

Anxiety

A workshop for parents from your Mental Health Support Team.

MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT TEAMS

Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

Ground Rules

- Be kind to yourself
- Confidentiality - this is a safe space
- No question is a silly question
- We show respect to everyone
- Non-judgemental



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Objectives/Agenda

1. Welcome
2. What is anxiety?
3. When & why does anxiety become a problem?
4. Anxiety disorders
5. Causes of anxiety
6. Maintenance of anxiety
7. How to help...
8. What next?



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What is anxiety?

- A feeling of unease, (such as worry or fear)
- Can be mild or severe
- A normal and often helpful emotion
- A survival instinct to keep us safe

Avoiding situations
or certain things

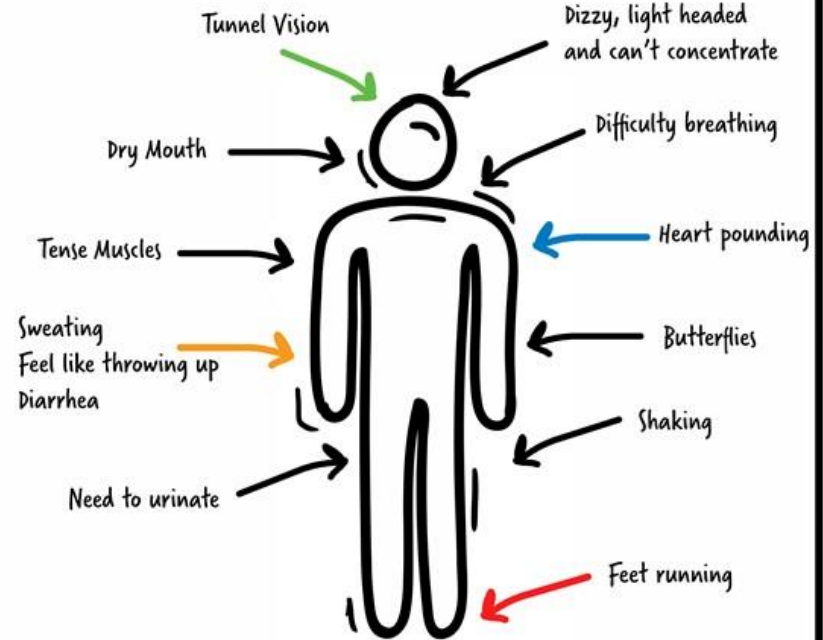
Fearing physical symptoms

Routines
and
rituals

What does
anxiety look and
feel like?

Seeking
reassurance

What happens during freeze, fight or flight?

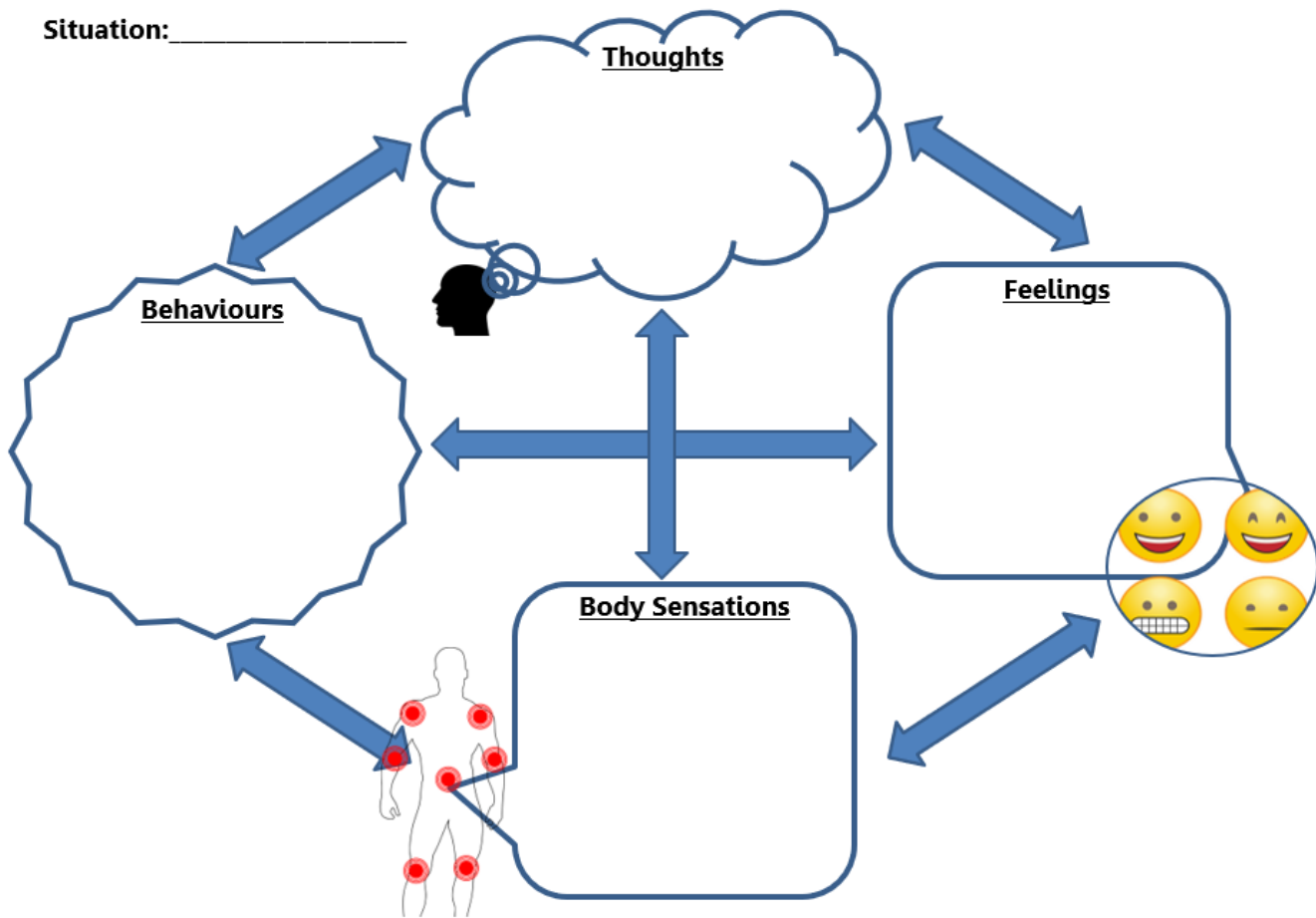


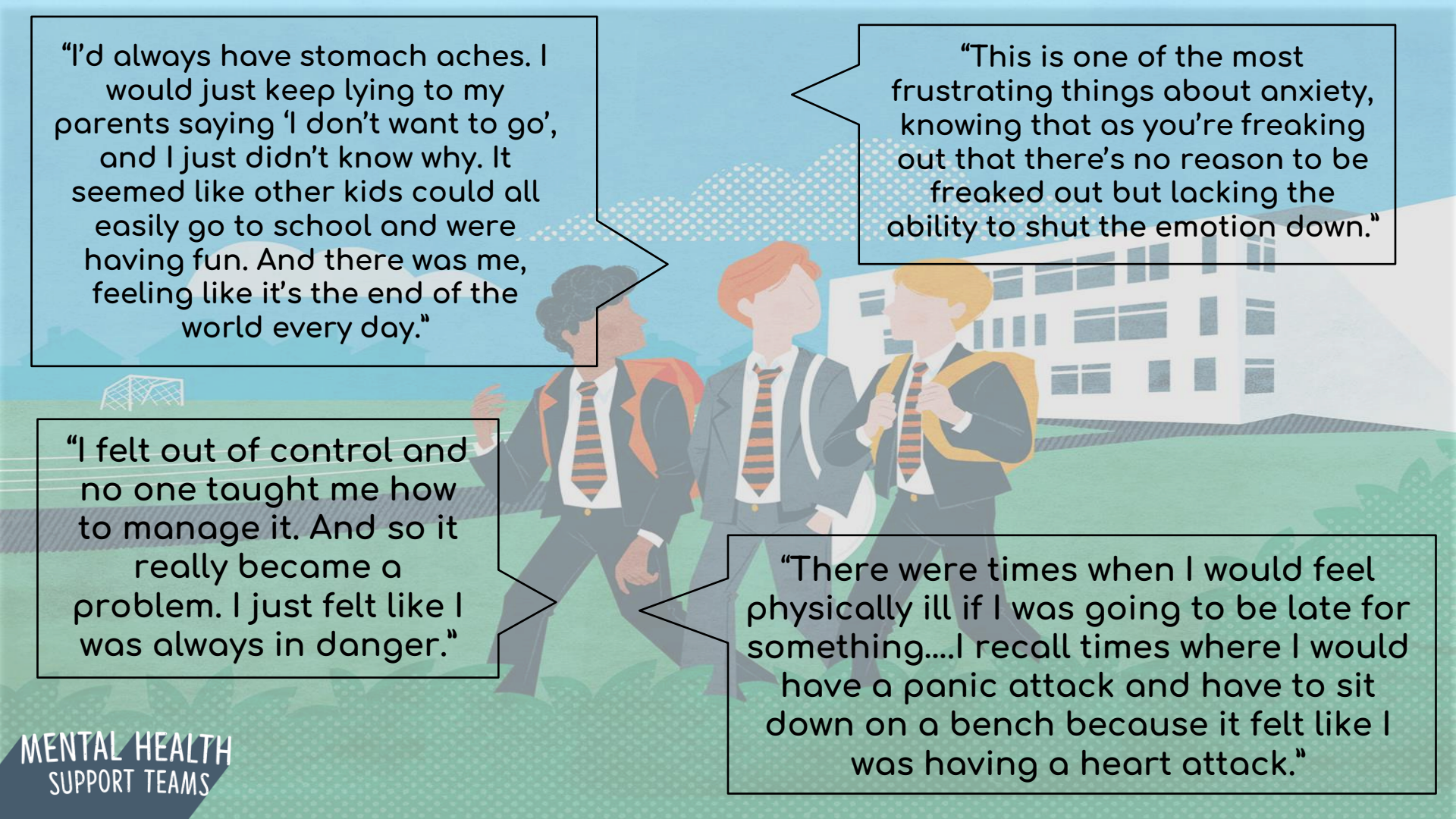
<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/digital-health-profiles/resilience-and-wellbeing/anxiety>

If anxiety is so helpful
why does it sometimes
become a problem?



Situation: _____





“I’d always have stomach aches. I would just keep lying to my parents saying ‘I don’t want to go’, and I just didn’t know why. It seemed like other kids could all easily go to school and were having fun. And there was me, feeling like it’s the end of the world every day.”

“This is one of the most frustrating things about anxiety, knowing that as you’re freaking out that there’s no reason to be freaked out but lacking the ability to shut the emotion down.”

“I felt out of control and no one taught me how to manage it. And so it really became a problem. I just felt like I was always in danger.”

“There were times when I would feel physically ill if I was going to be late for something....I recall times where I would have a panic attack and have to sit down on a bench because it felt like I was having a heart attack.”

Anxiety doesn't just come in one shape or form...

It is an individual experience with different and interacting causes which can vary in intensity. There are 7 main types of Anxiety Disorder

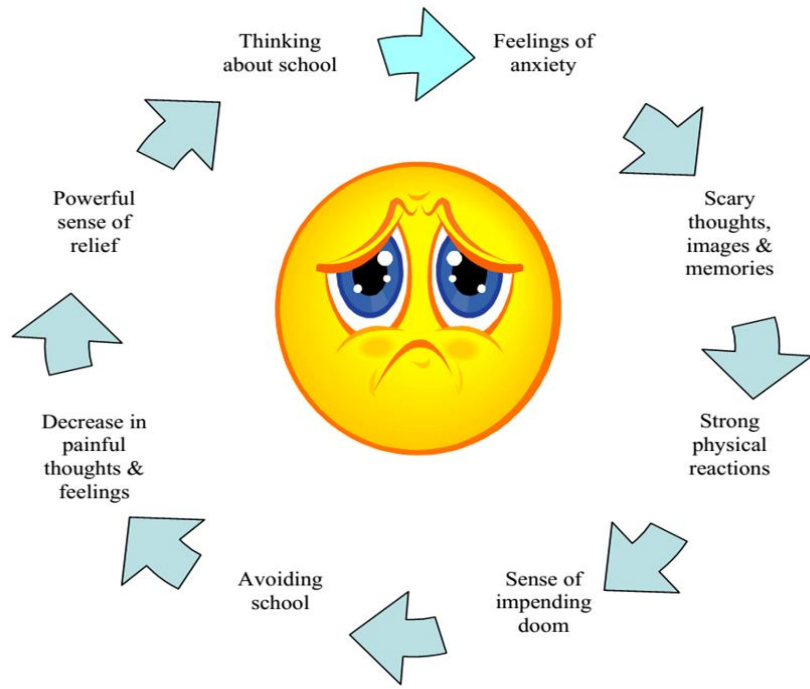
Social Phobia
Generalised Anxiety (GAD)
Post Traumatic stress Disorder (PTSD)
Separation Anxiety
Social Anxiety
Panic Disorder
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



Why my Child?



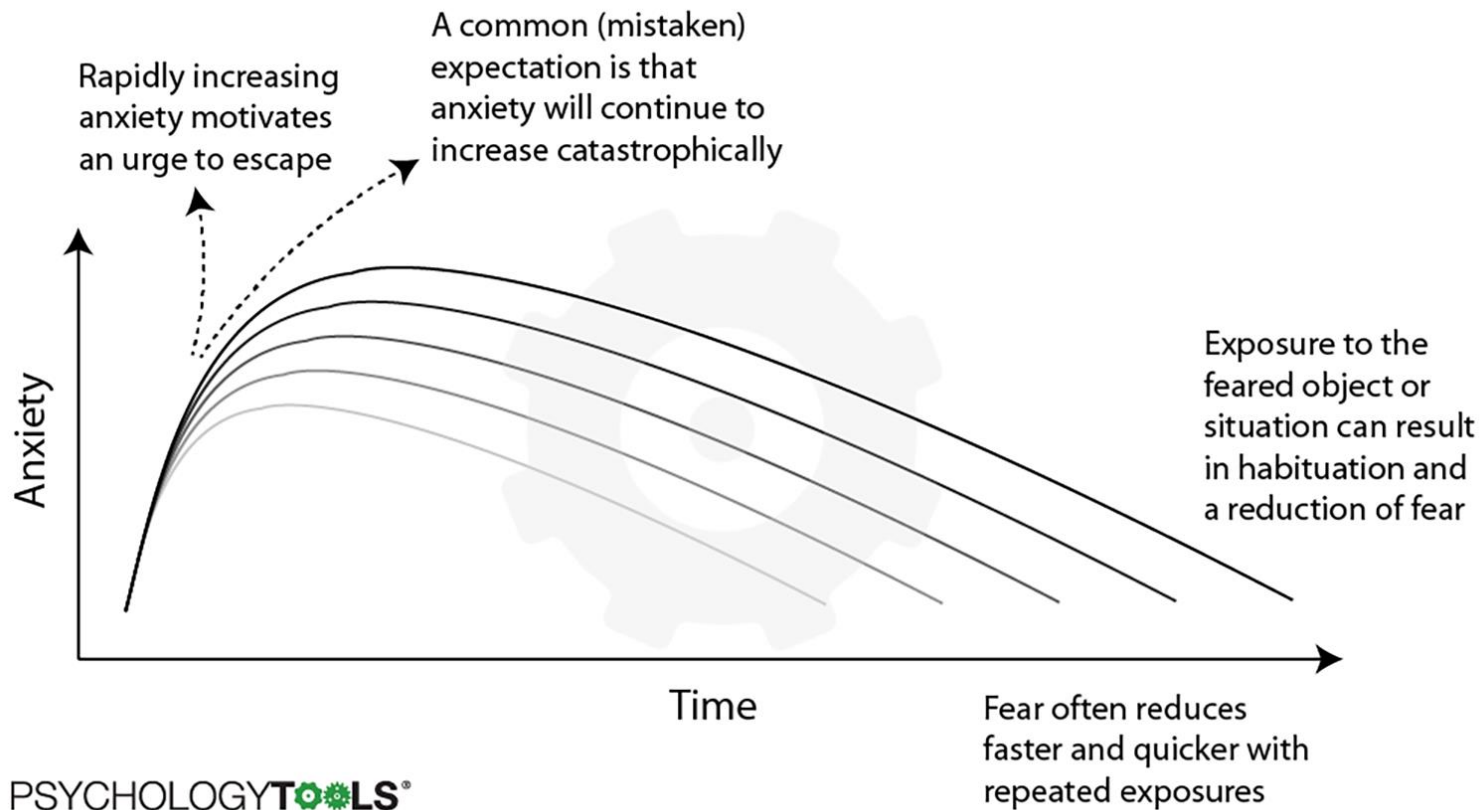
Significant life Events, Genes, Learned Behaviour or a combination of these



What keeps it going?

- Avoidance
- Safety Seeking Behaviours
- Reassurance
- Other people's responses
- Always expecting the worst to happen
- Believing they cannot cope





PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS®

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How can I help my child?

- Be curious
- Normalise
- Encourage independence
- Encourage “having a go”
- Praise and Reward





How can I help my child to challenge their thinking? (Cutting out reassurance)

well
done!

Reassurance:

- All parents reassure their children, it is a natural response which may reduce distress.
- Anxious children often seek out reassurance.

Persistence of Reassurance:

- It is hard to refrain from giving reassurance, especially when your child is feeling anxious, but giving it may help to maintain the problem.
- Reassurance may become very repetitive/frequent.

How can I help my child to challenge their thinking? (Cutting out reassurance)



Why do we need to manage reassurance giving?

Children need to be able to feel that they can deal with (and test out) their fears on their own.



How to cut out reassurance...

Cutting out reassurance can be attempted gradually and in a way that feels comfortable for you



It is not about *not* responding at all, it is about responding *differently* by:

- Showing empathy by validating your child's feelings e.g. "I see you are upset and worried and it is really hard" and then get them to think more for themselves.
- Asking your child questions, rather than giving them answers





How can I
help my child to
challenge their
thinking?



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Asking questions – not giving answers.

- Gets children to think for themselves
- Helps children to remember the conclusions that were drawn because they have worked them out for themselves
- Puts children in control to problem solve.

Thinking like a judge in court

- ✓ Identify the suspect (the thought) then...
- ✓ Investigate other suspects (alternative evidence), then...
- ✓ Make a judgment about the first suspect; is the thought realistic or helpful?

CHALLENGING
THINKING

Calming Strategies



Write it down



Write down on a piece of paper/journal/on your phone how you are feeling. Some people find it helpful to cross it out or rip it up after. Or use a worry Monster.

Grounding



5
things you
can see



4
things you
can feel



3
things you
can hear



2
things you
can smell



1
thing you
can taste



Refocusing

"I am feeling..."

"My body feels..."

Name it, tame it

"This is making me feel..."

Controlled breathing



1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9...10

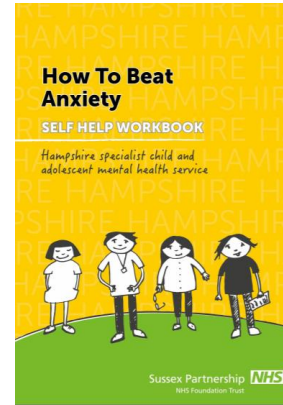
So what next?



Cathy Creswell - Helping your child overcome their fears and worries - self help book

Dawn Huebener- What to do when you worry too much

CAMHS Booklet
MHST



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Apps and Websites

Mindshift
Headspace
Self help for anxiety
management (SAM)
Worry Box

www.hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk
www.anxietyBC.com
www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.getselfhelp.co.uk



Thank you

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