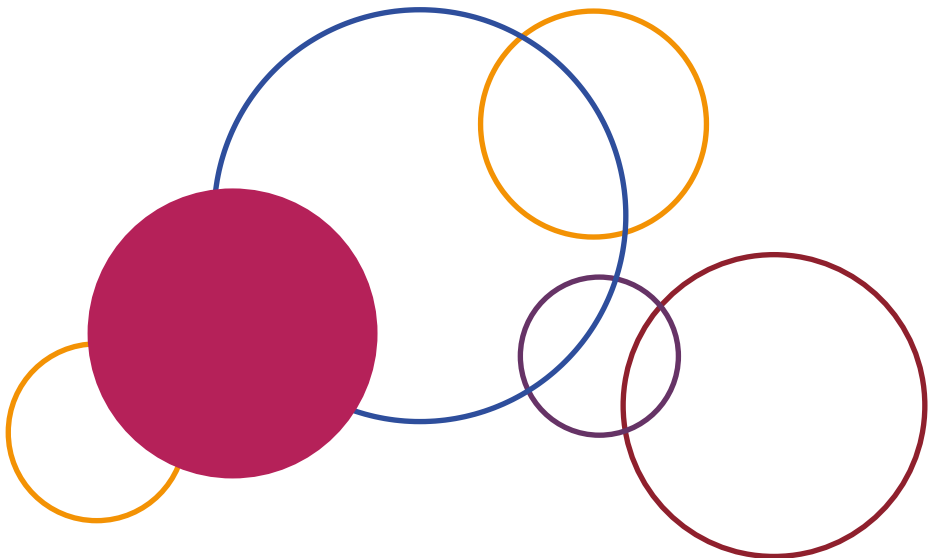


Service information guide

Lancashire Healthy Young People and Families 0-19 Service

Anxiety



Welcome to The Lancashire Healthy Young People and Families 0-19 Service

Anxiety

Information and guidance for schools, parents and young people

What is Anxiety

- Type of fear or strong feeling about a situation.
- Thought of a threat or something which may go wrong in the future.
- Causes fright and uncertainty.
- Lasts a short time or can be prolonged.
- Can affect our ability to eat, sleep, concentrate, travel, leave the house, go to school and work.
- Can interfere with our enjoyment and take over our lives and control thoughts and behavior's.

Why do we get Anxious?

- Sense fear.
- Extreme reaction to everyday events.
- Loss of control.
- Stress to a life situation.
- Release of adrenaline in the body.
- Preparation for an emergency.
- "Fight or flight" primitive response.
- Increase blood flow to muscles.
- Dilated pupils, increased muscle activity.

Triggers

- After something bad has happened or sense can happen.
- Significant life events i.e. bereavement/illness/separation/bullying.
- Fears: Dogs, spiders, snakes, flying, wasps.
- Genetic predisposition – how we are made up.
- Temperamental disposition – how we behave.
- Uncertainty– A fear of having to do something new or out of our comfort zone.



Physical Signs of Anxiety

- Fast Irregular heartbeat- Dry mouth or throat.
- Feeling lightheaded/ headaches/ dizziness.
- Weak/tense/tingling/aching of muscles.
- “Frozen” to the spot or unable to keep still Blurred vision.
- Increased breathing rate / shallow breathing.
- Stomach aches/ Nausea or bowel problems.
- Sweating- hot and cold.



How Can We Help?

- Encourage your child to talk about how their body feels when they experience different types of feelings.
- Share examples of your own body clues.
- Notice your child's physical complaints.
- If they complain of a tummy ache/headache etc, explain that it might be their body's way of telling them something e.g. are they feeling worried or nervous about something?

Positivity

- Praise your child for "brave" behavior's, such as trying new things, being kind to others, and facing scary situations. Give them specific feedback e.g. "I liked the way you....."
- Try to share a "happy thing" that happened that day. It can be something big or small! This encourages focusing on the positive.
- Before bed write down one worry and put aside then write down 3 things proud/happy/thankful for.

Sharing Feelings

- **Encourage** your child to talk about things that upset them including any fears or worries.
- **Share** some of your own childhood worries and fears. This will help your child to understand that feeling anxious and worried is normal and okay. We all feel this way sometimes – even adults!
- **Help** build your child's vocabulary of feelings words.
- **Validate** your child's emotions, Let them know that you notice their feelings.



Inner Thoughts...

The way we **THINK** influences the way we **FEEL** and **BEHAVE**



Red THOUGHTS vs. Green (POWERFUL) THOUGHTS.

Red Thoughts

- "I'm dumb".
- "I give up".
- "I hate my sister/ brother".
- "I have no friends".

Green (Powerful) Thoughts

- I'm Ok at lots of things.
- If I try i,'ll get better.
- I find my brother/ sister annoying sometimes but other times they are fun to play with.
- I have two people I play with and my dog is my friend.

Thought Challengers

It is sometimes difficult to change negative (red) to positive (green) thoughts.

Orange thoughts or questions can help us!

Orange Thoughts

- Is this really true? Am I exaggerating?
- Is this thought helping me? Am I making things out to be worse than what they really are?
- What other explanations could there be?

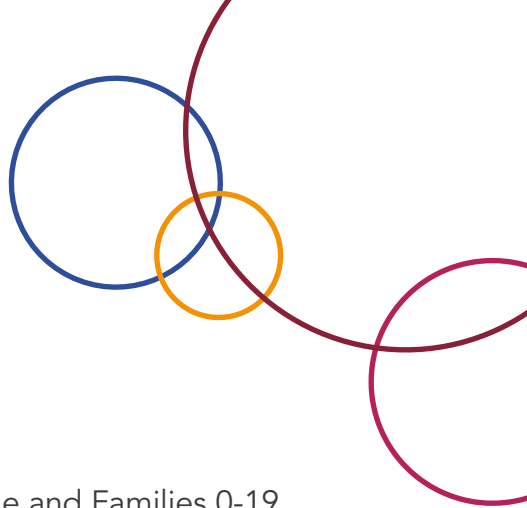
Breathing Exercises

- You might notice that when you feel worried; your breathing quickens and becomes shallow.
- By taking slow, deep breaths, we can relax our body, our heart beats slower, and we feel less tense or worried.
- Try taking in a slow deep breath, starting from the bottom of your stomach, in through the nose. Breathe out as slowly as you can through the nose or mouth.
- Imagine smelling a flower long deep breath and then blowing the flower away.



SELF-ESTEEM

- A huge confidence boost for your child is to give them lots of praise for their attempts at difficult activities.
- Reward your child when they try their best e.g. if they try something they have never tried before or if they do something that they usually find a bit scary. Tell your child that they should feel proud of themselves
- Recognise partial successes (not just for reaching their final goal). This helps children to learn to persist and not give up when things get difficult (learning to focus on small, achievable steps).
- Encourage your child to feel good about themselves when they have done their best, even if things do not go as planned. E.g. if a child does something new/faces a fear, they could say to themselves.
- "I'm a winner. I tried my best and I know what to do next time".



Get in touch

The Lancashire Healthy Young People and Families 0-19
Service

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