

# ANXIETY

**Looking after your child's mental health is important!**



## **Anxiety and worries are no doubt prevalent within your child(ren) at this confusing and uneasy time.**

Being out of school, not allowed to be with their friends and family is really challenging for us all, however for children experiencing anxiety this can be extra tricky and have long term effects on their mental health.

“It’s ok to not be ok” is a phrase that we, as support workers, say a lot to the children we work with. It is absolutely ok to be scared, concerned, worried and stressed in these circumstances. What can you do to help your child?

**1**

**TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AN AGE APPROPRIATE WAY**

**2**

**REMINDE YOUR CHILD IT IS ‘OK’ TO HAVE THESE FEELINGS**

**3**

**IT WON'T LAST FOREVER! FEELINGS WILL COME AND GO.**



### **Easy No Cook Playdough**

2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 3 tbs of cream of tartar, 2 tbs oil, 2 cups of boiling water (be careful!). Add scents or food colouring if you like. Mix all together in a bowl and knead until it forms a dough.



### **Bubble Mix**

Make your own bubbles. Use a large cup. Add 1/2 cup of washing up liquid, 1 1/2 cups of water and 2 teaspoons of sugar. Mix altogether!

Please make time to talk to your child(ren) about how they are feeling. Emotional literacy is just as important, if not more important, than trying to keep them up to date with their Maths, English and Science. Validate your child's feelings and try to change their mindset into a more positive outlook.

## What can you do to reduce levels of anxiety?

Why don't you and your child make a self sooth box! This can be created using a range of sensory materials from around your home which you can then encourage your child to use when they are feeling stressed or worried. Lets try and break it down:

**TOUCH** - use play dough, fidgets, spinners, stress ball, slime, messy play such as porridge oats, jelly, gardening.

**MEMORIES** - it's good to remember positive times and know that there are positive times ahead. Change any negative thoughts into positives! Look at photos from past happy times, trips, holidays, loved ones. Look at pictures of those who they aspire to be, look at their favourite story book and retell fun stories of special times, create stories of what they want to happen in the future.

**SMELL** - add herbs and spices to play dough, collect flowers from your garden to make your own perfume or room spray, light a scented candle (adults only) and relax allowing your imagination to take you to a happy place



**MUSIC** - music can have such a positive effect on our emotional wellbeing. Try calming music, relaxing your muscles. Or put on some happy music, show off your dance moves, your at home so who cares what you look like. :) Check out GoNoodle - Dreamworks Trolls - Cant Stop the Feeling on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/KhfkYzUwYFk>



**WATER** - drinking lots! Water is vital for reducing the feeling of anxiety - using a straw can also help as this focuses on slowing down your breathing to a nice gentle rhythm. Add a water bottle to your self sooth box to remind you.

**BREATHE** - there are lots of breathing techniques that you can do with your child to slow down their heart rate. When a child is anxious, adrenaline is released in their brain and it causes them to have a more rapid heart rate, encourage them to breathe slow deep breaths in and out. My favourite is to use my hand.

You can also draw a star on a sheet of paper and follow



the same process as you trace along each side of the star. Blowing bubbles is also a good activity to do when feeling stressed.

**POSITIVITY** - add some positive affirmations to the sooth box - get the children to write positive statements about themselves and life - you can add some too. When they are stressed you can read these together.

Other ideas to relieve stress and anxiety may include colouring, drawing pictures, being imaginative, yoga, meditation, learn how to knit or crochet, reading book, gentle exercise, making paper aeroplanes, write a joke book, make crosswords or word searches.

Why not try out some of these yoga poses - got these from [twinkl.co.uk](http://twinkl.co.uk) I thought they were great for little ones, they made us giggle!



Yoga Cards

### Mountain Pose - Tadasana

**Benefits** Improves posture, strengthens core, muscles and legs.

- 1 Stand tall with your weight balanced evenly on your feet.
- 2 Firm your thigh muscles and pull in your tummy.
- 3 Press your shoulders back and hold your arms out straight, a little way from your body.
- 4 Breathe deeply and hold as long as needed (at least two long breaths).

Yoga Cards

### Tree Pose - Vrikasana

**Benefits** Improves balance; strengthens thighs, calves, and ankles; stretches legs and chest; develops concentration.

- 1 Begin in mountain pose.
- 2 Lift your right foot, turning your knee out; place your foot below your left knee.
- 3 Press your hands together.
- 4 Raise arms overhead, and look up to your hands if possible.
- 5 Return hands to your chest, and lower your right leg.
- 6 Repeat with left leg.

Yoga Cards

### Warrior II Pose - Virabhadrasana II

**Benefits** Strengthens and stretches legs and core; stretches chest and shoulders; relieves backaches.

- 1 Stand with your feet wide apart. Turn your left foot in and your right foot out 90°.
- 2 Inhale, and lift your arms parallel to floor.
- 3 Exhale and bend your right knee. Be careful not to extend your knee past the 90° point with your ankle.
- 4 Keep your torso tall, turn your head, and look out over your fingertips.
- 5 Inhale, straighten your legs and lower your arms. Repeat on opposite side.

Yoga Cards

### Chair Pose - Utkatasana

**Benefits** Strengthens legs, stretches shoulders and chest.

- 1 Start in mountain pose.
- 2 Exhale, and bend your knees as if you were sitting in a chair.
- 3 Reach your arms towards the ceiling, with your palms facing each other.
- 4 Hold this pose and breathe.

Yoga Cards

### Downward-Facing Dog - Adho Mukha Svanasana

**Benefits** Calms the mind; relieves stress; energizes the body; strengthens arms and legs; stretches upper and lower body; relieves headaches; back pain and fatigue.

- 1 Begin on hands and knees with toes tucked under.
- 2 Exhale, straighten knees and lift hips, so you are in an upside-down V.
- 3 Hold this position for as long as you like. Let your head hang down and breathe.
- 4 To release, exhale and bring knees to the floor.

Yoga Cards

### Preparation and Safety

**Age** 5-7

**National Curriculum** Develop balance, agility and co-ordination.

**Time** Can be adapted to any setting or time frame.

**Preparation** Session to happen on a carpeted floor or mats with enough space to stretch out arms and legs. If possible, have a bag with animals, pictures and stories inside to promote discussion.

**Safety** Session to happen on a carpeted floor or mats with enough space to stretch out arms and legs.