

Supporting my child with their fears and worries

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Group Agreement

- No questions are silly
- Respect and listen to each other
- Be mindful of what you share

- Type your answers in the chat:
 - What is anxiety?
 - What does anxiety look and feel like for your child?



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal human emotion which everybody experiences from time to time.

It is sometimes characterised by worrying that something bad will happen and the belief they will be unable to cope.



What is anxiety?



Why is my child feeling anxious?

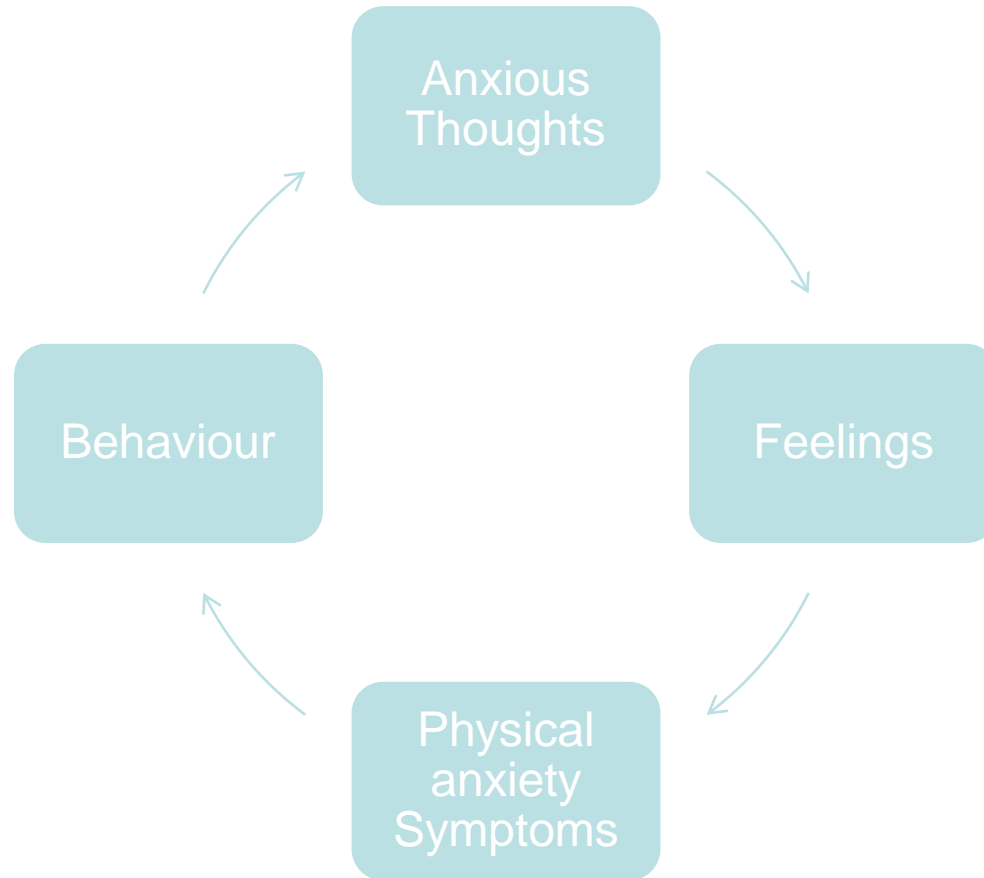
- Uncertainty
- Overwhelmed
- Changed routine
- Transitions
- Demands outweighing resources
- Vulnerability
- COVID-19



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Anything else?

What can maintain anxiety in children?



Take 2 minutes to think about this for yourself. You don't have to share.

Avoidance

How Anxiety Works and Why It Doesn't Go Away On Its Own
Fear of Dogs



Abdul has started to fear dogs. He heard about another little boy who got bit and now, whenever he sees dogs he feels sick and his heart rate increases.

Abdul's mum notices that he doesn't like going to the park anymore and doesn't want to play at Sarah's, who has a pet dog.

Mum doesn't want to upset Abdul, so whenever they see a dog, mum suggests they cross the road.

Type in the chat box or un-mute yourself:

What could Abdul's mum do differently?

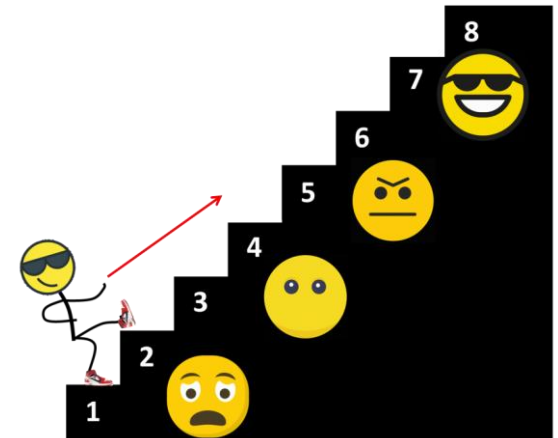
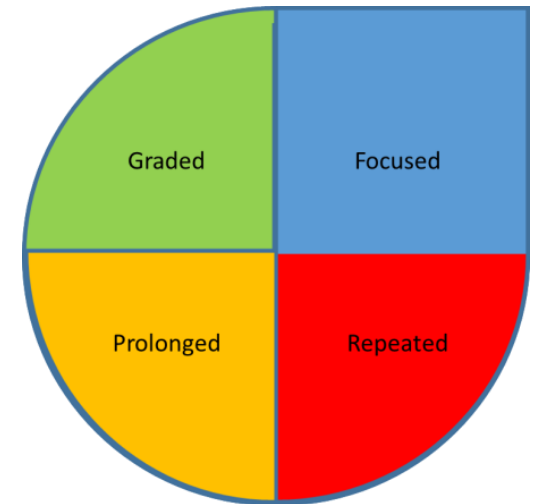
How does your child make attempts to 'avoid' things?

Reduce avoidance patterns with experiments



Graded exposure

- Rather than facing your biggest fear right away, which can be traumatising, graded exposure work usually starts with a situation that's only mildly threatening and works up from there.
- **Graded exposure involves three parts:**
- **Learning relaxation skills.** Firstly, you will learn relaxation technique, such as progressive muscle relaxation or deep breathing. You'll practice during session and on your own at home.
- **Creating a step-by-step list.** You'll create a list of up to about 10 scary situations that progress toward your final goal.
- **Working through the steps.** Under the guidance of a practitioner, you'll then begin to work through the list. The goal is to stay in each scary situation until your fears subside.



Step by Step Ladder



Step	Anxiety rating (0-10)	Reward
5 - Speaking in front of the whole class	9	Going to the park
4 - Answering a question in class	7	Choose the take-out meal for the week
3 - Asking a question in class	6	Choosing a family film to watch together
2 - Speaking in group	4	Baking a cake with her sister
1 - Say 'hi' to a different classmate everyday for a week	3	Going for a coffee with her Mum

Reducing emotional vulnerability

Emotion Management

PLEASE MASTER

- Treat **Physical** illness
- Balance **Eating**
- Avoid mood-**Altering** drugs
- Balance **Sleep**
- Get **Exercise**
- Build **MASTERY** – do simple activities that make you feel competent and in control

Make the world as predictable as you can

Some changes need to happen, for example school transitions, changing routines or moving home...

All we can do in these situations is make the change as comfortable as possible.

Promote your child's independence to boost general self-confidence



Practice relaxation and grounding techniques as a family (balloon breathing or 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 with colours)



Try to develop a growth mindset as a family
(draw attention to your child's persistence)



Problem Solving

What is the problem?

Which is the best solution?

Encourage the child to make a decision and have a go!

Ask the child how it went



What to do in the moment?



- Notice and be present
- Wait for the anxiety symptoms to calm down
- Empathise & normalise
- Ask questions
- Listen to their concerns
- **Instil confidence** – “it may be tough going to the park today, but let’s see what happens! You’re so brave.”
- Treat it like an experiment
- Reduce reassurance
- Encourage independence

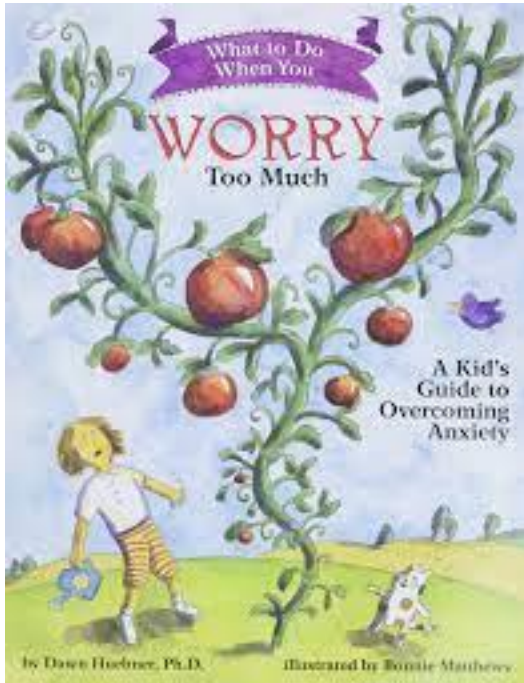
Parent wellbeing



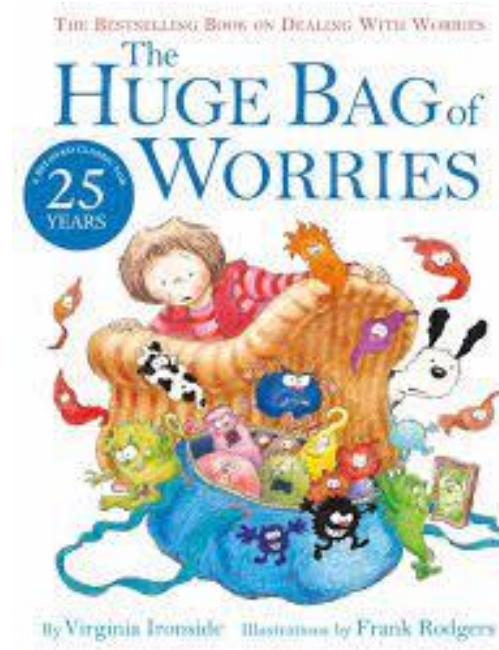
- Anxiety can feel quite contagious, children can pass their anxieties on to us and we can pass our anxiety on to our children.
- It is so important that we try to look after ourselves.
- Helping an anxious child is really tricky!

What do you do to improve your own wellbeing?

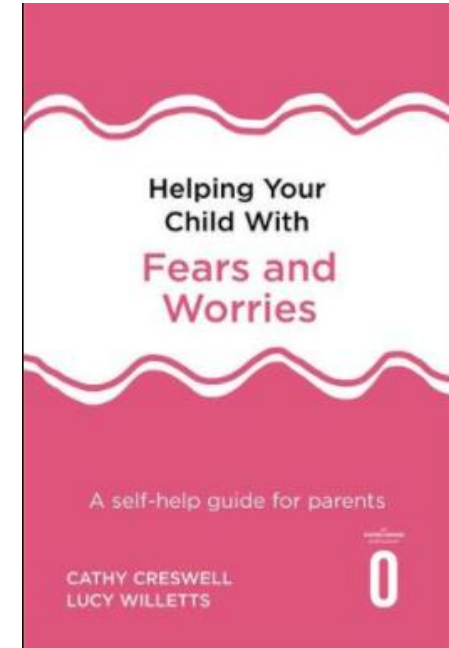
The books...



What to do when you worry too much
Dawn Huebner



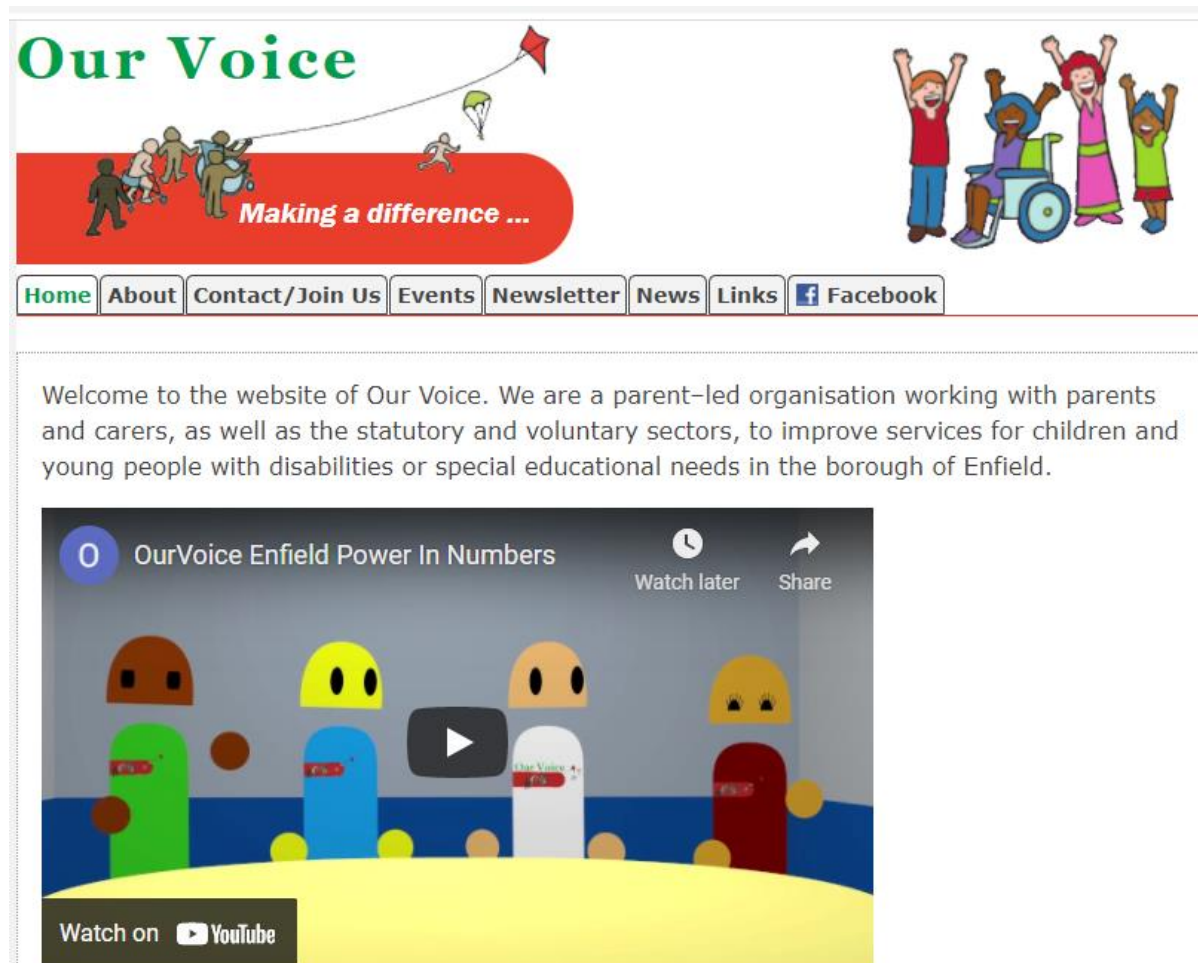
The huge bag of worries
Virginia Ironside



Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries
Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willetts

Our Voice

- <https://www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Our Voice website. At the top left, the text "Our Voice" is written in green. Below it is a red banner with the text "Making a difference ..." and an illustration of people pulling a string attached to a kite. To the right of the banner is an illustration of four diverse people (two adults and two children, one in a wheelchair) celebrating with their arms raised. Below the banner is a navigation menu with buttons for "Home", "About", "Contact/Join Us", "Events", "Newsletter", "News", "Links", and "Facebook".

Welcome to the website of Our Voice. We are a parent-led organisation working with parents and carers, as well as the statutory and voluntary sectors, to improve services for children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs in the borough of Enfield.

The main content area features a video player with the title "OurVoice Enfield Power In Numbers". The video thumbnail shows four stylized, colorful characters (green, blue, white, and red) standing on a yellow surface. The video player includes a play button, a "Watch later" button, and a "Share" button. At the bottom left of the video player, it says "Watch on YouTube".

Extra support/resources

- **Enfield CAMHS 24/7** – crisis line **(08001510023)**
- **Enfield EPS & SEWS** – parent telephone support line
- **Enfield IAPT** – Free adult counselling sessions
- **Headspace App** – free meditation and mindfulness
- **SENDIASS**– SEN support service **(07903 762008)**
- **IPSEA** – Independent panel for SEN provides free legal advice and helpline **(ipsea.org.uk)**
- **FamilyAction** – family/parent helpline **(0808 802 6666)**



Enfield SEND IASS
Enfield Special Educational Needs & D



Building
stronger
families

