

How to support a child with

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY

Useful Apps:

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.



MindShift



FearTools



The Worry Box

WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE

Anxiety is the feeling of worry, apprehension, fear and/or panic in response to situations which seem overwhelming, threatening, unsafe or uncomfortable. Anxiety is your body's way of alerting you that some kind of action is needed in the face of a situation that is perceived to be threatening or dangerous.

WHEN IS IT HARMFUL?

Anxiety becomes a problem when it interferes with life. If it becomes overwhelming and prevents you from taking appropriate actions or prompts you to take actions that are counterproductive.

Anxiety may be detrimental if you avoid studying for a major exam that worries you, or if you cope with worry about your relationship by getting unnecessarily suspicious and then yelling at your partner.

If you think you may be struggling with any of the types of anxiety talked about on this card, book an appointment with your doctor to talk about it.

Mental health and wellbeing cards

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk>



PANIC ATTACKS

Intense episodes of fear that often occur out of the blue and will peak within ten minutes and often even quicker.

When this alarm system gets triggered you are likely to experience a series of physical and cognitive symptoms which can be overwhelming.

Some people have panic attacks but never develop Panic Disorder.

Often after someone has experienced a panic attack the worry of having another is what becomes debilitating.

SPECIFIC PHOBIAS

There are many people who dislike certain things/situations and become anxious when in contact with them.

However if you have a phobia, the thing/situation evokes intense distressing fear that significantly impacts their ability to function.

There are many types of objects, animals and situations that could evoke this type of fear including:

- flying or driving
- snakes or spiders / other animals (dogs, cats, etc.)
- heights, bridges and tunnels
- dentists or doctors
- elevators / lifts
- blood, injections, injuries or illness
- storms, loud noises etc

SOCIAL ANXIETY

Fear of being appraised or judged negatively by others and as a result, feeling embarrassed or humiliated.

The fear is out of proportion to the actual situation but anxiety is uncontrollable (even though the person may know they are being irrational).

This will often result in avoidance of situations where you may feel that you will experience an increased likelihood of being judged negatively.

GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER

A condition whereby you experience chronic and debilitating anxiety and / or worry.

Your worry affects your ability to function in important areas of your life like work, home, school and your personal relationships.

In addition, you also may experience a lot of physical symptoms that are related to the worry.

OBSESSIVE-COMPulsive DISORDER (OCD)

A condition in which you experience thoughts, images, or impulses that come into your mind that are very disturbing to you and may make you feel anxious (Obsessions).

You may then need to perform certain acts or rituals in order to make yourself feel better or less anxious (Compulsions).

TIPS FOR MANAGING ANXIETY

- Daily physical activity.
- A nutritious, well-balanced diet.
- Adequate amount of sleep.
- Emotional support from friends and family.
- Work on creating realistic, attainable goals.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of alcohol and drugs and limit caffeine intake.
- Don't engage in "emotional reasoning" (e.g., "because I feel awful, my life is terrible").
- Don't assume responsibility for events which are outside of your control.
- Manage your screen time.
- Try to distract your thoughts.
- Try doing some physical activity.
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling.
- See our coping strategies card for ways to help manage your anxiety.