

SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY

Psychology in Schools Team

CONFIDENTIALITY
AND PERSONAL
INFORMATION

Slido will be used as our main interaction tool

When answering questions please do **not** include personal or sensitive information such as names or anything that can identify you or your child

Slido is anonymous, but other users will be able to see what you have written

Our workshops are recorded and uploaded to YouTube, please be aware that anything said on Slido may be included in a publicly accessible recording

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What age is your child/ren

 Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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Have you attended one of our workshops before

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SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY

Psychology in Schools Team

OVERVIEW

- The prevalence of anxiety and the impact of the pandemic
- Recognising and understanding anxiety
- How young people can support them selves
- How we can support our young people



PREVALENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUNG PEOPLE

COVID-19

- Mental health difficulties are rising among children in England.
- Anxiety & depression are the most common mental health difficulties and have high co-morbidity (Green et al 2005)
- Mental health problems can be long-lasting. 50% of mental health difficulties starts before age 15 and 75% by age 18.
- Suffolk Healthwatch survey **(2020)** highlighted that young people were most worried about: their parents/grandparents catching it, their education, their future
- Current challenges; post lockdown behaviours, increase in social pressures

ANXIETY: A FEW THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Anxiety has nothing to do with strength character or courage
- Anxiety is really common. On average 1 in 5 young people will struggle with anxiety
- Anxiety is a feeling not a personality
- Anxiety is your brain doing exactly what it is meant to do

Karen Young



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Have you ever struggled with anxiety?

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When you have struggled with anxiety, what has it felt like?

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WHY DOES ANXIETY DEVELOP

- Biology, genetics, temperament
- Learning and Listening
- Difficult childhood experiences



RECOGNISING WHEN ANXIETY IS BECOMING A PROBLEM

- *-High levels of worry persist on a daily basis for a significant time period*
- *-Impacts on day to day life (e.g stop doing your 'normal' routine and activities)*
- *--Feeling overwhelmed and hopeless*



ARE YOUR KIDS GOOD AT THESE THINGS ALL THE TIME

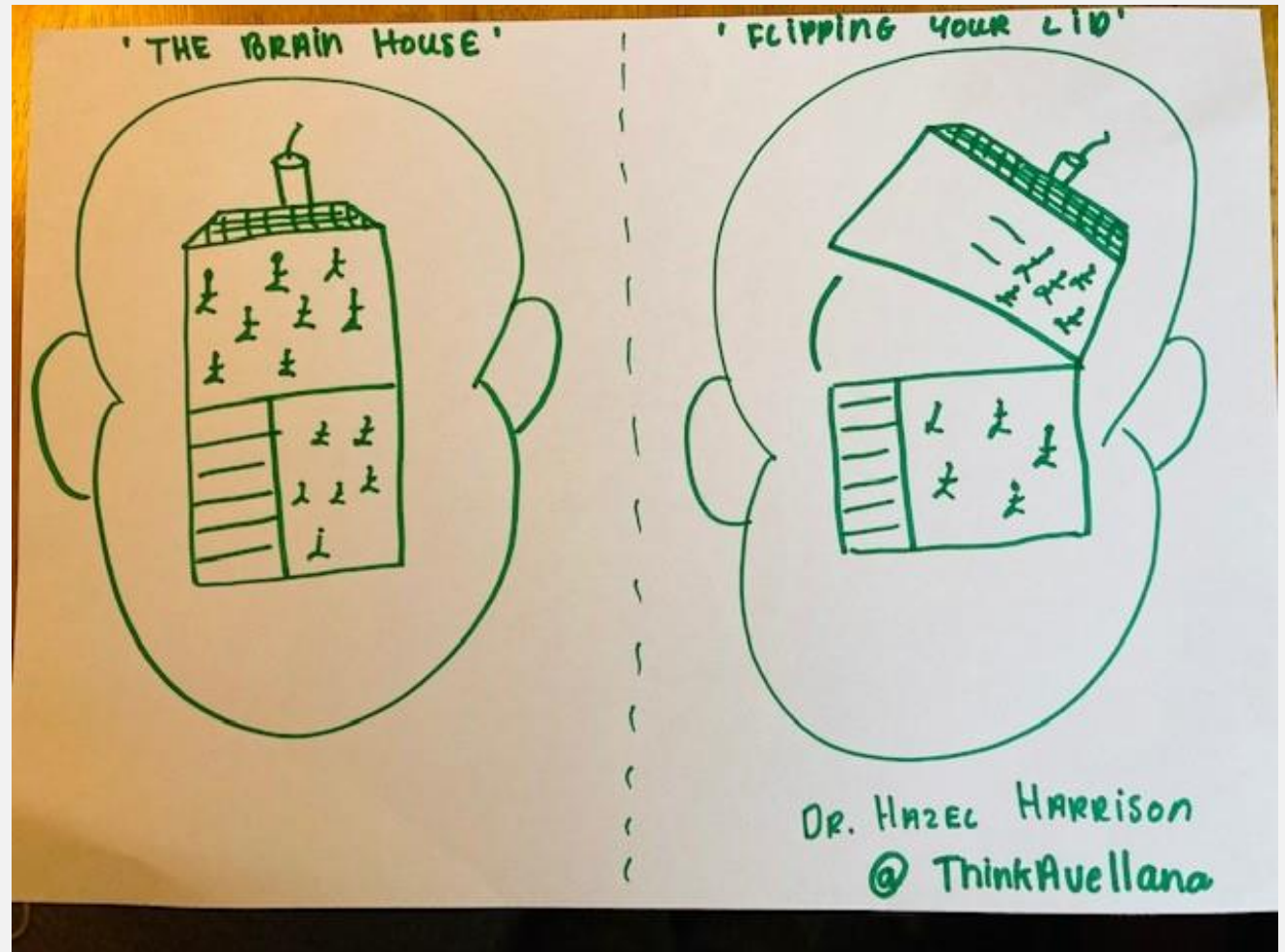
- Good decision making
- Regulating their emotions
- Good at planning
- Good at empathy
- Facing Fears
- Flexible in their thinking

Dr Tina Payne Bryson



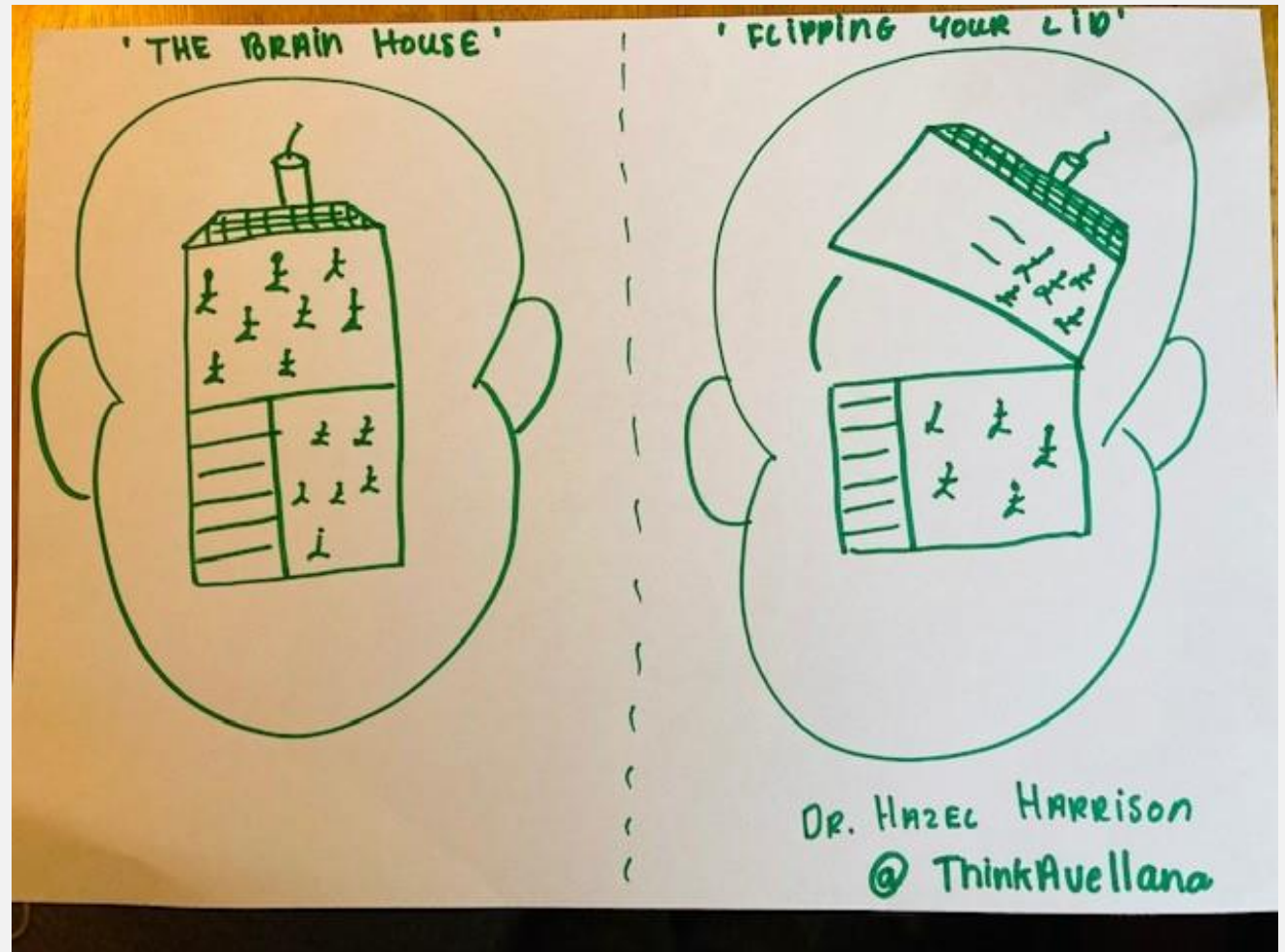
UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR BRAINS

- The upstairs brain – our control tower
 - Planning
 - Organising
 - Problem solving
 - Flexibility
- The downstairs brain – our alarm system
 - FFF
 - Emotional Brain



FLIPPING OUR LID

- When the upstairs (prefrontal cortex) is talking to the downstairs (limbic system) our brains are integrated and we can make good decision
- Big feelings like anxiety are overwhelming and often take charge - meaning the upstairs brain is temporarily unavailable
- In this state our teenagers (or ourselves) are unable to access the wonderful skills of the PFC
- **The upstairs brain will not be fully developed until our children reach their mid 20's**



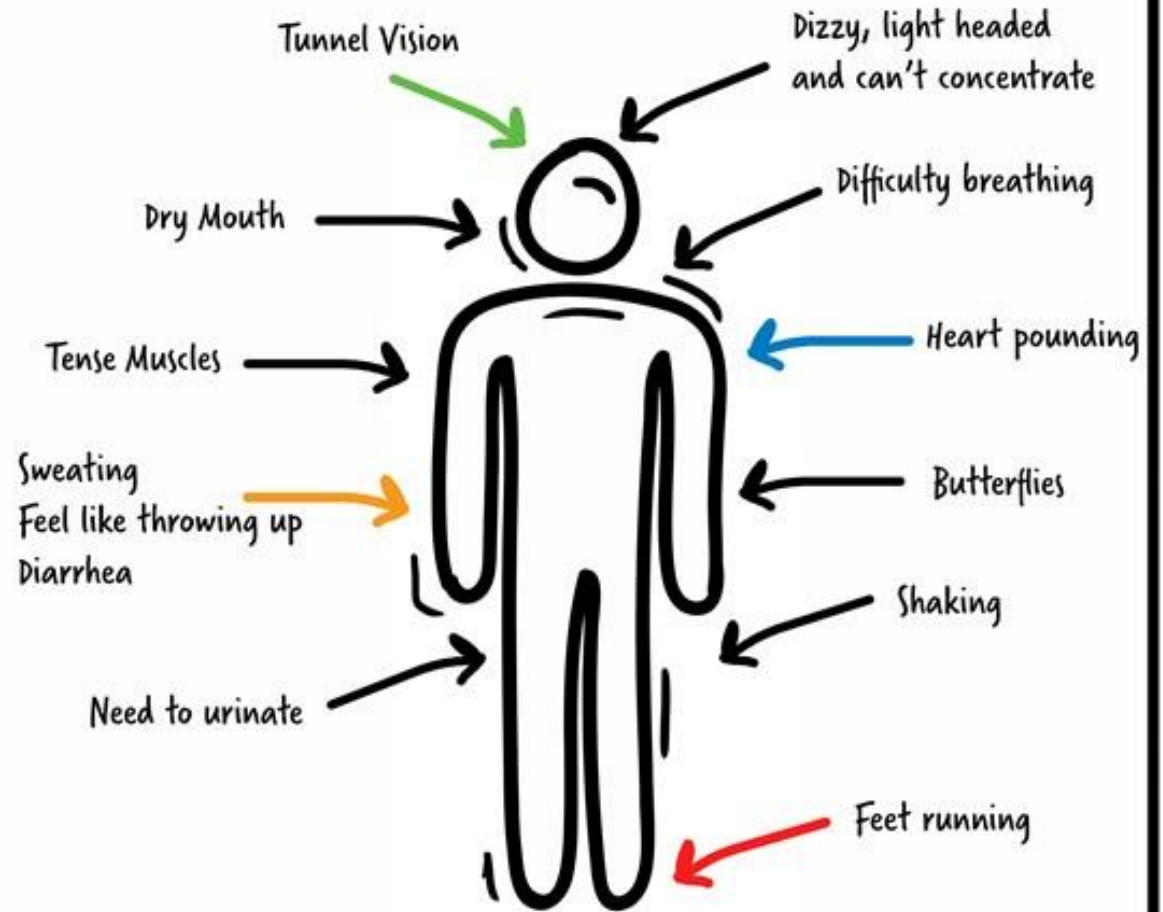
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What do you notice in yourself or your child when feeling
anxious?

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UNDERSTANDING
WHAT IS
HAPPENING IN
OUR BODIES
**THE
FIGHT/FLIGHT/
FREEZE
RESPONSE**

What happens during freeze, fight or flight?



A WORD ABOUT CONNECTION

When our children are overwhelmed by anxiety they will not be able to hear us until the thinking part of the brain is back online

We can help with this by prioritizing connection over correction

Every time we choose to speak warmly and empathetically we are supporting them to bring their PFC back online



THE MASSIVE IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING AFTER YOUR OWN WELLBEING

- Filling up our own resource bucket first
- Emotional contagion
- If you are feeling dysregulated it's almost impossible to support a young person to regulate themselves



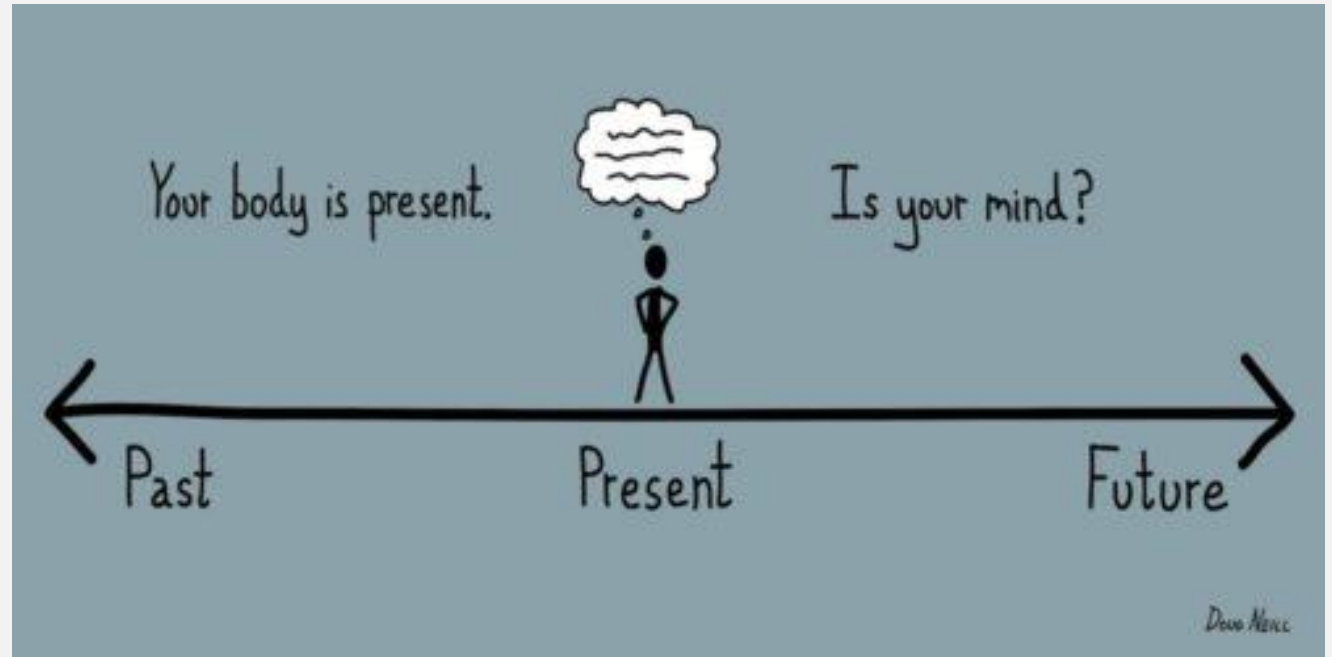
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When I am worried about something I tend to ...

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PRACTICAL WAYS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE CAN MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY

- **Breathing**
 - Activates the relaxation response
 - Calms down the neurochemical surge in the body
- **Contacting the present moment**
 - Grounding
- **Self compassion**
 - Positive self talk



PRACTICAL WAYS OUR YOUNG PEOPLE CAN MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY

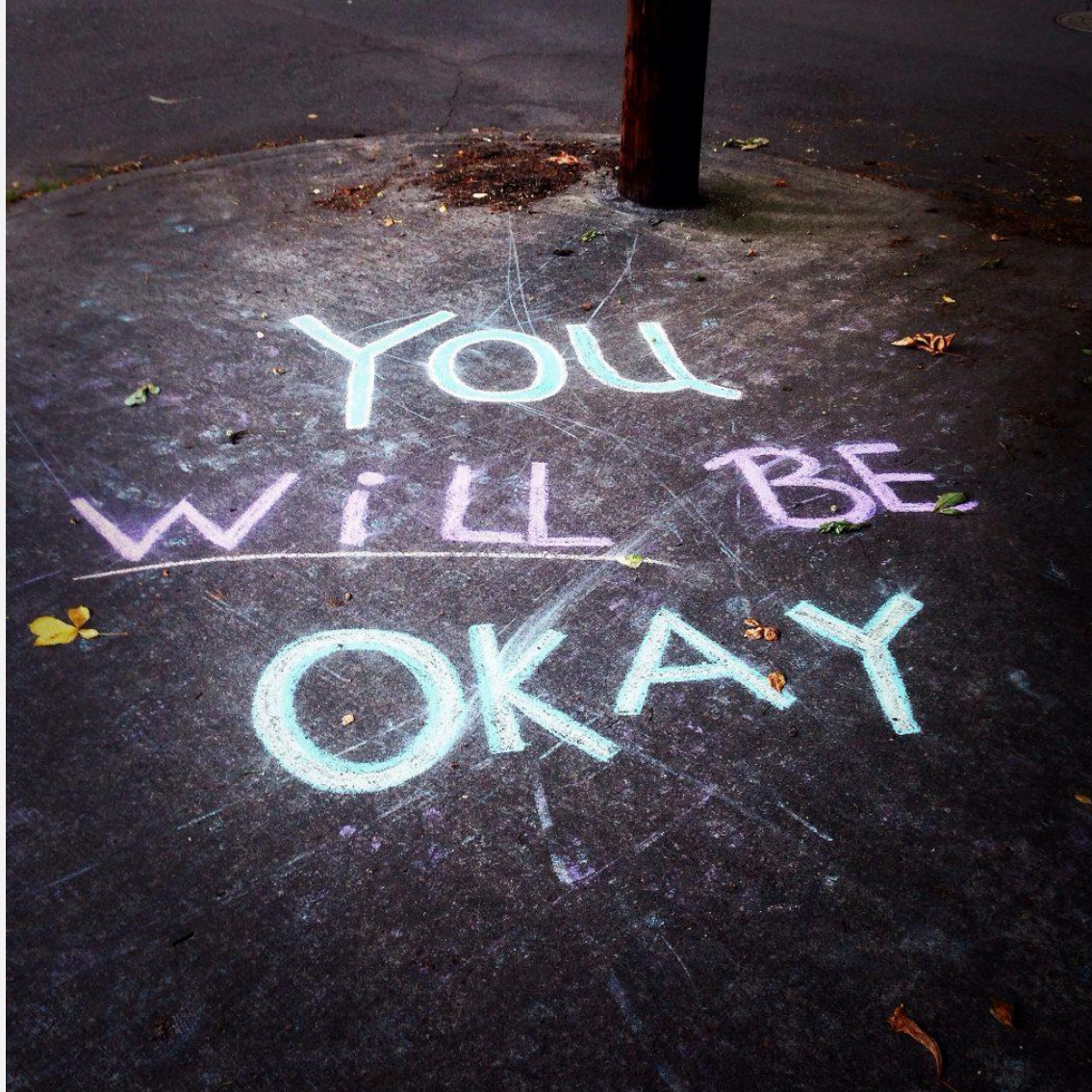
- Exercise
- Sleep
 - 9 1/4 hours
 - Impact of sleep deprivation



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Who finds their child seeking reassurance or trying to avoid the things they are worried about

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THINGS WE
LOVINGLY DO
THAT MIGHT
FEED ANXIETY

- Avoidance
- Excessive reassurance

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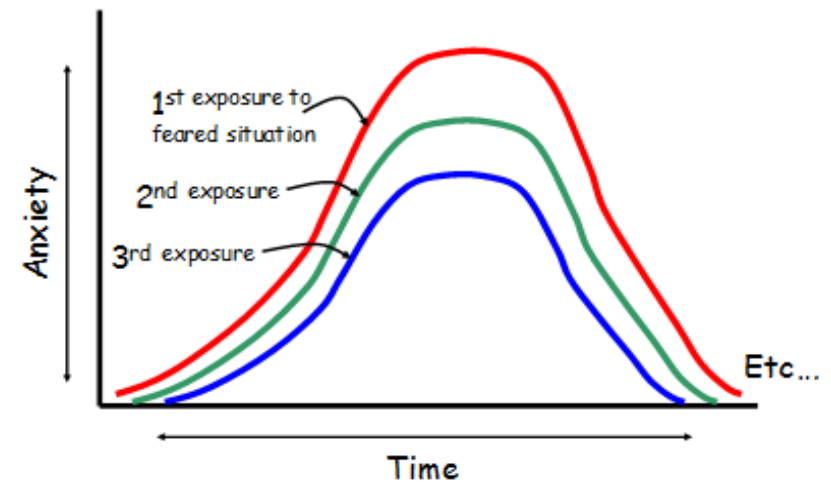
If you were asked to do something you were anxious about (like preparing a presentation) and you successfully completed it, write down how you would feel?

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AVOIDANCE

- Avoidance takes away the opportunity to learn that fear is a warning, not a prediction
- When avoidance happens too often, it can become the default way of responding to the world
- Teens become less willing to experiment and explore the world, looking instead for experiences that come with security and comfort.

The Anxiety Curve





MOVING
FROM
REASSURANCE
TO SELF
ASSURANCE

- Listen to your child's worries in an open way
- Make time for this – picking the moment
- Encourage them to answer their own questions
- Ask them what they think the likelihood of something bad happening is
- Encourage them to come up with ideas, including things that have worked before, for solving their worries and reassuring themselves
- Break things down into achievable tasks, least feared first

COVID-RELATED WORRIES

- **Coping with uncertainty:** Acknowledge how hard it can be when things feel unpredictable. Try and think about some things we do know/can be certain about? Teach problem solving for worries that can be addressed. Support your child to notice unhelpful thoughts/feelings, then refocus on something they want to do.
- **Re-establishing routines:** When there is an extended time off school – try to keep to some routine, even if slightly different from usual. Take a step by step approach to working towards this, one task at a time. Encourage independence in your child, use visual aids and reward charts.
- **Friendships e.g. will my friends still like me?:** Acknowledge their worry. Support them to problem solve ways to still keep in touch with friends, even if face to face is not possible, and encourage them to do this.
- **Sleep Issues:** Take a step by step approach to getting back into a more normal day/ night routine.
- **Child doesn't want to use public transport/ re-join activities:** Explain about sensible things that can be done to keep safe. Follow government guidelines and consider using protection where advised, use imagery rehearsal, take a graded approach and do one step at a time.

THE TAKE HOME

Filling up your own resource bucket first

Connection

Change the story and make the link between anxiety and bravery

Focus on their strengths and acknowledge **any** brave behavior

Be the person you want them to be – model brave behavior



FINALLY

- Anxiety is a part of life. Every time we push against our own boundaries and try something new, there's going to be anxiety in there somewhere. It's healthy and normal and it lets us know that brave behaviour is needed.
- Young people will look through your lens, and when they see the pictures of themselves that you see, as someone who is compassionate, resilient, strong and brave and able to walk through fearful, anxious times with courage, resilience and strength, this is what they will see in themselves.

Karen Young



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I have found this session helpful

 Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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What are the two things you will take away from this session?

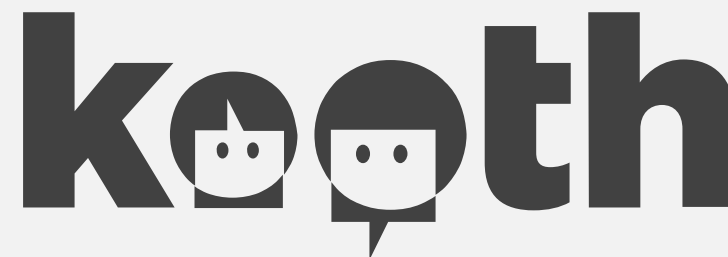
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RESOURCES

- **Helping your child with fears and worries: A guide self-help guide for parents** by Creswell, C. and Willetts, L (2019). London: Robinson.
- **Emotion based school avoidance** Psychology in Schools pre-recorded session. 60-minutes:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzA0-rGB-OQ>
- **Sleep**
 - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/sleep/>
 - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Children-families-and-learning/Psychology-and-Therapeutic-Services/How-might-the-sleep-of-teenagers-be-affected-by-COVID-3.pdf>
 - <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/if/five-tips/>

- Kooth has qualified counsellors, youth workers and emotional wellbeing practitioners
- The service includes Chat, messenger, discussion board and magazine plus Kooth diary – where you can track your mood and spot what things help lift it; and a goal setting function.

you can email : parents@kooth.com



Kooth.com / app:
online confidential
counselling and
support for 11-25
year olds in Suffolk.

WHAT HELP IS OUT THERE?

- **Barnardos See, Hear, Respond service** 0-18 for children experiencing harm/increased adversity during coronavirus who aren't getting support from services.

FOR PARENTS:

- **Suffolk Family Carers:** online information workshops /courses including on anxiety and wellbeing, virtual meetings, telephone support & advocacy
- **Homestart Suffolk:** Trained volunteers support parents with children under 12, offering a listening ear via phone (usually offer practical help in homevisits)
- **Epic Dad:** Dad's matter course 5-week group /1:1 course (online / phone); Dad's survival kits, walk & talk



WHAT HELP IS OUT THERE?

- **School:** tutor, pastoral support, head of year, SENCO
- **Suffolk School Nursing** - ChatHealth (11-19)
Text Service for confidential health advice from the school nurse (available mon-Fri 9.30am-4.30pm)
- **NSFT Wellbeing services:** you can self refer to Wellbeing under 18's service www.wellbeingnands.co.uk
- **Emotional Wellbeing Hub:** Information, advice, and support for anyone concerned about the emotional wellbeing and mental health of a child or young person aged 0 to 25 years.
- **GP**

OTHER RESOURCES

Apps:

Websites:

Silver cloud: course to manage anxiety and depression at your own pace

Catch it: manage negative thoughts and look at problems differently

Youngminds.org.uk Good resources. support for YP & Parentline. Guidance. 24 hr crisis support

Living life to the full littf.com
Free online courses on low mood, stress and resiliency

Blue ice / Calm harm: manage emotions and reduce urge to self harm

Headspace: mindful meditation

rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health : Information about mental health and treatment. Has a section on young peoples mental health

Moodgym moodgym.com.au
interactive self-help to learn skills to manage symptoms of depression and anxiety