



Dorset  
Mental  
Health  
Support  
Team in  
Schools



Dorset HealthCare  
University  
NHS Foundation Trust

RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES  
TO HELP CHILDREN MANAGE:

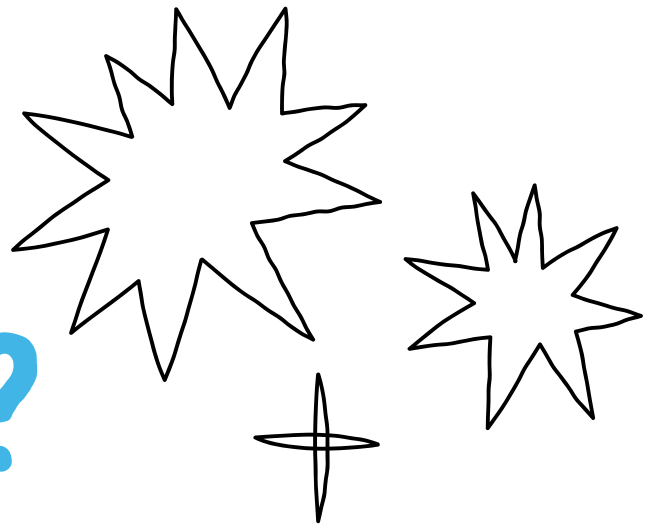
# WORRIES



# ANXIETIES

PARENT/CARER GUIDE

# WHAT IS ANXIETY?



Anxiety is a normal feeling which we all feel and experience.

A little bit of anxiety is a good thing because it prepares our bodies for danger and helps us get things done for example revising for a big exam. If we weren't worried we wouldn't have any motivation to revise so it can be helpful.

However, too much anxiety can impact our lives, stop us from concentrating and make us worry a lot more.



If you see this arrow icon or the text is underlined, the text is hyperlinked. Right click and 'open in a new tab' to open the links.

# WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?



Here are a few tips that you can do to make a difference:

- Talk to your child about how they are feeling, ask them what is happening in their body and when this happens. Children sometimes don't know why they feel like this which makes it more scary and overwhelming.
- Help your child to recognise when they are feeling anxious so they can learn to tell you when they are feeling anxious and ask for help.
- Normalise anxiety so your child does not feel scared 'it is ok to feel anxious, this feeling will pass'. It might be helpful to describe the anxiety as a wave sometimes it is bigger and sometimes it is smaller. It passes through like waves.
- Keeping a worry diary or book can help children write down when they are feeling anxious. This encourages them to identify what makes them anxious.
- Positive thinking - help your child notice what they think is the worst thing that can happen and then problem solve with them so they are able to feel better and feel like they can cope.

# OPEN QUESTIONS TO ASK CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE WORRIED

Why are you feeling worried?

What is frightening you?

What do you think will happen?

What is the worst thing that might happen?

What it is about [the situation] that is making you worried?

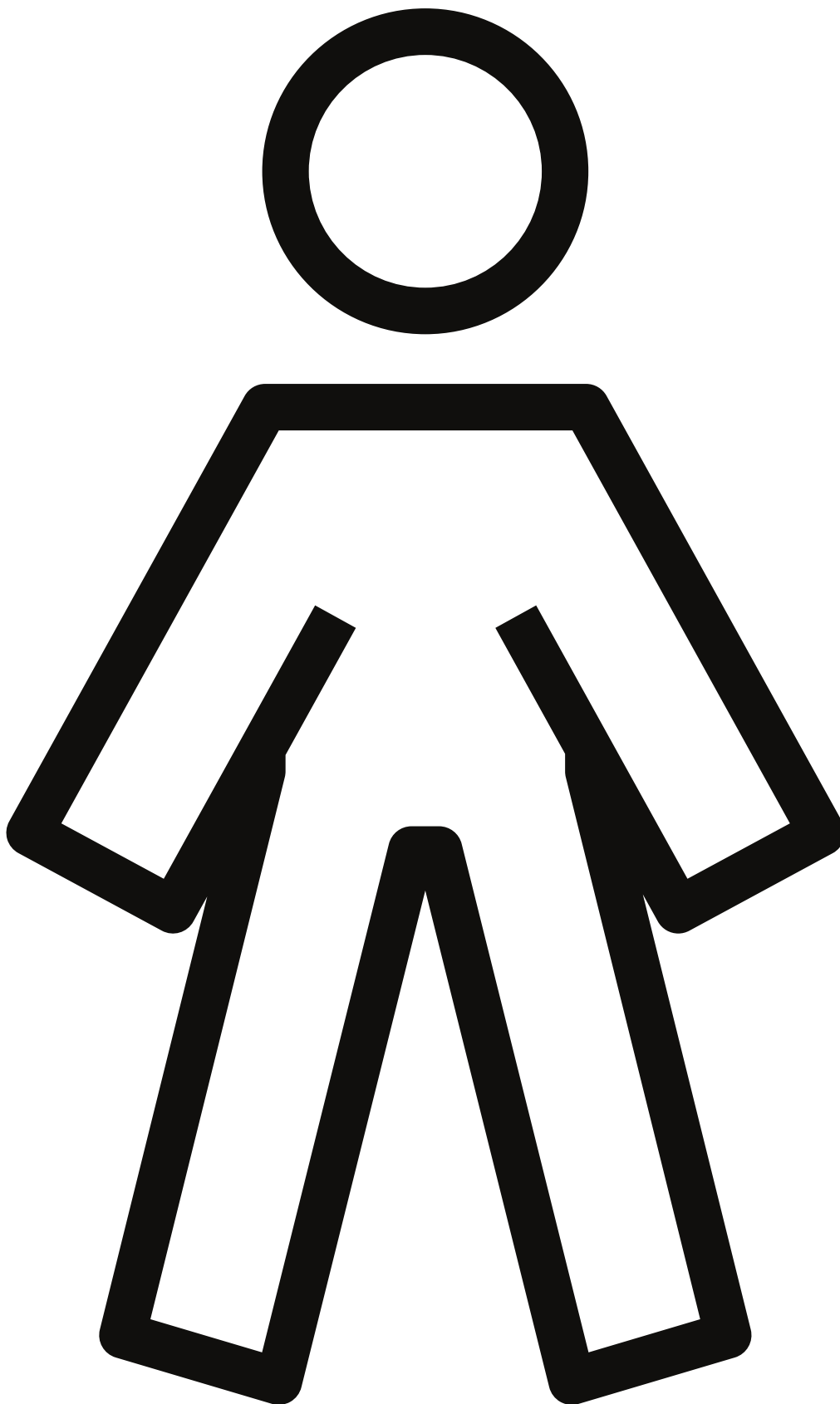
The better the question, the better the answer.

Your responses:

- Be curious
- Help your child feel understood
- Help your child feel normal
- Make suggestions
- Check you have understood
- Keep it rewarding (and fun, if applicable)

# WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR BODIES WHEN WE FEEL ANXIOUS?

Think of a time when you felt anxious or worried.  
Which parts of your body felt different or uncomfortable?  
Draw a circle on those parts on the picture below.

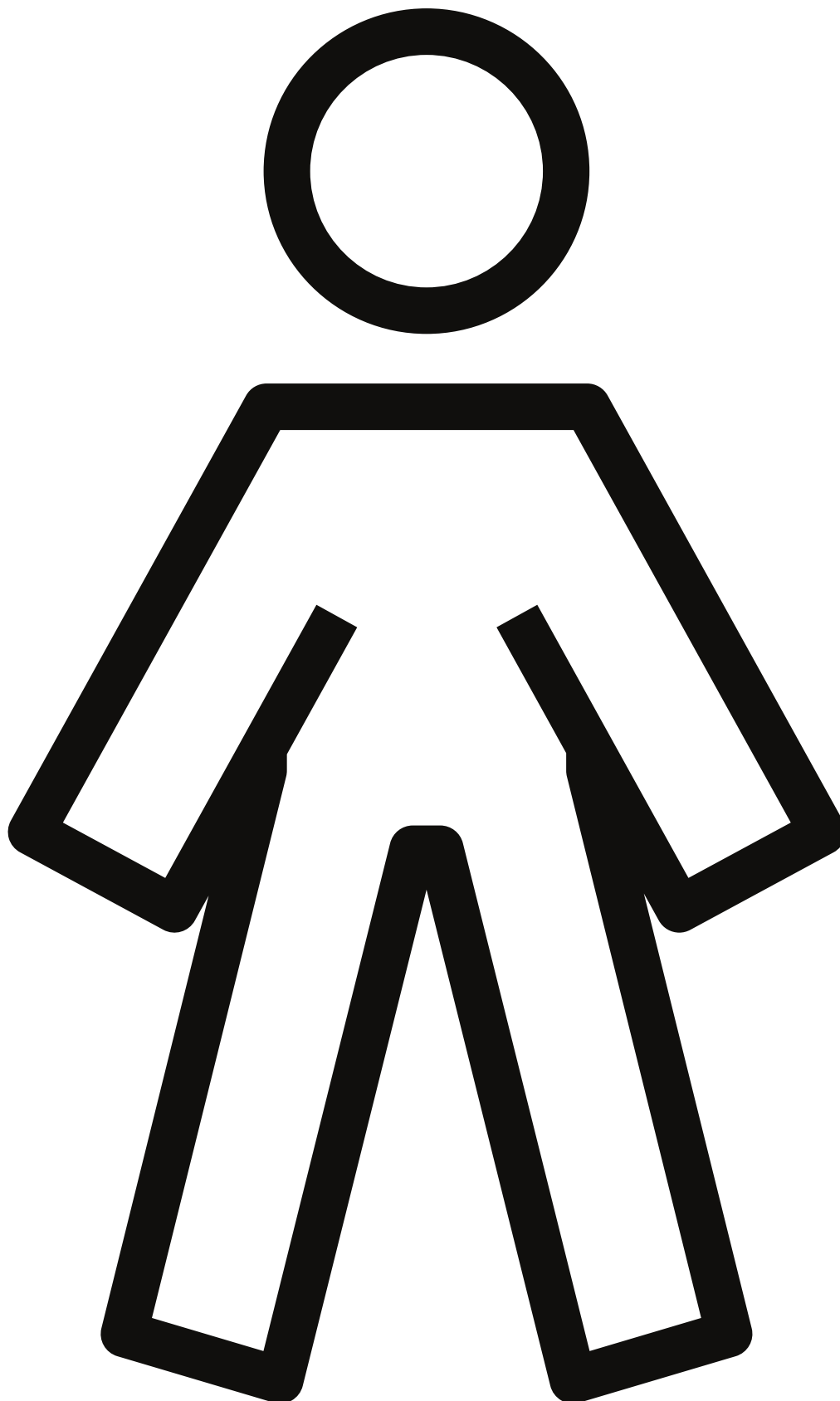


# WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR BODIES WHEN WE ARE RELAXED?

Think of a time when you felt relaxed - where were you? What were you doing?

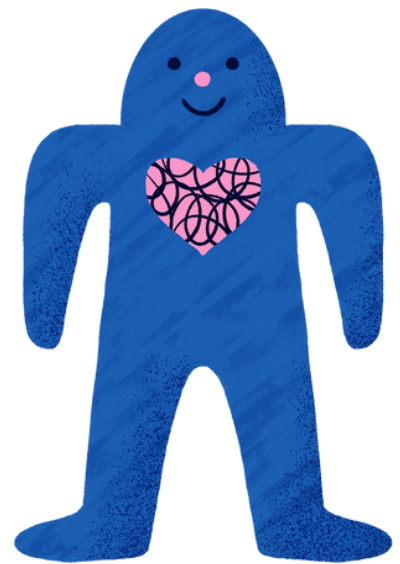
Which parts of your body felt different or comfortable?

Colour those parts on the picture below.



# STRUCTURE AND PREDICTABILITY REDUCES ANXIETY

Structure and routines are super important as they can help families feel more organised which will hopefully help manage stress and anxiety. It's good to break down tasks into manageable chunks. Following a routine at bed time can help children to settle.



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Dinner time



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Play time



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Bath time



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Reading, cuddles, quiet time in bed to settle



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Kiss good night



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Lights off





# WORRY MONSTER

The idea behind the Worry Eater/Monster is that children write down or draw a picture of what's upsetting them and put it into the toy's mouth, which is then zipped shut - banishing their worries. The Worry Monster teddies are available to buy online, however you could also make your own Monster Box at home!

[Worry Monster: Free Print Resource](#) 

[Design a Worry Monster](#) 

Or create your own monster worry box using old tissue boxes, and feed the monster all your worries!





# WORRY JAR



Whenever you feel stressed or worried, write your worries on a piece of paper and place it inside your worry jar. Pick a time during the week to discuss your worries with a parent, carer or teacher.

**You will need:**

**An empty, clean jar**

**Materials to decorate your jar such as stickers, tissue paper, paint, ribbons, pom-poms, etc (optional).**

**Small pieces of paper to write your worries on.**

## **Instructions**

- 1. Take your empty jar and decorate it with anything you like. Make it bright and colourful! You could use stickers, tissue paper, pom-poms or ribbons. You could even paint it! (optional)**
- 2. You can label your jar 'My Worry Jar'**
- 3. Pick a day every week or month to discuss your worries with a parent, carer or teacher.**
- 4. If you are no longer worried about something that you've put in the jar, you can take that worry out of your jar and treat yourself for being super brave!**

# WORRY LADDER

Pick a situation that you commonly avoid due to anxiety and uncomfortable feelings. Write it down below next to point 5 at the top of your ladder. Think of other smaller steps you can take to expose yourself to the fear you listed at the top of your ladder. Rate each step with the intensity of anxiety it would cause you to complete. Remember, you want each step to cause some level of anxiety. Once you decide to work on your ladder, you can start on the bottom and move up, or you can randomly pick any step and practice over and over.



**SITUATIONS**

**ANXIETY (0-10)**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |

# BREATHING EXERCISES



Youtube links:

[Balloon Breaths](#)

[4-7-8 Breathing Exercise](#)

[Rainbow Breath](#)



[Belly Breathe with Elmo](#)

[Diaphragm Breathing](#)

[Body Scan Meditation](#)

# MUSCLE RELAXATION



Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a classic meditation that teaches you how to relax your muscles using a two-step process. First, you tense particular muscle groups in your body. Then, you release the tension and notice how your muscles feel.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation



## SCRIPTS

Guided meditation helps your child develop mindfulness and the ability to calm and relax their body and mind at will. Meditation has many benefits for kids, and these scripts are a wonderful tool to help them develop a lifelong appreciation for the power of mindfulness.

Guided Relaxation - Scripts



## GUIDED MEDITATION

10 minute meditation for kids



# BOOKS



## Audio Books

The Very Hungry Worry Monsters



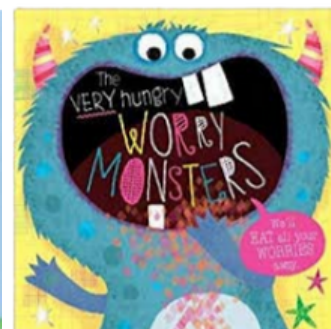
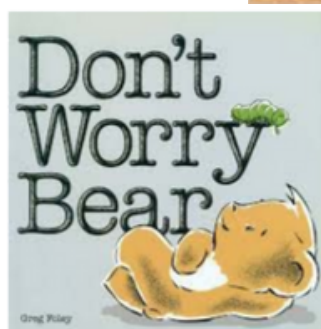
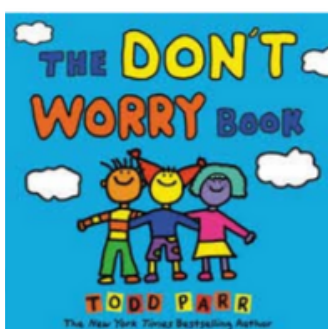
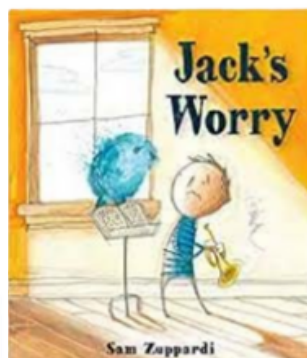
Ruby Finds a Worry



The Huge Bag of Worries



Jack's Worry



# APPS



**Breathing Bubbles** is an app that helps kids practice releasing worries and focusing on good feelings by allowing kids to select the emotion they are feeling and how strongly they are feeling it. Kids can choose to handle their emotion by releasing a worry or receiving a joy as Manny the Manatee walks them through deep breathing and visualization.



**Stop, Breathe & Think Kids** offers children a fun and easy way to identify and process their emotions. From counting breaths to friendly wishes or frog jumps, each activity brings fun rewards to keep them engaged.



**Smiling Mind** is designed to help people with pressure, stress and challenges of daily life. This app has a fantastic section **Mindfulness** in the classroom and is suited for kids aged 7-18.



**Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame** is intended for parents and caregivers to use with their young children (aged 2-5) to help teach skills such as problem-solving, self-control, planning and task persistence.



**DreamyKid** meditation app offers meditation, guided visualisation and affirmations curated just for children and teens. It uses proven techniques that teach your kids methods to guide them towards a happier life through mindfulness.

# FURTHER SUPPORT

## ANNA FREUD

- The Anna Freud Centre is a world leading mental health charity for children, young people and their families.

## CONNECTION

- Dorset's 24/7 helpline that anyone, of any age, can call for advice/support. 0800 652 0190.

## LISTENING EAR

- 1-1 telephone appointments with a family support adviser for parents/carers looking for a listening ear, reassurance and practical and emotional support.

## PARENTLINE

- ParentLine is a confidential text messaging service providing parents and carers of 5-19 year olds in Dorset a way to seek advice from our school nursing team about their child's health and development via text message. Parents and carers can advise about a range of issues, including toileting, sleep, development, behaviour, healthy eating, mental health, bullying, school refusal and exam stress. Text 07312 263131 for confidential advice and support from a member of the school nursing team.

## PLACE2BE

- Parenting advice from child mental health experts.

## RELATE

- If you're having problems in your family life, there are lots of ways Relate can help you. They can offer parenting tips, advice, as well as family or individual counselling.

## YOUNG MINDS

- Mental health support and resources for young people and their families. Call their Parents Helpline for free on 0808 802 5544. Open Monday - Friday 9:30am - 4:00pm.





# Dorset Mental Health Support Team in Schools

Take a look at our social media channels for more ideas, tips and activities to keep you busy and get ideas to boost your wellbeing.



@DORSETMHST



Website: [bit.ly/dorset\\_mhst](https://bit.ly/dorset_mhst)