

Remember 4 R's: Rescuing, reassuring, ridicule does not lead to resilience:

One of the most important things to remember is that a worry or fear is real to the person feeling it:

How can we help our child become resilient and problem solve?

If we rescue, for example, become too involved and sort their problem they will never learn to problem solve and rescue themselves.

Instead of rescuing we could ask, for example, *'what can they do?'* *'how can you help?'* even if you help they are learning to problem solve by suggesting what they want you to do.

If we reassure them, for example, tell them it is ok, or everything will be alright how will they react if it goes wrong? Or how are they learning to try it for themselves?

Instead of reassuring can we do some evidencing of their fear. For example asking *'Has this happened before?'* *'What happened then?'* *'How likely is to happen?'* *'What advice would they give a friend?'*

If we ridicule them they will feel shame or guilt and could possibly believe others feel the same. This can impact on their self esteem.

Instead of telling them the fear is 'silly' remember the fear is real to them, so we can acknowledge even if it is not our fear. For example *'I can see you are fearful of (add their fear) what can you do about that or how can I help?'*

Tips

Helpful - things to try:

- Reward brave/non-anxious behaviour – praise – tell them 'well done'
- Plan to ignore behaviours you don't want – this is not leaving your child in fear but ignoring the 'tantrum' around the fear
- Promoting your child to cope constructively – problem solving
- Model brave/non-anxious behaviour – you might have to 'dig deep'

Unhelpful - things to avoid:

- Excessive reassurance - telling them it will be ok
- Being too involved - doing it for them
- Being too directive - telling them what to do
- Permitting avoidance - never problem solving
- Becoming impatient - getting cross
- Dismissing their emotions - telling them it's not real

This leaflet is produced as a simple and general guide. If you do have any concerns about your child's fears or worries. You may be unsure how you can help your child learn to become resilient and problem solve their fears or worries and you want some help do not hesitate to contact your PSA, Linda Parry.

There is a 2 hour workshop available 'Understanding and supporting emotions - Anxiety'. Please contact Linda for more information.

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General support and information August 2018 ©

Understanding and supporting emotions Anxiety



A simple guide to help understand and support your child/rens worries and fears.

To support problem solving and resilience.



General information on understanding and supporting emotions—Anxiety

Anxiety:

Worries and fears

Anxiety is a normal part of life and has its origins in being a protective measure which allows us to check for danger and react accordingly.

Children with anxiety problems can be thought of as having normal worries that become more extreme and more intrusive than the worries of other children.

A better way to think about these things is to consider whether your child's anxiety is a problem for him/her.

Does it cause difficulties for your child?

These difficulties may be many and varied for example it may simply be that your child's fears/worry cause him/her upset and distress **or** it may affect your child socially, emotionally or academically.

The bottom line is it is different for everyone. However if your child's anxiety is adversely affecting and impacting on his/her life then he/she will benefit from learning how to overcome it, to problem solve and become resilient.



Physiological and physical signs of anxiety:

When we get anxious the body releases adrenaline into the blood stream. This is designed to prepare the body for fight or flight.

So what are some physiological signs you might recognise in your child/ren?

- Becoming angry
- Excessive fear
- Excessive worry
- Catastrophising
- Obsessive or negative thinking

So what are the physical signs you might see in your child/ren?

- Increased heart rate
- Rapid breathing
- Sweaty palms
- Light-headedness, feeling dizzy or faint
- Stomach ache/tightening
- Needing the toilet
- Crying
- Wobbly knees
- Hiding



Thoughts, feelings and Behaviour:



Anxious children will have **THOUGHTS** that centre around some type of worry, fear, danger or threat. For example they may worry that they will be hurt, someone close to them may be hurt, they will be laughed at, they will fail etc.

With these **THOUGHTS** adrenaline is released and increases the **FEELINGS** of fear/worry which can impact on behaviour. The **BEHAVIOUR** such as running away, get angry, freeze, fidget, pace, become upset, cling or avoid etc. then reinforces the **THOUGHTS**.

A simple example:

*Your child is fearful of spiders the **thoughts** are, perhaps, they can hurt them, they are ugly, they are fast etc. These **thoughts** lead to **feelings** such as fear, being scared, wanting to run or hide. These **feelings** lead to how we **behave** such as screaming, running away, crying etc. This **behaviour** then supports and reinforces our initial **thoughts**.*