

# HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY

Outside of moments when your child is feeling particularly anxious or panicky, there are things you can do over time to help them manage their anxiety and feel better.

A lot of these strategies are about helping your child to understand themselves and find out what works for them. The more confident they feel about helping themselves when things are hard, the more they will believe in their ability to cope – helping to reduce feelings of panic.

## **1 IN A CALMER MOMENT, TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR ANXIETY.**

Ask them what it feels like in their mind and body, and what things make them feel that way. It can be tempting to dismiss their worries because you want to reassure them, but it's important to empathise with their experience and validate their feelings.

## **2 THINK TOGETHER ABOUT WHETHER THERE'S ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT'S MAKING THEM FEEL ANXIOUS.**

This could include a friendship, a relationship with a family member, their schoolwork or a combination of things. Are there changes that could be made at home or school that would make things easier? If your child is worrying about things that are outside of their control, it might help to name together who is responsible for managing the problem – for example, you might say, "worrying about money is the parents' job".

## **3 HELP YOUR CHILD TO RECOGNISE THE SIGNS THAT TELL THEM THEY'RE GETTING ANXIOUS.**

Anxiety might make them feel sick or make their heart race. Getting to know these signs can make them less frightening and overwhelming when they happen.

## **4 THINK TOGETHER ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES THAT HELP THEM TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND REDUCE THEIR ANXIETY.**

Your child could try doing exercise, drawing or painting, writing in a journal, watching a favourite film, talking to friends or cooking and baking. These kinds of activities can help them to feel calmer.

## **5 TRY ACTIVITIES THAT HELP US TO RELAX, SUCH AS MINDFULNESS, YOGA OR MEDITATION.**

Teenagers might like to use a mindfulness or meditation app such as Headspace or Calm. Remember that some people find these activities more helpful than others, so encourage your child to decide what works for them.

## **6 MAKE A WORRY BOX OR SELF-SOOTHE BOX.**

It might help your child to write down their worries and put them in a worry box, giving them a physical place where their worries can be 'held'. Or they might prefer a self-soothe box, which they can fill with things that help them when they feel anxious – like photos, fidget toys, scented oils and positive quotes.