



# You vs Anxiety

## A Wellbeing toolkit

If you are reading this guide, it is likely that you are looking for support. Our team of Children and Young People's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs) work with lots of young people who experience a range of difficulties. We have created this guide to give you some tips on how to look after yourself and to share with others.

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# About this Guide

**Before we get started, here is a little bit about us**



At Centre 33 we offer one-to-one confidential counselling and guided self-help to young people aged 13-25. You can drop in to one of our Cambridgeshire hubs to have a chat about wellness, sexual health or anything else that is causing you stress. We have tons of resources on our website too.

## About us



We are Olly, Jamie and Rachel and we are trainee CWP's at Centre 33. We work collaboratively with young people to support them in developing skills and strategies to help challenge and overcome difficulties with their anxiety and low mood through a programme called Guided Self Help. We work with young people to help them become more aware and understand what is going on in their minds and bodies when they are experiencing anxiety or low mood and this often helps to make it feel less scary. We are able to find out what the difficulties are and work together to set goals and work on strategies, some of which you will see in this guide. The young person is always going to have access to these strategies like a tool kit so if a situation should arise where they need them in the future they will always be there. We all have a background in working with young people and know the importance of working alongside them to support and help improve their mental health together.



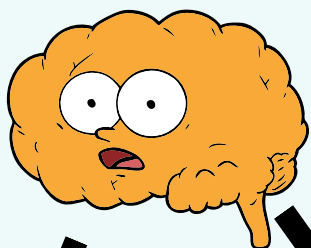
# Managing Anxiety

## WHAT IS ANXIETY, AND WHY DO WE EXPERIENCE IT?

Anxiety is a **natural human emotion** and an evolutionary safety response to life threatening situations. The physical changes caused are **designed to feel uncomfortable** to prompt a response from us. Sometimes this response is appropriately triggered and other times it is not.

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE HAVE ANXIETY?

Anxiety is linked to our **Fight, Flight Freeze** (FFF) response. This FFF response is an evolutionary response **designed to keep us safe** when a danger is detected and it causes physical changes in our body



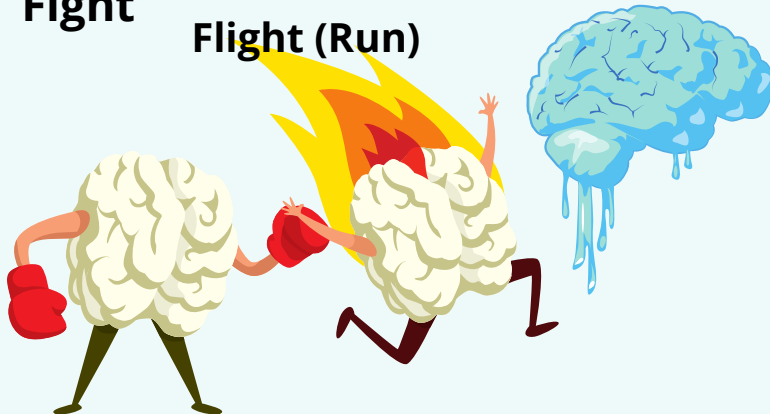
When our brain detects or thinks about a threat, it signals to our body to either **fight the threat, flight (run) from the threat** or **freeze (can't move)** in front of the threat.

Our FFF response sends lots of signals through our body to **prepare for action**. This includes physical changes of sweating, increased heart rate and breathing, panicking thoughts and even feeling sick.

**Fight**

**Flight (Run)**

**Freeze**



The FFF response can be set off by being in a scary situation but can also be set off just by **THINKING** we're in a dangerous situations.

So by **thinking** we're in danger, our **body responds** as if we're in danger



## MY EXPERIENCE OF ANXIETY

Anxiety can effect everyone differently. Have a go at selecting some of feelings below that you've experienced:

**Sweating**

**Nervous**

**Overthinking**

**Fast Heart Rate**

**Stressed**

**Excessive worrying**

**Fast, rapid breathing**

**Feeling sick**

**Twitching or tapping**

**Tense muscles**

**Dry mouth**

**Sadness**

## WHAT KEEPS ANXIETY GOING?



Our thoughts and behaviours are the main things that keeps anxiety going, which means there are things we can change to overcome the problems.

### Escape and avoidance:

It makes sense that we **want to avoid difficult situations**. However, avoiding situations **keeps anxiety going** as it prevents us from learning how to cope in difficult situations. It can also restrict what we're able to do in our daily life.

### Unhelpful habits:

Sometimes to face difficult situations people develop habits to help them through e.g only going to events with another person, rushing through a task or situation as quickly as possible, or over preparing. These **subtly avoid** elements of anxiety we feel we are unable to cope with.

### Anxious thinking:

When we are feeling anxious we tend to **think in an anxious way** e.g. that we can't cope and that the worst case outcomes will happen. We might even **misinterpret** the physical symptoms of anxiety as something that's really bad, like a heart attack.

It's important that we **try and think in a balanced way** and challenge anxious thinking.





## HOW DO I CURRENTLY COPE WITH ANXIETY

List some of the ways that you currently manage anxious feelings.  
Are any of them unhelpful habits?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_



DID YOU  
KNOW?

Despite feeling horrible and physically alarming, anxiety isn't dangerous! It doesn't harm the body or the mind and is a safe reaction to difficult situations.

Anxiety  
is..Ok!

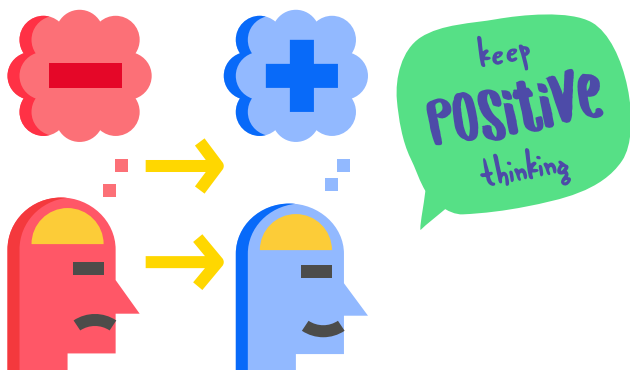
## HOW CAN I MANAGE ANXIETY?

Anxiety can feel overwhelming, but there are some things you can do to feel better. Below are some techniques to try

### ***You're not in danger***

The physical feelings of anxiety are very unpleasant but they are not harmful. Remind yourself that you are safe and it's just your body's natural response to a perceived threat

You  
Are  
Safe!



### ***Positive thinking***

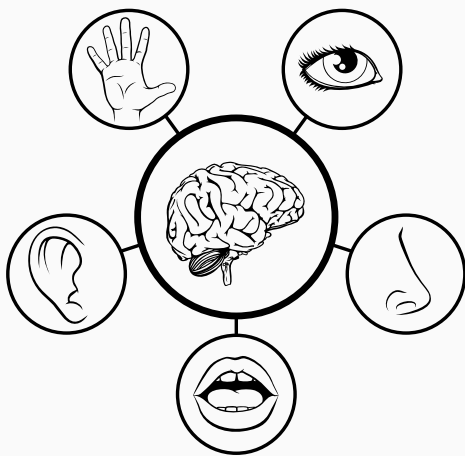
Grounding techniques can be really helpful in shifting your attention from the unpleasant physical changes to the environment around you. Positive self-talk are short statements we can repeat to ourselves that are calming and reassure us that we can cope in difficult situations.

## Face your fear

When faced with anxiety and feeling panic it's likely you'll want to escape or avoid the situation. However, in the long term this won't help you overcome the problem so try and stay where you are until the anxiety starts to reduce. Facing our fears is the best way to overcome anxiety.



# Just Breathe



## Deep breaths

Using breathing exercises when feeling Anxious can be an effective way to manage the physical symptoms by regulating your oxygen intake and helping you feel calm. There are lots of different techniques, try a few and find one that works for you.

## Relaxation Exercises

Using our senses and noticing what's around us can help bring us back to the here and now.

- Try looking and counting 5 things you can see, hear, smell, touch and taste
- Try tensing and releasing different muscles in the body. This helps us feel more in control of our physical reactions to panic



## SOME GOOD NEWS

Anxiety cannot and will not last forever! Sometimes Anxiety can feel like it will never stop but the body cannot keep that Anxiety intensity going. So **Anxiety will always naturally go away**



## TOP TIPS

It can be really difficult to think clearly when we're anxious.

So **practice** calming behaviours and thoughts **when you're feeling calm.** Then, when you are feeling anxious, it'll be easy to use the techniques



## MY ANXIETY PLAN:

Lets put it all together...

Having a plan of what you will do if you feel anxious, can help you cope in difficult situations

### What situations make me feel anxious?

Identifying potential difficult situation can help us prepare for them

**Positive self-talk statement I can use when I feel anxious.** Write own some statements you can say to yourself to help keep calm and challenge anxious thoughts

**Relaxation techniques:** Write down some coping techniques you're going to try when feeling anxious

**Who can I talk to?** Talking to a trusted other person can help you feel less alone with your anxiety. Write down some people you feel comfortable talking to



# How to manage your worries

In an uncertain and challenging time, it is very understandable if you are feeling worried or stressed. You certainly won't be the only person feeling like this.

It's important that we are kind and look after ourselves, particularly if the worries feel overwhelming or unmanageable.

The diagram can help you manage your worries.

Start at the bottom of the tree trunk and work your way up:

4. Set aside some 'worry time' each day (e.g. 10-15 minutes) -

Write down your worries during the day and try not to think about them until this set time.

**If you are finding this tricky...**

3. Try to spend less time focusing on worries that may or may not happen (such as "what if..." questions), or on things that are out of your control.

4. Speak to a family member, friend, or professional. You don't have to cope with this alone, and they can help you find ways to manage the worries.

4. Try some relaxation techniques to ground your mind and bring yourself back to the present moment.

3. Try to think of ways you could solve this problem.

It may be useful to ask friend or family to help you with this.

## Other tips...

Try to limit the amount of time listening to the news, as this can make us worry more.

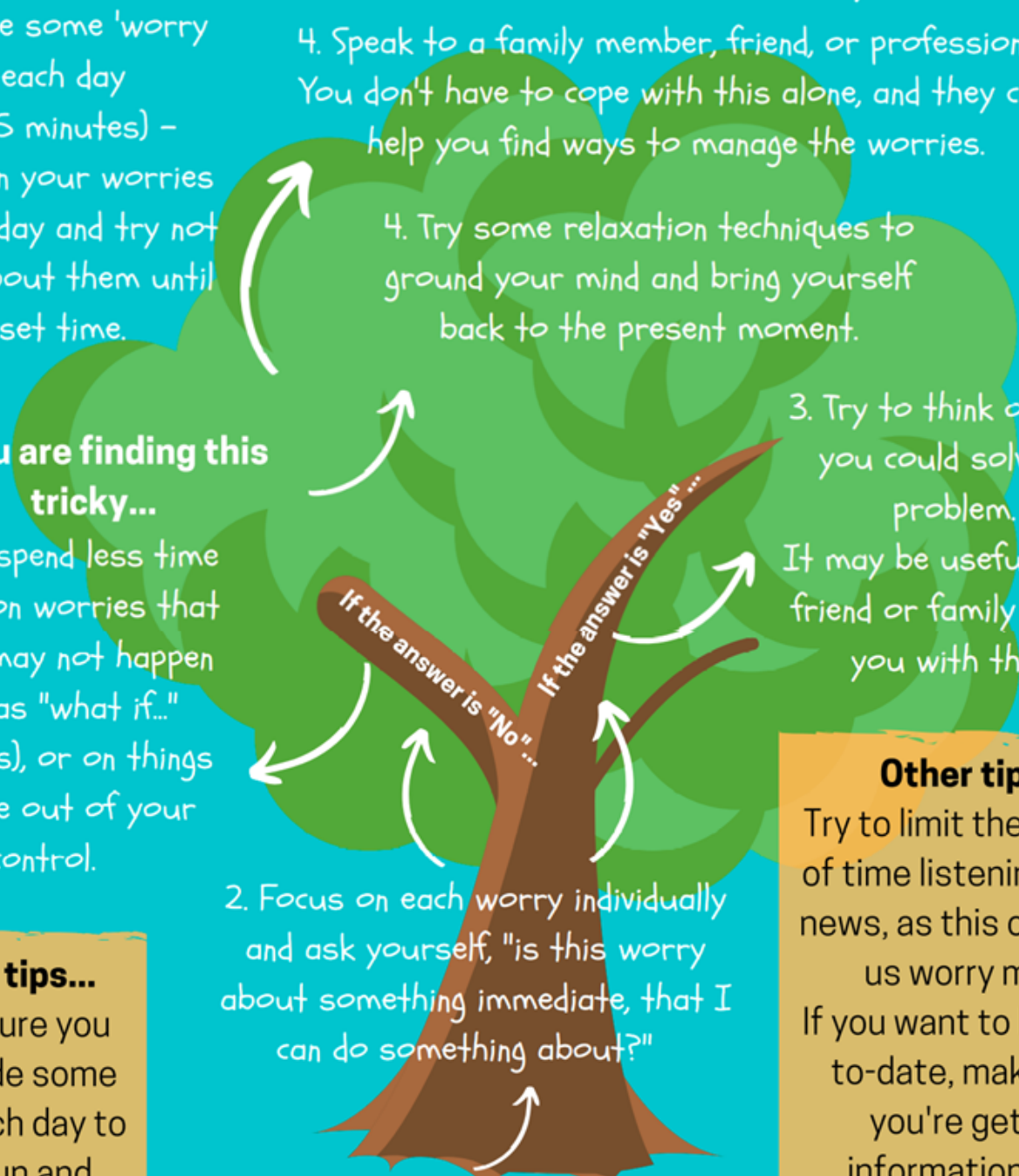
If you want to keep up-to-date, make sure you're getting information from trusted sources.

## Other tips...

Make sure you set aside some time each day to do a fun and relaxing activity.

2. Focus on each worry individually and ask yourself, "is this worry about something immediate, that I can do something about?"

1. Write a list of everything that's worrying you.





# Exercise and Mental Health



HOW CAN A WALK HELP MY MENTAL HEALTH AND BRAIN POWER?

## Boost happy chemicals

Exercise increases our 'happy' hormones. One group of hormones released are called *endorphins*.

These endorphins help with *pain relief* and overall feelings of *wellness*.

Another happy hormone released is *dopamine*. This is our reward hormone, which not only makes *us feel good*, but makes us want to *do more* of what made us feel good.

So the more exercise we do, the more *dopamine* we produce, the *better we feel* and the more we want to exercise again.

## Reduce Stress

When we're stressed we build up a hormone called *cortisol*. Exercising reduces the level of *cortisol*, *reducing our feelings of stress*

Exercise also increases the concentration of *norepinephrine*, the chemical that moderates the body's response to stress. The more *norepinephrine* we have the better we're able to *control our stress response*

## Increase memory and brain power

Regular exercise can create brand *new brain cells*, boosting overall brain function.

Specifically new cells are created in the *hippocampus* which is the part of the brain responsible for *memory and learning*.

So the more we exercise the *more powerful* our brain becomes.



## Increased relaxation

Moving around and doing exercise increases the body's core temperature. When we stop exercising and our body's temperature goes back down to normal, this signals to the body that it's *relaxed*. The drop in temperature generates overall feelings of *calm and restfulness*

**No two people are the same, try something new and find what works for you** ☒

*Some suggestions of the different types of exercise you could try. There are many more than listed here*



Skateboarding  
Hiking  
Running  
Weight lifting  
Cycling  
Dancing

Walking  
Cricket  
Yoga  
Swimming  
Football  
HIIT

Hula-hooping  
Boxing  
Skipping  
Gymnastics  
Basketball  
Hockey

**#someone totalkto**

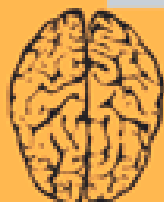


# THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP



HOW A GOOD NIGHT SLEEP CAN CHANGE YOUR DAY

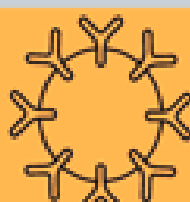
## Why is sleep important?



Gives time for the body and mind to recharge and repair



Digest and learn information from the day



Build a strong immune system so our body can fight infections and stay healthy



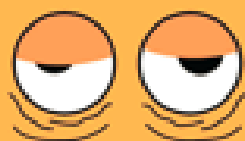
Promote healthier, stronger, clearer skin



Boost energy levels in the morning and throughout the day

## What happens when we don't get enough sleep?

Our ability to regulate our mood decreases. This can make us feel down, lethargic, and unmotivated



Increased risk of becoming ill and poorer ability to repair injuries



Makes concentrating difficult which can make us feel frustrated and unproductive



We can also become more irritable and increase feelings of anxiety

## TOP TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

1. Regular exercise during the day (try to avoid strenuous activity before bed)



2. Avoid late caffeine intake



3. Get outside in the sunlight as much as possible. This helps to produce our 'sleep' hormone melatonin



4. Avoid napping during the day



5. Avoid eating big meals late at night



Avoid screen use before bed

Make yourself a milky drink

Building a bedtime routine

Do a relaxing activity; reading, painting, light yoga, meditation

Have a bath or warm shower

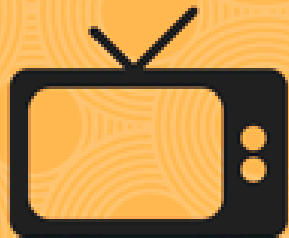
Have a completely dark room where possible





# wellbeing tips

## from Centre 33



Limit your time spent following news updates; too much can be overwhelming and stressful.

**Try to do some exercise each day, even a walk helps you to feel good and sleep better.**



Stay connected with friends and family over the phone or online.

**Spend time doing activities you enjoy, or take up new hobby.**



Keep a routine with fixed bedtimes and meal times.

**And remember:  
If you need to talk,  
we are here to listen and to help.**

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

There is help out there for you. If you're struggling or feel overwhelmed reach out to the services below:

### Anxiety Helplines and Services

SHOUT text line 24/7 - Text SHOUT to 85258

No Panic Helpline Everyday 10am-10pm - 0300 772984

Anxiety UK Helpline - Mon-Fri 09:30am-5:30pm 03444 775 774



### Crisis Support numbers

First Response Service: dial 111 and select option 2 (open 24 hours/7 days a week)

Young Minds Crisis Messenger: text YM to 85258

Samaritans: dial 116 123 (open 24 hours/7 days a week)

Childline (under 18s): dial 0800 1111

### Young Person Services

Centre3 3 - [www.centre33.org.uk/](http://www.centre33.org.uk/)

Kooth - [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

The Kite Trust - [www.thekitetrust.org.uk](http://www.thekitetrust.org.uk)

Your Local GP

Some Further Websites or Apps you might like to try:



MindShift

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough C&YP Mental Health

KeepYourHead



Tel: 0333 4141 809

email: [help@centre33.org.uk](mailto:help@centre33.org.uk)