

# Strategies to support children and young people to manage anxiety and build resilience

## General protective factors / ways to build resilience

- Good physical health – sleep hygiene, good diet, regular exercise, no drugs/alcohol misuse
- Secure parent-child attachment
- Good social support networks
- Regular school attendance
- High self esteem
- Good friendships
- Problem solving skills
- Good role models for coping with anxiety and distress
- Supportive environment (school, home and community)
- Belonging to a social activity or club

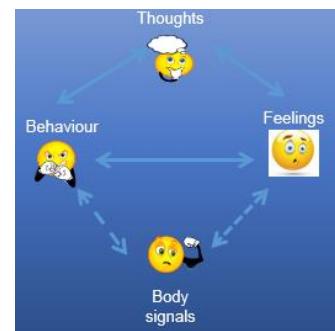


## Teaching understanding of anxiety

- Talking to children about worries/ anxiety – it's a normal response!
- Help your child to recognise signs and signals of anxiety (e.g. a body mapping exercise).
- Talk about the green, red and blue zone and what can help them stay in/get back to the green zone.

## Helping change thought patterns

- Linking thoughts, feelings and behaviours. If we can change the thought, we can change both the feeling and behaviour.
- Identifying unhelpful thinking patterns.
- Help children to become a 'thought detective' and weigh up the evidence for and against a thought.
- Challenge children's thoughts and help them to think of alternatives (more positive).

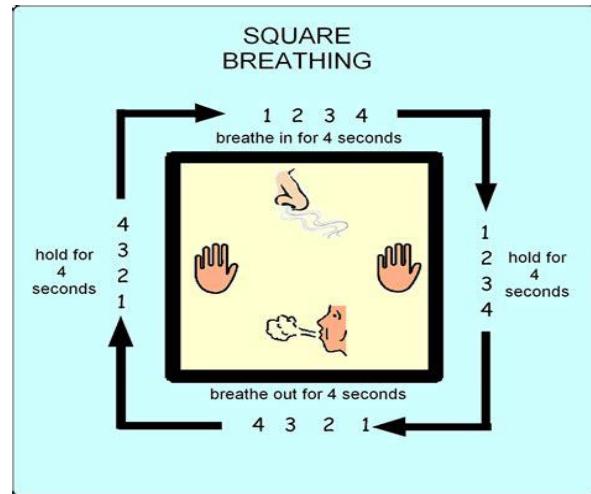
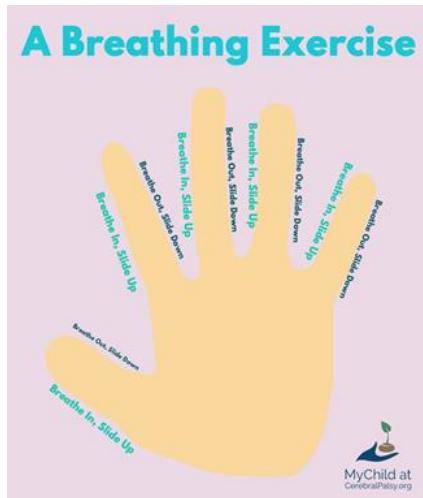


## Helping with the management of stress (in the moment)

- **Shifting attention** – distraction!
- **Grounding** – bringing children back to the present moment.
  - In your head name think of : **5** things you can see, **4** things you can hear, **3** things you can touch or feel, **2** things you can smell or taste, **1** long slow breath.
  - **Move about:** stretch, stamp your feet, run on the spot, clap your hands, remind yourself where you are right now.
  - **Challenge your mind:** count backwards in 7s from 100, think of 10 different animals, 10 blue things, one animal or country for each letter of the alphabet, say the alphabet slowly, say the alphabet backwards etc.
  - **Mindfulness colouring.**



- **Carry a grounding object** e.g. jewellery, small object. Practice with the object at relaxed times.
- **Create a soothe/calming box or safe space** with relaxing, soothing, memorable objects or reminders of how to cope with difficult situations, photos, stress ball, list of positives.
- **Mixed up heads, shoulders, knees and toes** (adult says head, child has to touch their shoulders etc).
- **Breathing techniques:** mindful hands, square breathing, 7 – 11 breathing (breathe in for 7 and out for 8,9,10 and 11).



## Relaxation / self-care

- Help children to identify their energy boosters (things that make them feel good) and energy drainers – balancing the bucket!
- Guided relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation, relaxation rhymes (YouTube scripts and videos).
- Make time for relaxing activities within daily/weekly routine:
  - Listening to music
  - Reading a story
  - Sitting back in a comfortable chair or sofa
  - Going for a walk, run, cycle
  - Having a warm bath or shower
  - Watching TV, going to the cinema or listening to the radio
  - Pursuing a hobby e.g. musical instrument, football, arts and crafts, swimming
  - Reading poetry
  - Socialising with friends and family
  - Playing and watching sports
  - Playing with a pet

