is not very likely to happen, or can help them realise that they are more able to cope with it than they thought, if it did happen.

Try Asking:

- Why are you feeling worried?
- What is frightening you?
- What do you think will happen?
- What is the worst thing that might happen?
- What is it about this that is making you worried?
- What would you do if this did happen?

Further Helpful Resources

Understanding Emotions

This can help your child understand that all of their emotions and feelings are valid and that they are usually trying to tell them something. Encourage them to check in with themselves regularly to understand how they are feeling.



Overcoming Fears

Use this technique to help your child face their fears, building up their confidence and ability to overcome them. We can help them break the cycle of fear and avoidance and take back control so they can do the things they enjoy.



Worry Tree

The Worry Tree is a tool you can use to help your child work through their worries. It can help you and your child to learn how to manage worries that are within and outside of their control.



Circle of Control

This will help your child understand what is in their control and what is not. They can release the worries that they cannot do anything about by doing something else, or focus their attention on the things within their control instead.

