



UNDERSTANDING WORRIES

What is Anxiety/Worry?

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

Emotions are normal feelings but sometimes our emotions can vary according to the time of day, what is happening around us and whether we are struggling.

Sometimes we have big emotions, this is often due to human's instinct to keep ourselves safe

This is called Fight, Flight and Freeze Response. Although we are quite safe our body has an internal alarm that sometimes goes off when we need to keep safe. When we are having the Fight, Flight Freeze response our body produces adrenaline which causes changes in the body.

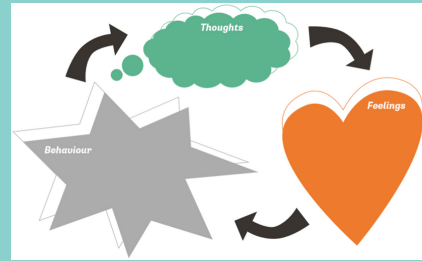
FIGHT FLIGHT FREEZE RESPONSE

Fight Flight Freeze is our reaction to danger. These days we can react as if we are in danger when we are not. It is important to recognise when we are responding like this.

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THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS



When we worry it usually starts with a thought. The thoughts become our focus and we are said to be worried. 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.

When our feelings grow we then have more thoughts and our behaviour may change. We may cry, become tense, feel nervous or just confused. We may even behave in a different way to normal.

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Children can sometimes experience some of these unhelpful thinking styles:-

- All or nothing thinking
- Catastrophizing
- Negative Glasses
- Crystal Ball thinking
- Bad memories
- Comparing ourselves to others
- Letting our feelings determine whether we do something or not
- Being a perfectionist
- Being self critical
- Black and white thinking
- Mind Reading

Reassurance

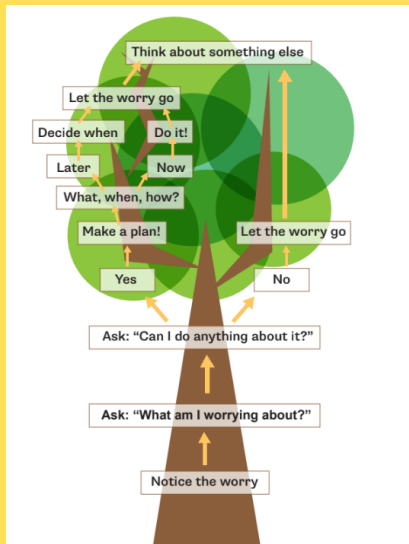
- Giving your child reassurance is a natural response and can reduce distress in the short-term.
- Anxious children often seek out reassurance, however it does not help them to feel less anxious in the long run.
- Reassurance can be addictive; the more a child gets reassurance, the more they will want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

Asking Questions, Not Giving Answers

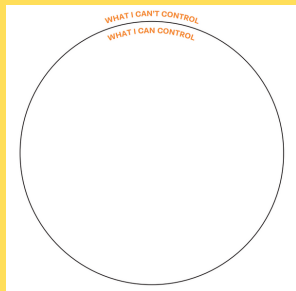
- Some children may not be able to explain what they think will happen in situations they fear.
- If we can understand a child's thoughts, we can understand what they need to learn to overcome their problems with anxiety.



MANAGING WORRY



Managing your worries can really help, try following the worry tree above



The circle of control shows that we can only do something about things that we can control, such as what we say, do or think. Everything else that you cannot control or do anything about - you should try to let go and take your mind off it by thinking about or doing something else.

THOUGHT CHALLENGING

Challenging our thoughts is really important. It is important to see things as they are rather than how we think they are.

Noticing our unhelpful thinking can help us think differently and think more clearly.

Is what you are thinking a fact or an opinion?

Is what you are telling yourself true?

Would you speak to your best friend the same way that you are treating yourself?

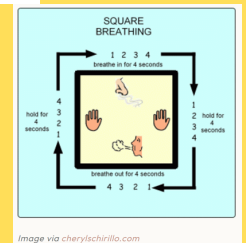
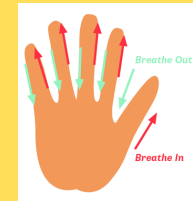
Ask yourself what the worst that could happen?

Ask yourself if your worry will matter tomorrow, in a week, a month or even a year from now?

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MANAGING EMOTIONS & CALMING DOWN

Managing your emotions will help you feel calm again. Try some of these below.



FURTHER HELP & SUPPORT



rise.childrenssociety.org.uk

