

Anxiety

As a parent you know your child best and understand what level they are at developmentally; so, choose which activity meets your child's needs.

Age 5-10

- Thought Box; get your child to help you decorate a small cardboard box with things that they like stickers etc. If they are worried or concerned about anything, they write it down and put it in the box. They can look at it the next morning and decide if it's something to discuss with you or if it is no longer a concern.
- Social story; a story using pictures to explain in a general way the feelings a child may be having, and how they can deal with those feelings.
- Safe Box; like a worry box but the box should have a lid and the child places things/objects inside of it that make them feel safe i.e. Photos of family members, photos of enjoyed trips, objects that have meaning to them. When they are feeling unsafe, they can go to their box and revisit their memories. Leave the box in their bedroom for them to access.
- 7 – 11 breathing; get the child to lie on their bed and close their eyes, breathe in for 7 seconds whilst you count and out for 11 seconds whilst you count again. Do the counting for them until they can do it themselves.
- Blow your troubles into the bubbles; ask your child to think of their worries as they blow the bubbles, so their worries are captured into the bubbles and burst taking their worries with them. You can use a balloon as well for this exercise.
- 10 Good Things; ask your child to give them 10 positive things that happened to them that day. End the day on a positive.
- Brilliant Book; can be used both at home and school, there must be at least one positive thing written in it every day, discuss at bedtime.
- Have your child lay on their bed, close their eyes then starting from the top of their head to scrunch up their forehead hold it tight for 10 seconds (you count aloud) and then let go, then their mouth, shoulders, arms, hands, stomach, bum, thighs, and feet doing the same each time. This can relax your child and be a nice exercise to do together.

Age 10+

- A thought diary
- Change the thought, change the feeling. Explain to the child that every thought you have creates a feeling, so if you think sad or unhappy thoughts you get that anxious feeling in your tummy. If you change the thought to a happy thought, that will make you feel happy inside. It also helps to repeat it to themselves as they can't think unhappy thoughts at the same time.
- A thought is just a thought and a thought can be changed. Explain to a child that the thoughts that they have are what they have created, and they are in charge of their brains and can change their thoughts to something more positive and helpful. Saying it repeatedly can help.
- Visualization; ask your child to imagine a favourite colour that makes them feel peaceful and safe. Have them imagine taking in that colour with each breath and sending through their entire body as they exhale. Have them continue until they visualise being filled with their special relaxing colour. You can also use a sound or smell.

Anxiety Resources

Websites:

www.chums.uk.com

www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk

www.keep-your-head.com

www.youngminds.org.uk

Books:

Starving the Anxiety Gremlin by Kate Collins-Donnelly

When I Feel Sad by Cornelia Maude Spelman

The Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside