

Understanding Anxiety



Name:

Class:



Healthier Minds: Understanding Anxiety



This booklet is designed to be worked through with a parent or carer at home. The main aims of the booklet are:

- To reinforce learning from the Healthier Minds Understanding Anxiety Whole Class or Group Lessons
- To promote the importance of talking openly about mental and emotional wellbeing and to normalise these conversations
- To involve parents and carers in developing our Understanding Anxiety for Whole Class and Groups resource

You can find more information on how to support your child whilst discussing mental and emotional wellbeing by downloading our Parents and Carers guide on the Healthier Minds Website and exploring the different sections of the website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/healthierminds/>

You can get in touch with us by emailing:

HealthierMindsHub@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Task 1: What is Anxiety?

Discuss the question with someone at home then, in the box below, write some points summarising what you have learned about anxiety so far. Some things to consider - how does it feel (think about emotions and feelings in your body)? What kind of situations might cause someone to feel anxious? How common is it - does it happen to all of us?



With the person you are working with at home, share a time that you felt anxious. You might want to ask them about a time they have felt anxious - remember it is something that everyone experiences! Sometimes, simply sharing your worries with a trusted person can be very helpful.

Task 2: Anxiety and the Brain

1. Draw and label a picture of the brain below, showing the brain stem, the pre-frontal cortex and the amygdala.

2. Match the parts of the brain to their function.

Pre-frontal cortex

automatic functions, such as breathing and heart rate

Amygdala

helps us make decisions and think rationally

Brain stem

controls our emotional responses, including fear



Can you talk the person you are working with at home through what happens in your brain when you experience anxiety? You might want to show them the “hand model” of the brain and talk about what happens when you “flip your lid”!

Task 3: Fight, Flight or Freeze - Physical Symptoms of Anxiety

Draw a picture of yourself or an outline of a body. Can you label the picture with your own physical symptoms of anxiety?



Can you talk the person you are working with at home through the “fight, flight or freeze” response? What is the purpose of this response? Why might it be helpful? You might want to show them the video on YouTube - “Fight, Flight or Freeze” by the Anxiety Canada channel.

Task 4 - Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours

Our thoughts have a big impact on how we feel and what we do. Can you fill in the diagram below, showing an example of how a thought can affect how you feel and how you act? There is an example below to help you.

I can't go to the party – **what if** no one speaks to me and I'm left all alone?

I feel really worried and scared!

I'm going to avoid going to the party – I'll just stay at home instead.



Show the person you are working with at home the “Awareness Test” on YouTube - Test Your Awareness: Do the Test - dothetest channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ahg6qcgoay4> Can you explain why this video is important to understanding anxiety?

Task 5: Challenging and Changing Unhelpful Thoughts

Can you catch your thoughts?

Think about something you are worried about (or have been worried about in the past).

How did you think about the situation?

Were you able to **catch and recognise** the thought?

Did you **challenge** the thought?

Were you able to **replace** the thought?

Use this page to note down any unhelpful thoughts you have managed to catch this week?
What did you do? How did you speak to yourself?



Ask the person you are working with to share a time they were worried with you, if they are comfortable sharing this with you. Can you think of a way they could have replaced their worrying thoughts about the situation?

Task 6: My Coping Strategies

Create a poster showing different ways of managing anxiety. You might want to look at the Anna Freud On my Mind Self Care webpage (<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>), which has over 90 ideas for keeping yourself mentally healthy!



Can you think of a target you can set as a family or household to improve your mental wellbeing? It could be setting aside a time each day to discuss your day and any worries or setting a goal to go for a walk together or do something active each week.

Useful links for Parents and Carers

Healthier Minds Website - Parents and Carer's Section

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/healthierminds/parents-carers/>

Parent's Survival Guide - Young Minds

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/survival-guide/>

Young Minds Parent Line 0800 802 5544 Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

Anna Freud Centre - 91 Self Care Activities and Parents and Carers Self Care

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/self-care-for-parents-and-carers/?msclkid=cef46f18a6bc11eca2fb728252162b89>