

Strategies for

COPING WITH ANXIETY



Mental Health Awareness Week 15th – 21st May 2023

Here are some strategies to help when you feel worried or begin to get anxious:

BREATHING:

Shallow breathing is often caused by Anxiety. So a good place to start when we feel anxious, worried or even suffering from anxiety is to focus on our breathing. Doing an exercise that really forces deep breathing can help to reset your feelings. So how about 30 star jumps. After all – remember you are a superstar.

If there is no space to do star jumps focus on the 7/11 breathing or breathe in for four, hold for two and out for six – count it in your head. You can then increase the amount of time that you breathe in after a few breaths – so now breathe in for five, hold for two and breathe out for seven. Do this a few times and then in for seven, hold for two and out for eleven.





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BLOW BUBBLES:

If your body is in fight or flight mode as a reaction to fear or stress, we need to help our body to take back control. Taking ten deep breaths will help our brain's calm down and regain control.

Blowing bubbles is a great way to encourage deep breaths. If you don't have bubbles then use a bit of let's pretend – here let's have a go. Join your thumb and forefinger together to create a ring. Dip your fingers in the pretend mixture – take a deep breath in for a couple of seconds through your nose and blow gently – think about creating as many imaginary bubbles as possible. Then repeat.





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SEE YOUR CALM PLACE:

Establish your breathing – in for four, hold for two and out for six.

Close your eyes – remember a time when you were particularly happy, calm and peaceful. See it in your mind with as much detail as possible. Remember those feelings that you had then. Always use the same calm place to help enhance the effect. As you visualise your calm place also continue with your calm breathing pattern.





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REMEMBER PAST SUCCESS:

Another technique is to think of a time when you did something successfully. Think of the strategies you used to achieve this. What did you feel like when you achieved it? Remember you can do anything if you set your mind to it – even though it may be hard. Don't let the effort of the task put you off. Say to yourself I can and I will.





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GROUNDING FOR ANXIETY:

This exercise is great in bringing things back into focus. It helps to ground one back in the real world and not lost in muddle of worries going on in your head. It goes like this:

See 5 things

Hear 4 things

Touch 3 things

Smell 2 things

Taste 1 thing





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DRAW YOUR ANXIETY:

Draw a picture of what you are worried about. Then problem solve what you can do about it. Tackle that worry head on. Talk about your worry or anxiety with your safe listener – a parent or grandparent.





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WORRY TIME:

Make some worry time during the day – this is a special time during the day when you can sort out what has been worrying you and finding solutions. During the day if a worry comes into your head and you can't deal with it there and then make a note and pop it in a worry box. During your worry time revisit your notes and deal with them one by one – you never know some of them might have disappeared by that time as they will have resolved themselves. Share this time with your safe listener. Talk through the types of solutions that you could use if your fear was to become a reality. Once you know that you have a plan and can handle the very worst this can help to calm the fear.

