

# MYME Mini Conference

Top Tips for supporting your child with their worries and fears



# Introductions

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- Kajal Patel (Education Mental Health Practitioner)
- Katie Kavanagh ( Senior Children's Wellbeing Practitioner)
- Leylla Mulisa (Senior Lead Educational Psychologist – Emotional We  
Health)



# Plan for today

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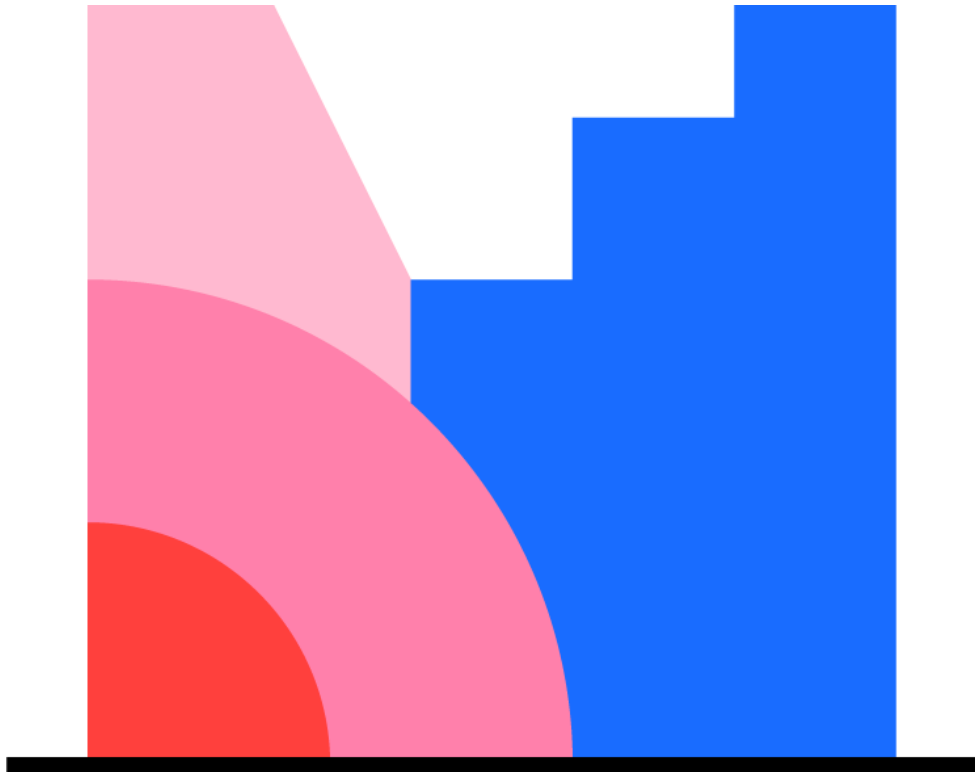
- Introductions
- Who we are
- What is anxiety
- How to talk to children about their worries
- Strategies to support your children with their worries

# Who are we?

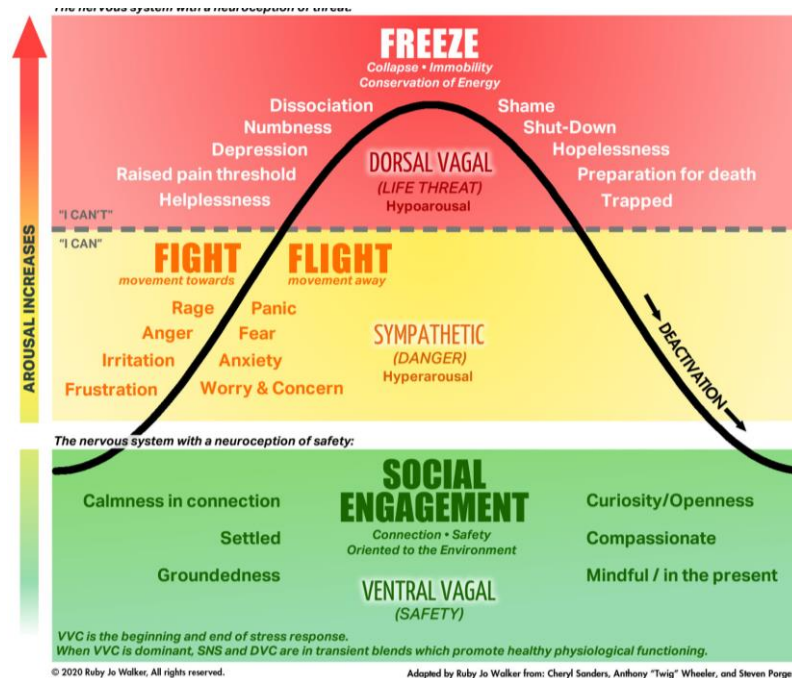
- We are the Enfield CAMHS Mental Health Support Team (an NHS funded project).
- We were renamed locally as 'My Young Mind Enfield' (MYME) a friendlier, approachable, & suitable name for CYP of all ages.
- MHST are designed to help meet the mental health needs of CYP aged between 5-19 in education settings.
- Our team is made up of a wide range of professionals:
  - Education Mental Health Practitioners/Children's Wellbeing Practitioners
  - CAMHS Clinical Professionals and Supervisors
  - Clinical and Team Lead

What words  
would you  
associate with  
feeling worried  
or anxious?

- <https://www.menti.com/alti4dh2cs>

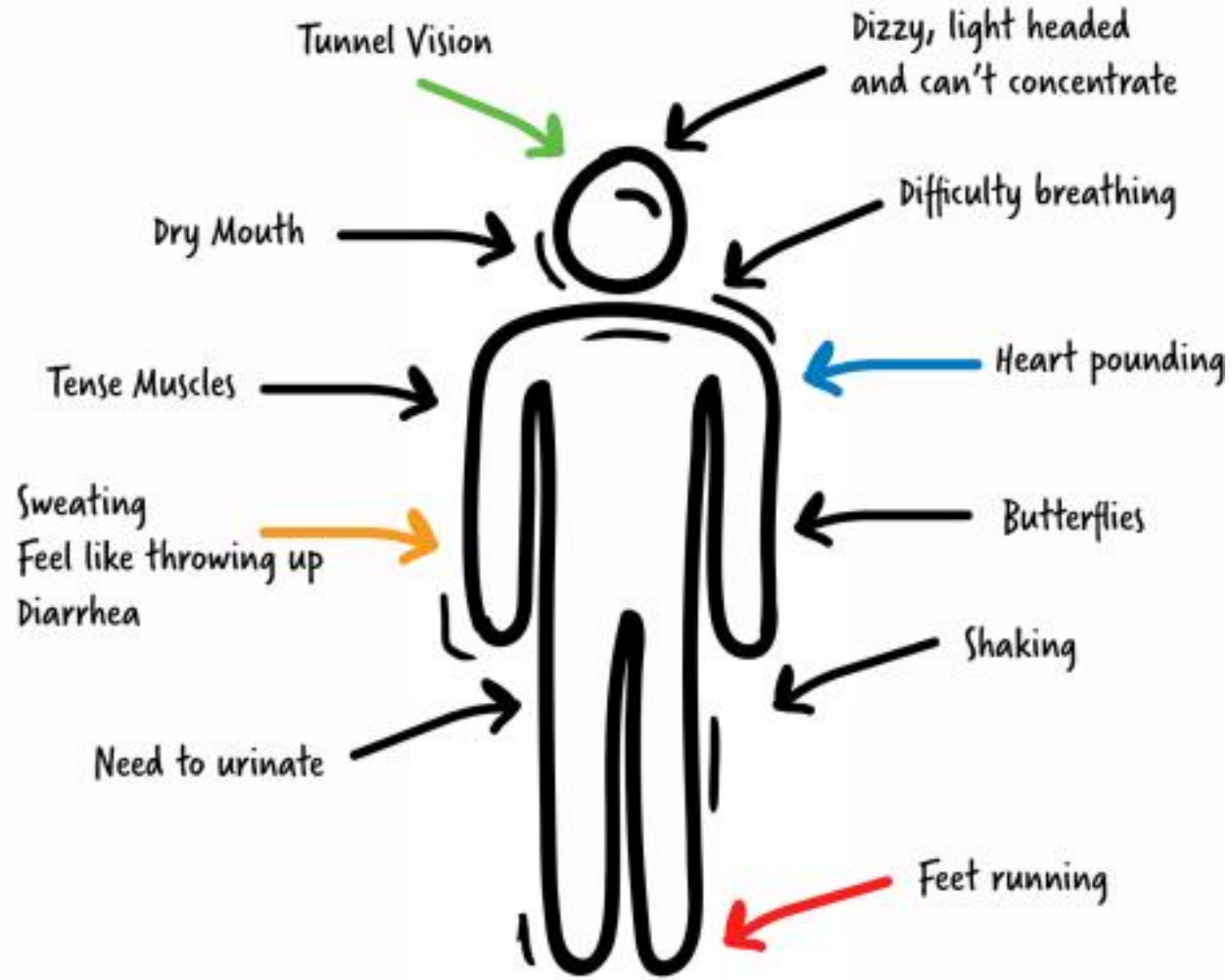


# What is anxiety



- A normal emotion that can be used to enhance performance.
- Anxiety becomes a problem when it is more severe, frequent and interferes
- with everyday life. It can affect areas such as a person's social life, academic performance and mood.

# What happens during freeze, fight or flight?



# Fight/flight/freeze response

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# Small group / Pair Discussion

What signs might you see to indicate a child is starting to feel anxious or worried?

- Behaviors
- Physiological
- Sensory
- Emotional



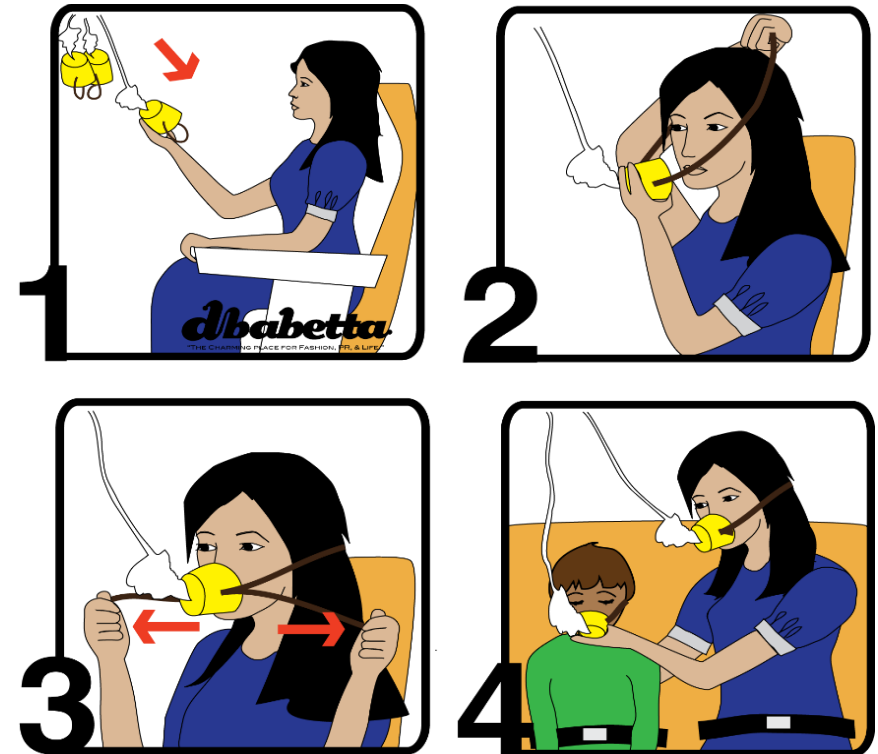
# Being mindful of our own responses

It is quite normal for people to feed off each other's anxieties.

Feelings of anxiety can grow amongst people in the home or in a setting, creating ever-increasing levels.

To step out of the cycle caregivers must first regulate their own emotional experience.

**Put your oxygen mask on first.**



“A calm, regulated adult can regulate a dysregulated child but a dysregulated adult can NEVER calm anyone”

Dr Bruce Perry The Neurosequential  
Model Network  
[www.neurosequential.com](http://www.neurosequential.com)



# Ways to Help

- Normalise, validate and acknowledge it
- Address stress and develop your skills in managing stressful situations
- Be kind to yourself
- Make your plan for coping in the moment, and for building your longer-term resilience
- Practice emotional self-care - putting the oxygen mask on
- Stay in the present moment
- Take steps to replenish – hobby, time with nature, time with family/friends, etc
- Don't suffer along/ask for help, e.g. seek support within the school community or seek external support
- Seek positive support
- Be mindful of your physical health
- Prioritise/set realistic goals



# Talking to children about fears and worries

- It is important for children to know that anxiety is normal.
- To manage their anxiety, it is helpful to give them an understanding of the symptoms. An important way to do this is to focus on the physical symptoms.
- Teach them that physical symptoms are normal responses to anxiety (even if they are not pleasant).

# Reframing anxiety

- A little bit of anxiety can help your child prepare for certain situations. It can even motivate them to perform well. For example:
- Feeling a little anxious about an exam can motivate you to study.
- Feeling nervous about a social situation it can make you prepare and think through what you want to say.
- So, we want to try and reframe anxiety as a strength.





- \* Anxious children usually have vivid imaginations. Though focused on what might go wrong, this imagination could be **used to visualise things going well**.
- \* The tendency to ruminate, rehearse and replay negative events indicates the potential to be **good thinkers, planners and organisers**.
- \* Socially anxious children are usually very sensitive to their own feelings and to those of others, in social situations. This gives them great **skill in understanding people**.



The goal is to help children access these potential strengths so they are working for and not against them.

# My Child's strengths

## Worrying about What People Think



### My Child's Anxiety

Very shy, worries all the time what people will think about them in social situations



### Potential Strengths

A sensitivity to people's feelings/being empathic



### Encouragement

"You are sensitive to people's feelings. Let's think how they might be really feeling in that situation... And how are you feeling?"

- It can be helpful to think about the potential strengths that your child might have.
- Think about things that you can say to your child, to help them reframe their anxiety as a strength, empowering them, rather than discouraging them.



# My child's strengths worksheet

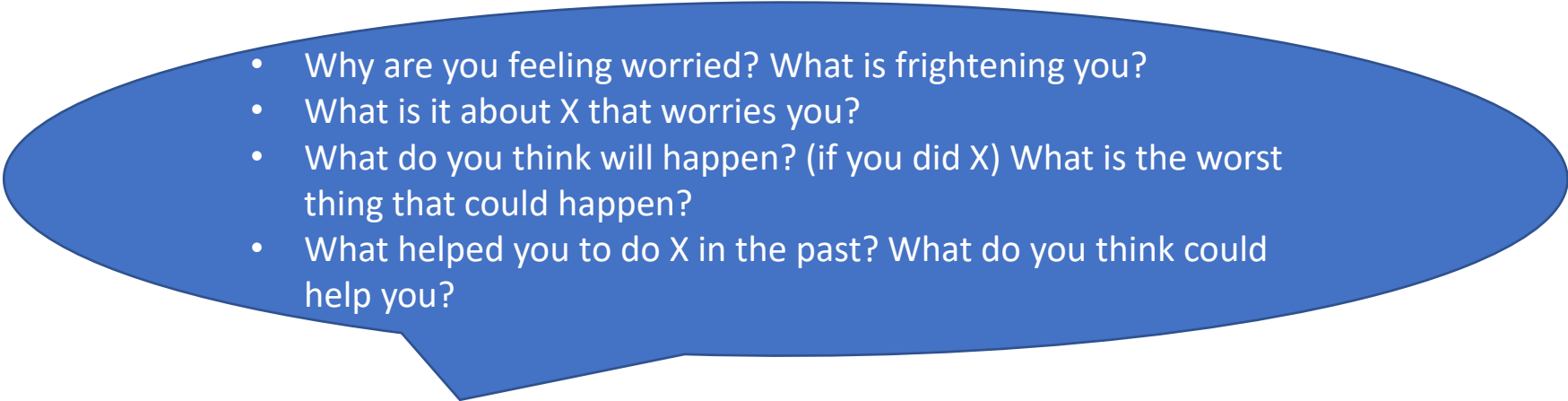
## My Strengths

This worksheet will help you identify all the different things you enjoy and are good at.

<p>What hobbies and activities do I like doing?</p>	<p>Who are my friends?</p>
<p>What am I good at at home?</p>	<p>What subjects am I good at in school?</p>
<p>What jobs do I do at home?</p>	<p>When do I feel most happy?</p>

# Talking to children about their fears & worries

- Building open and trusting relationships and creating a safe, non-judgemental space for a child to talk.
- If possible, find a time and space when a child is feeling calm and you won't be interrupted.
- Asking open-ended questions rather than giving answers to explore what they expect to happen when they are worried. This helps us find out what they need to learn to reduce their anxiety.

- 
- Why are you feeling worried? What is frightening you?
  - What is it about X that worries you?
  - What do you think will happen? (if you did X) What is the worst thing that could happen?
  - What helped you to do X in the past? What do you think could help you?

# Talking to children about their fears & worries

- Empathising – ‘That sounds really difficult to be thinking about that a lot’
- Labelling emotions – ‘It sounds like you are feeling really frightened about...’.
- Make it fun/ rewarding
- Be receptive – “You look sad/upset today, do you want to have a chat/is there anything I can do?”
- Normalising – ‘Being worried feels uncomfortable, it’s not ‘bad’, I feel worried sometimes too’.
- Check understanding – ‘So let me check, what you’re telling me is...’.
- Thanking them – ‘Thank you for sharing and opening up to me. I know it’s not easy’
- Using alternative methods of communication

# Responding Positively As a Parent

Understand your child's emotions and respond with warmth and empathy. Take time to understand the source of their worry and help them to name their emotions.

Child expresses a worry

**Step 1:** Parent presses pause

**Step 2:** Parent tunes in and expresses empathy

Child feels heard

**Step 3:** Parent chooses calm response

Child feels calmer

Parent and child feel more secure about handling worries

The most important thing to do is to "pause" when your child becomes anxious. Try to remain calm instead of reacting immediately to their anxiety.

Once you have acknowledged your child's anxiety, the next step is to take action and respond positively. Use the techniques in this workshop to address your child's worries.

# What if a child finds it difficult to talk about their fears and worries?

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- Some may be reluctant to talk about emotions, perhaps in part because it raises anxiety levels further for them.
- You may want to highlight how common it is to have anxiety and that most people experience anxious thoughts and feelings at some point.
- Take the pressure off: Don't constantly ask your child what is wrong as this can cause them to close down even more. Instead, remind them you are there for them and will listen to them.
- Talk about your own worries: It can help if you talk about your news and your own stresses too. Modelling the sharing of concerns and disclosing problems will help them learn how to do this.
- Don't feel you need to get all the answers straight away.
- (It can be helpful to talk during drives, walks, when it's not too formal)



# What if I make it worse?

- Talking to our children about their fears and worries can increase our own anxious thoughts.
- We might worry that we can make things worse, put ideas in their head or say the wrong thing – these are very normal and common concerns! It is OK to try and get things wrong sometimes.
- Providing a listening, curious ear to your child can make a big difference to their fears and worries.
- The aim isn't to 'fix' the worry, but support your child to feel in control, think for themselves, stop them feeling 'silly' and begin to learn to cope with uncertainty.



# Strategies & Resources

## Coping Skills Wheel

9 Ways to Handle Big Emotions



Created by: CourteneyChasey

# The Body Map

At times, people can experience their emotions through physical feelings, in different parts of their body. For example, when you are anxious, your hands might feel sweaty, 'butterflies' in your stomach, or your neck could feel stiff. Each person experiences these feelings in different ways.

People sometimes notice these physical feelings before they are even aware that they are anxious.

You can try the body map exercise, which will help you and your child to assess your bodies and then visually describe how you are feeling.



Consider the different body sensations you might be experiencing, for example:

Do you feel cold or warm anywhere?

How does your skin feel?

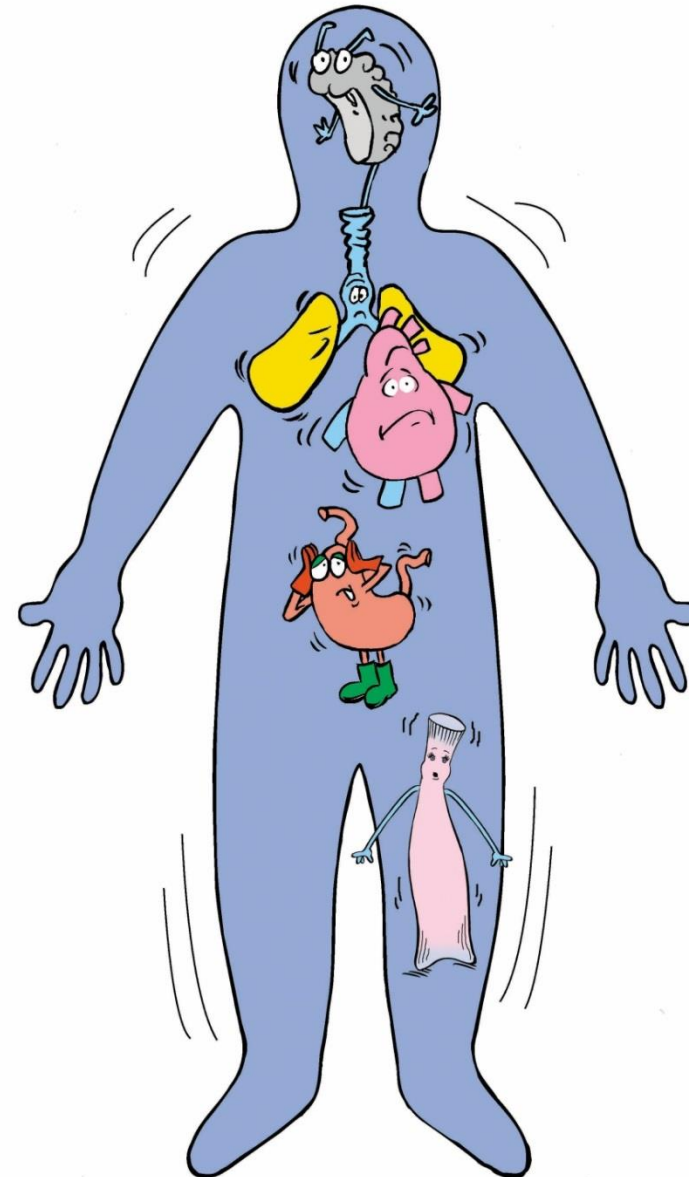
Does anywhere feel prickly, bubbly, or itchy?

Can you feel anything in your tummy? How about your hands and feet?



# Energy/Body Mapping

- Show me where you feel  
Happy? Sad?
- Where is Your Energy Right  
now:
  - Notice heart rate
  - Notice body temperature
  - Notice breathing
  - Notice muscle tension



# Grounding strategies

5 4 3 2 1

**SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN**  
FIRST- TAKE 3 SLOW BELLY BREATHS!

5 List 5 things you can SEE 

4 List 4 things you can FEEL 

3 List 3 things you can HEAR 

2 List 2 things you can SMELL 

1 List something you like to TASTE 

**FINISHED? - TAKE ANOTHER 3 SLOW BELLY BREATHS**

Room Search

Think of a category and search the room for it. For example, look for:

- Everything that is a ... colour
- Everything that is a ... shape
- Things that feel of...
- Things made of ...

Grounding can help when emotions feel overwhelming, to help bring our focus back to the present moment.

# Distraction

- Using thoughts to distract your child e.g.,
  - Remembering their favourite story
  - Think of an animal/country for every letter of the alphabet
  - Count backwards from 60 in 3s – 60, 57, 54...
  - Get involved in absorbing activities (e.g., making/building something, being active)
  - Get them to describe things around them.

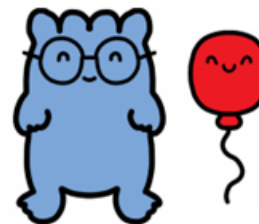


# Breathing techniques

- Children can learn to reduce their anxiety and calm themselves down, using simple deep breathing techniques.

Breathing techniques can reduce our anxiety and lower our heart rate. This helps us feel calmer and more relaxed.

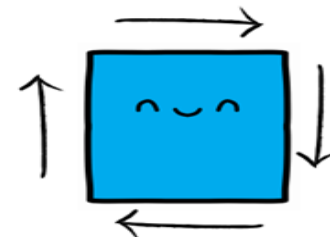
## Belly Breathing



- Take a deep breath in and fill your belly like you're inflating a balloon.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath in and fill the balloon in your belly.
- Pause and then let all of the air out of your belly like you're letting a balloon deflate.
- As you do this, count 1, 2, 3, 4 to breath out and let the balloon go down from your belly.

## Square Breathing

- Imagine you're drawing a square with your finger in the air.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the top line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line down the side and then pause.
- Breath in while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the bottom line and then pause.
- Breath out while counting 1, 2, 3, 4 as you draw the line up the side to make the square.



## Finger Breathing



- Use your index finger to trace around the edges of the fingers on your opposite hand.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath in as you go up the first finger.
- Count 1, 2, 3, 4 and breath out as you go down the finger.
- Repeat until you have traced up and down all five fingers, breathing 1, 2, 3, 4 in and 1, 2, 3, 4 out each time.

# Coping Thoughts/ Positive Self-talk

- Stop, and breathe, I can do this
- I can learn from this and it will be easier next time
- I can use my coping skills and get through this
- I can be anxious/angry/sad and still deal with this
- People love me
- I'm good at lots of things
- I have done this before and I can do it again
- Thoughts are just thoughts – these thoughts are not helpful
- This feels bad, it's a normal body reaction – it will pass
- This is difficult and uncomfortable, but it's only temporary

You can help your child to think of and write down their own coping thoughts, for each difficult or distressing situation.



# Visualisation- Safe place

- When we feel stressed, worried or unhappy, it can be helpful to visualise our safe place and this can help us feel calm and relaxed



# My safe space worksheets

## Visualisation Safe Space

- My 'Safe Place' worksheets encourages the visualisation technique by asking children a number of questions to help them imagine their safe place, for instance, what it smells like and what they might be able to hear. You can create your own safe space worksheet with your child or find other worksheets available online
- - This can be quite a fun activity to do together

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS MUME ENFIELD Council Enfield CAMHS Mental Health Support Team in Schools

Name: .....

### MY SAFE SPACE

In my safe space I can hear, \_\_\_\_\_

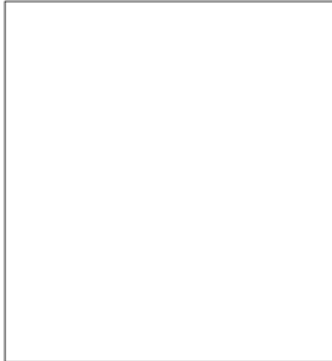
In my safe space I can see, \_\_\_\_\_

In my safe space I can smell, \_\_\_\_\_

In my safe space I can feel, \_\_\_\_\_

In my safe space I can taste, \_\_\_\_\_

In my safe space I am with, \_\_\_\_\_

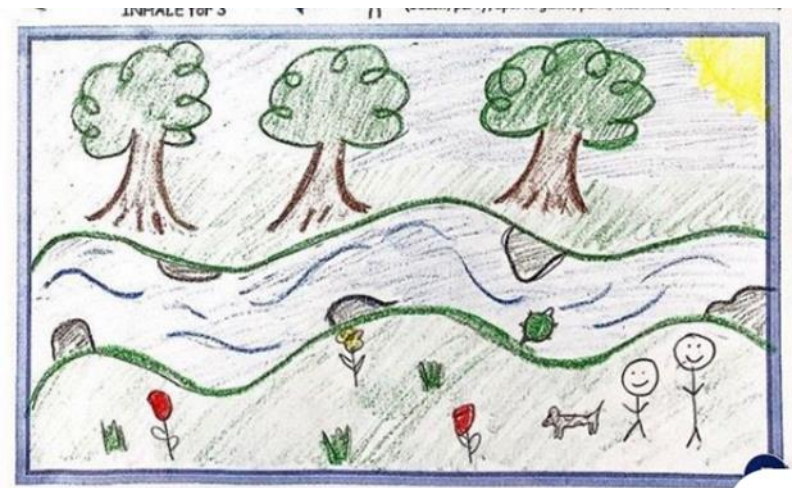


In the space below draw or use words to describe your safe space. This is your special place you can go to in your mind when you want to or when you feel big emotions such as feel stressed, upset or worried. In this place you will be completely relaxed, safe and happy. It might be a real place or a place you are imagining.

Think about the following questions when drawing your calm space below:

- What can you see around you?
- What colours and textures can you see?
- Is there anyone else there?
- What is the light like?
- Can you hear anything?
- Is it quiet or loud?
- What can you feel? Can you feel the sun on your skin or a light breeze or the feeling of soft sand or fresh cool grass under your toes?
- Can you smell anything nice and relaxing in this special place where you feel completely calm, happy and safe?

My safe space:



# Worry Box

- It might help your child to write down their worries and put them in a worry box.
- Putting worries into a box allows for the child to feel they are taking the worry out of their mind and leaving it somewhere else.
- Your child can then come back to box at a time when they are calm and discuss with a trusted friend or adult to problem-solve in order to ease the worry.





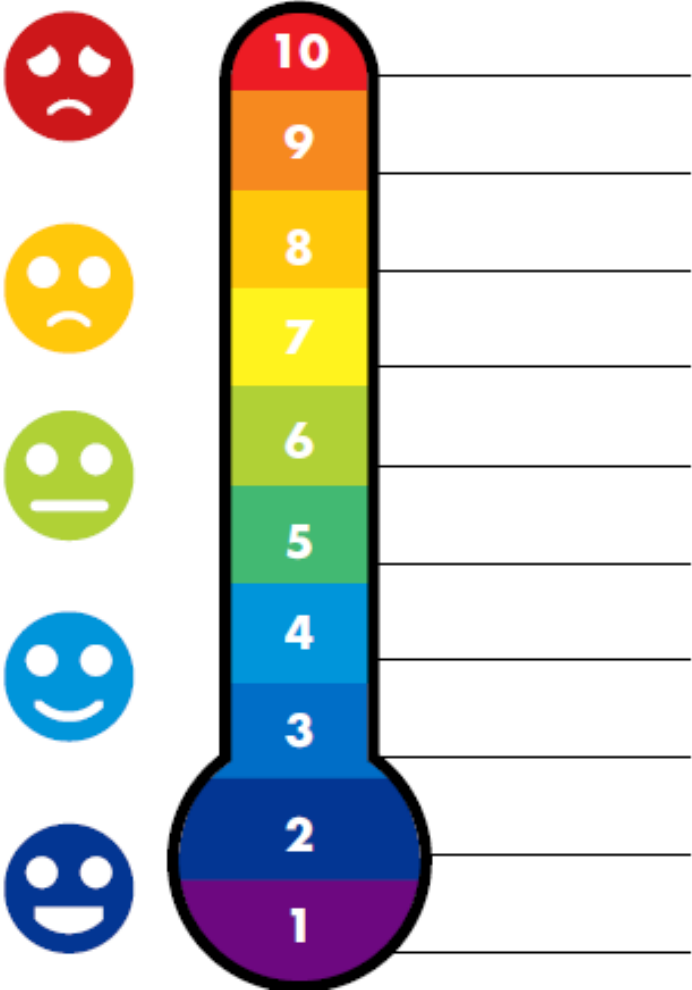
# Physical Strategies

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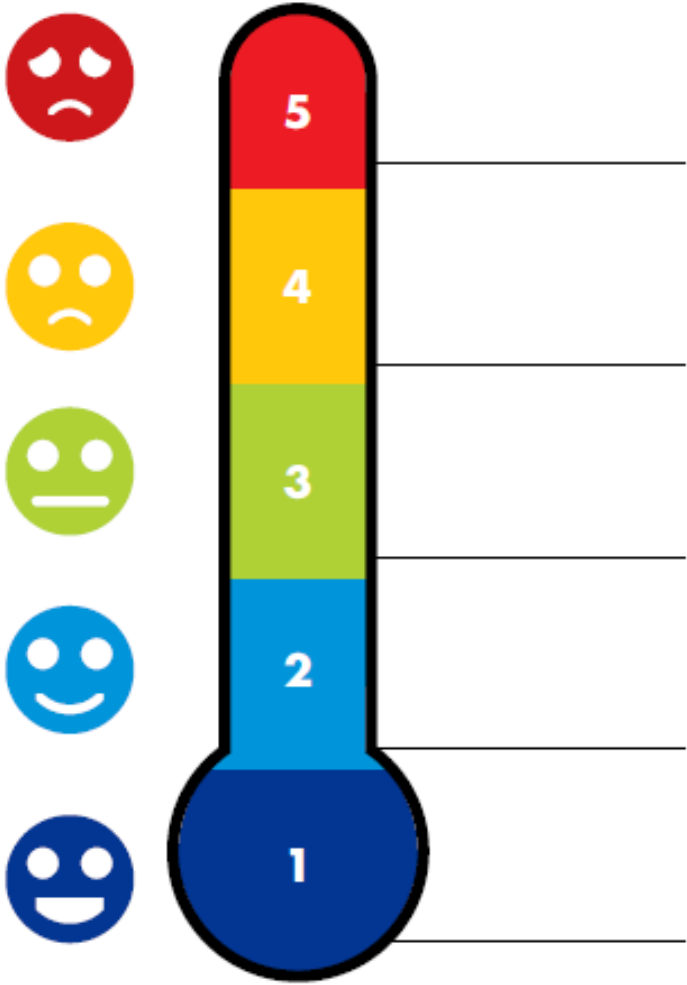
- For some young people, regular movement breaks will allow them to get rid of nervous tension.
- Altering the vestibular and proprioceptive systems by rocking, pacing or other repetitive body movements may reduce levels of anxiety.



Emotion Thermometer (by Tony Attwood)  
How do I feel?













Emotion Thermometer (by Tony Attwood)  
How do I feel?



## Match Actions to the Feelings

Choose the pictures that would help you feel calm, happy, nervous, sad or angry. Cut them out and paste them on your feelings thermometer.

 Ask for a hug.	 Take a break.	 Take ten deep breaths.
 Draw a picture.	 Talk to someone.	 Play with toys.
 Play with toys.	 Play with a friend.	 Read a book.
 Ask for help.	 Go for a walk.	 Go on the swings.
 Jump on the trampoline.	 Do a puzzle.	 Play a game.

## Feelings Thermometer How Are You Feeling?

This feelings thermometer belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

 angry	5	When I feel angry, I can...
 sad	4	When I feel sad, I can...
 nervous	3	When I feel nervous, I can...
 happy	2	When I feel happy, I can...
 calm	1	When I am calm, I can...

## 5 to 1 scale

What does it look or feel like?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ My: \_\_\_\_\_ scale

Rating	Looks like	Feels like	I can try to
			
			
			
			
			

## 5 to 1 scale

What does it look or feel like?

Name: Ben My: Angry scale

Rating	Looks like	Feels like	I can try to
	Swearing Breaking stuff Clenching Teeth Wide-eyed	I have to break something Feels like I need to leave Like I will explode.	Take a walk or sit in a dark room
	Swearing	Mad	Leave the room with permission to go to a safe place
	Not talking Pacing A little swearing	Upset	Go get a drink
	Not happy Keeping to self Still interacting with others	Start to feel agitated and distracted	Talk to a safe person Use deep breathing
	Talking and engaging with others	Calm and relaxed	Recognise possible triggers in my environment that might make me angry

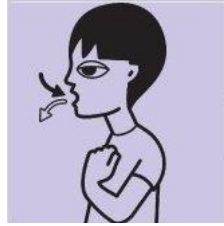
# What am I feeling in my body?



**Headache**



**Dizzy**



**Breathing fast**



**Tears/crying**



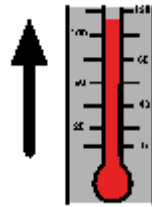
**Stomach hurts**



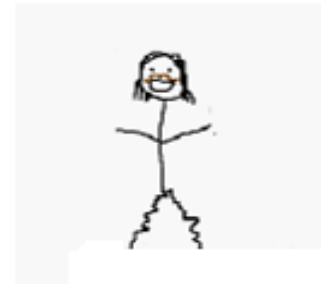
**Loud Voice**



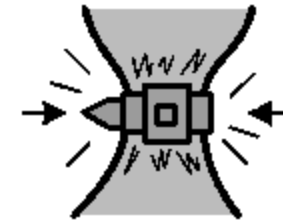
**Heart beating fast**



**Hot**



**Shaky**



**Tight**



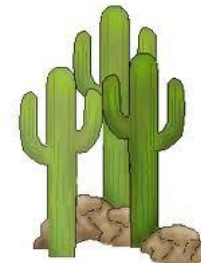
**Cold**



**Frozen**



**Heavy**



**Prickly**



**Sweaty**

**When I feel happy, sad, proud, worried, angry, excited or stressed, my body might show signs. Here are the signs that I might feel:**

Where do I  
feel it in my  
body?



Head



Face



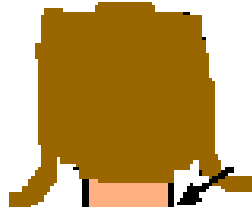
Eyes



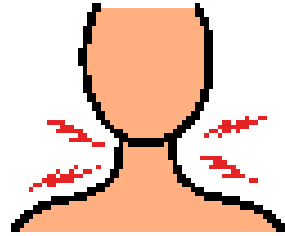
Mouth



Voice



Neck



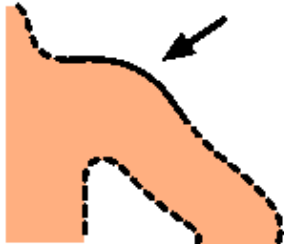
Throat



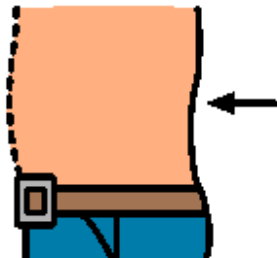
Hands



Fist / Arm



Shoulder



Back



Leg



Foot



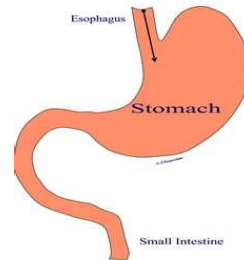
Knee



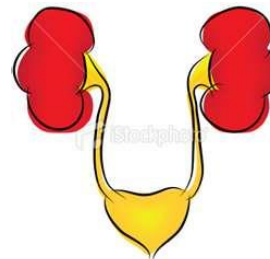
Heart



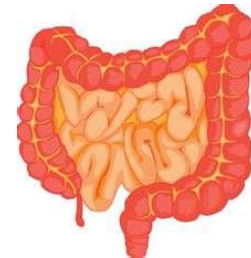
Lungs



Stomach



Bladder



Bowel

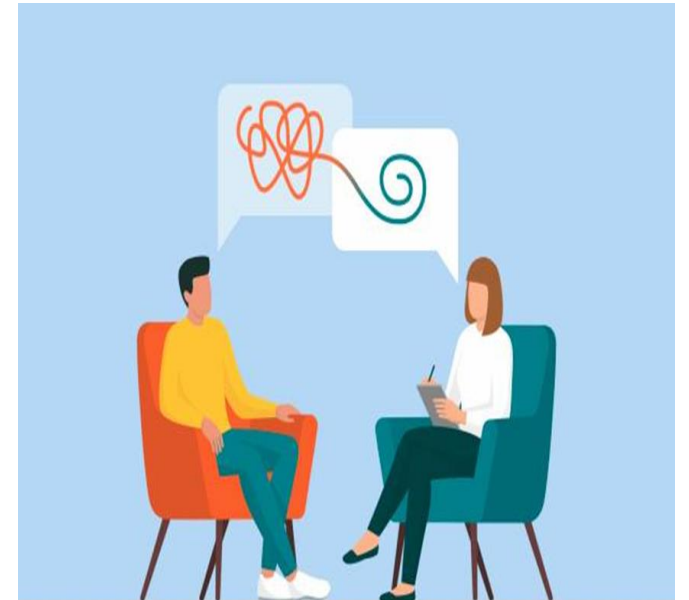
# Take away messages

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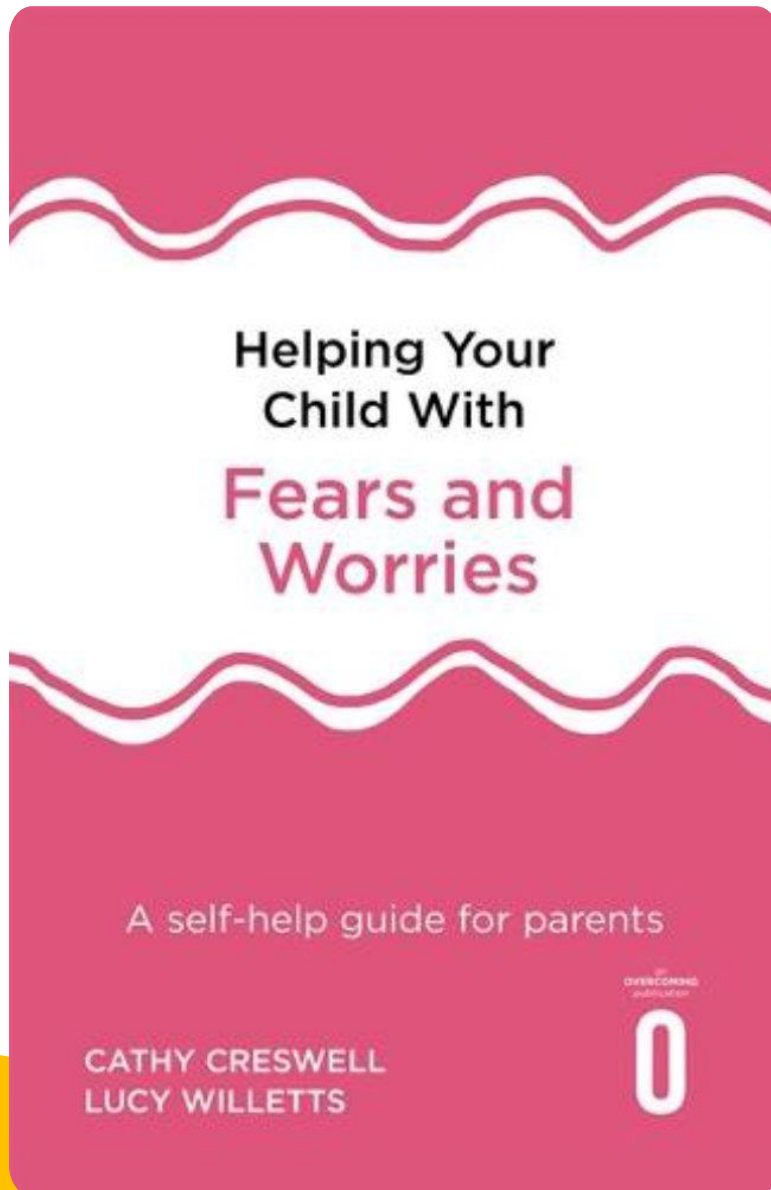
- Anxiety is a common and natural response
- Reassure the child that anxiety can not harm them and it will pass
- Stay calm and talk in gentle voice – use open-ended questions, pick the right moment, be empathetic, make suggestions etc.
- Encourage breathing and grounding strategies
- Give time and space to calm down after

# How can you access support?

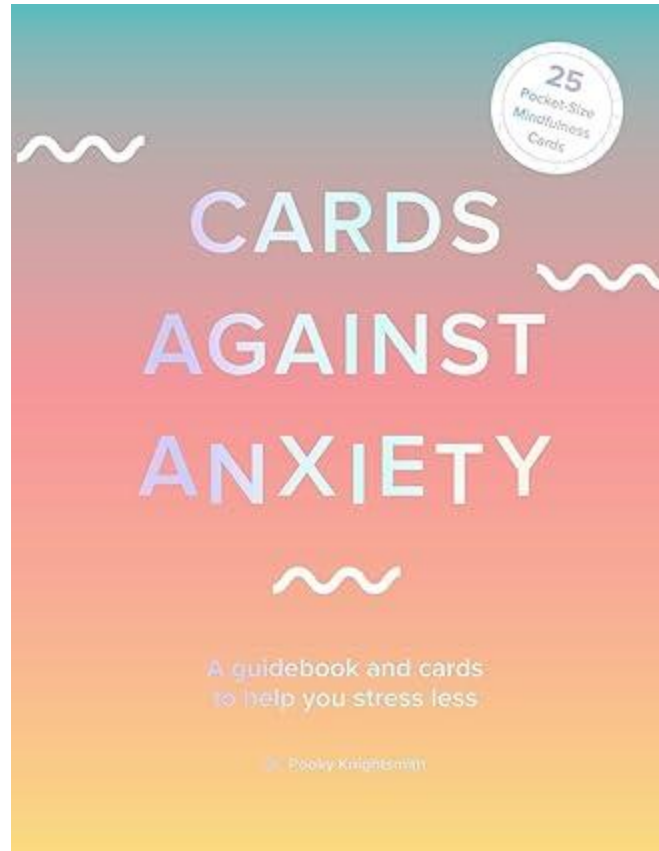
- If you feel like your child would benefit from our service, speak to your child's teacher or the School's Mental Health Lead.
- You cannot self-refer, but if appropriate, someone from your school will make a referral to our team.







- Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries (HYC) ; based on the principles of Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willett's book (Anxiety Support)



- Anytime and anywhere, put your worries to rest with this guidebook and portable set of cards
- Cards Against Anxiety is a unique approach to dealing with anxiety, overwhelming thoughts, and other unwanted feelings that accompany the stresses of everyday modern life. This slipcase set includes a guide to cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques, and a deck of 25 wallet-size cards. Each card has a focus phrase on the front and a handy reminder of the technique on the back. The book highlights which methods you may find most useful for different situations, so you can pull the card that you want to focus on and carry it with you or prop it up on your desk or mirror. Whether you are at work, at school, at home, or on the road, these techniques are easy to use and, with practice, will significantly improve your mood, focus, and quality of life.

[Cards Against Anxiety \(Guidebook & Card Set\): A Guidebook and Cards to Help You Stress Less: Knightsmith, Pooky: 9781419743757: Amazon.com: Books](#)

# Additional support

- **Contact your child's GP/School**
- **Enfield CAMHS 24/7 crisis line.** If you need help or in crisis, call T: 0800 151 0023
- **Book:** Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries by Cathy Creswell - A great resource for parents which talks through many different strategies you can put in place at home to manage their worry and provides step by step guidance and case studies on how to do this.
- **Book:** The Huge Bag of Worries – by Virginia Ironside – A fictional story about how one girl learns to let go of her worries.
- **Booklet:** Managing worries and anxious feelings workbook for primary school children Website: [Anxiety\\_Online\\_Booklet\\_Primary\\_V120200423.pdf](https://www.nhs.uk/primarycare/mentalhealth/primary-school-children/Anxiety_Online_Booklet_Primary_V120200423.pdf) (lpft.nhs.uk)
- **Gingerbread:** Single Parent Helpline T: 0808 802 0925). Website: <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/talk-to-us>
- **Family Action** –family/parent helpline (0808 802 6666). Website: <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/familyline>
- **Family Lives:** Parenting and Family Support. T: 0808 800 2222 <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>
- **Young Minds Parent Helpline:** Offers free and confidential expert advice for parents worried about their child. Information on supporting children and young people with specific problems can also be found on their website. T: 0808 802 5544 free to call 9.30-4pm, online contact form for out of hours. **Website:** <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help-for-parents/parents-helpline/>
- **Youngminds:** A-Z guide gives advice on how parents can help their child with their feelings and behaviour, as well as mental health conditions and life events. **Website:** <https://youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/>
- **Family Lives:** Advice on all aspects of parenting, including health and wellbeing, family relationships, bullying. T: 0808 800 2222 free to call (Monday to Friday - 9am to 9pm and Weekdays - 10am to 3pm. **Website:** [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- **MindEd:** A free educational resource for adults on children and young people's mental health. **Website:** <https://www.minded.org.uk/>
- **Kooth:** Online counselling service with a qualified counsellor and emotional well-being platform for children and young people. **Website:** <https://www.kooth.com>

Reach Out  
For Help.  
You're Not  
Alone.

