

Mental Health Monthly

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, which can be mild or severe. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life e.g. you may feel worried and anxious about sitting a test, going to a new year group, having an injection, a job interview etc.



The pandemic and lockdown may impact on children's mental health in many different ways. Children may be experiencing increased anxiety and struggling to understand how they are feeling. There is a really useful series of illustrations on The Priory website that may help you to discuss with your child why we become anxious and how it makes our bodies feel. This can be found here: <https://www.priorygroup.com/young-peoples-services/how-to-explain-anxiety-to-your-child>.

Breathing Exercises to Help Children with Anxiety

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress

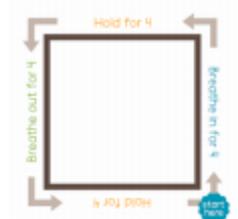
Bumble Bee Breathing

Breathe in through the nose. Exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of the bumble bee. The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the breath out.

Drawing

First draw a square, star and a triangle on a piece of paper.

SQUARE - follow the sides of the square, breathing in for 4 counts on one side and out on the next side for 4 counts again. Continue round the square.



STAR - use your finger to follow the sides of the star. Breathe in. Hold your breath on the tip and breathe out on the other side. Continue until you have been all the way around the star.

TRIANGLE - take a deep breath for 3 counts on side one. Hold your breath for 3 counts on the next side and finally out for 3 counts on the final side. Do these for a few minutes at a time.



Playing with Bubbles

Playing with 'bubbles' is a great way to help regulate deep breathing. It is also something that can be done together with the rest of the family. Take a big, tummy pushing out breath before gently and slowly blowing to make the bubbles - making sure the tummy is contracting.

Places to go for advice and support



This website from the NHS offers expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your child's mental health and wellbeing as well as the rest of the family.

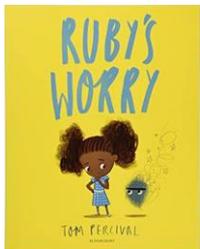
<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mindmatters/>

The NSPCC are offering support and advice if you feel your child is struggling with their mental health and anxiety due to the coronavirus. More information and advice can be found on their website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>



Young Minds – <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

December's Book Picks

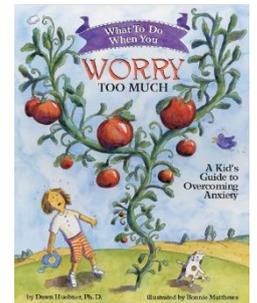


Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IhhCq44ar8>

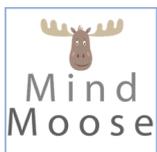
Ruby loves being Ruby. Until, one day, she finds a worry. At first, it's not such a big worry, and that's all right, but then it starts to grow. It gets bigger and bigger every day and it makes Ruby sad. How can Ruby get rid of it and feel like herself again?

What To Do When You Worry Too Much by Dawn Huebner

All children worry, but some kids begin to feel like captives of their fears, seeking reassurance over and over again or avoiding situations that cause anxiety at all costs. This interactive self-help book uses age-appropriate language to introduce cognitive-behavioural techniques that provide anxious kids with tools and techniques to identify and manage their own anxiety, so they can feel ready to take on the world!



December's App Picks



Mind Moose

Children go on a journey of discovery with Mind Moose and his animal friends. They explore more about themselves and different coping mechanisms so that in times of stress they know what helps them relax and what makes them feel happy.

Me: A Kid's Diary

This interactive app will inspire your child to learn more about themselves and the people around them. It's designed to build self-awareness, self-confidence, empathy and kindness through a range of different journaling techniques.



Communicate any concerns with school

If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or well-being, then please let school know. There will be things that we can do to help and support you.

Miss Snelgrove