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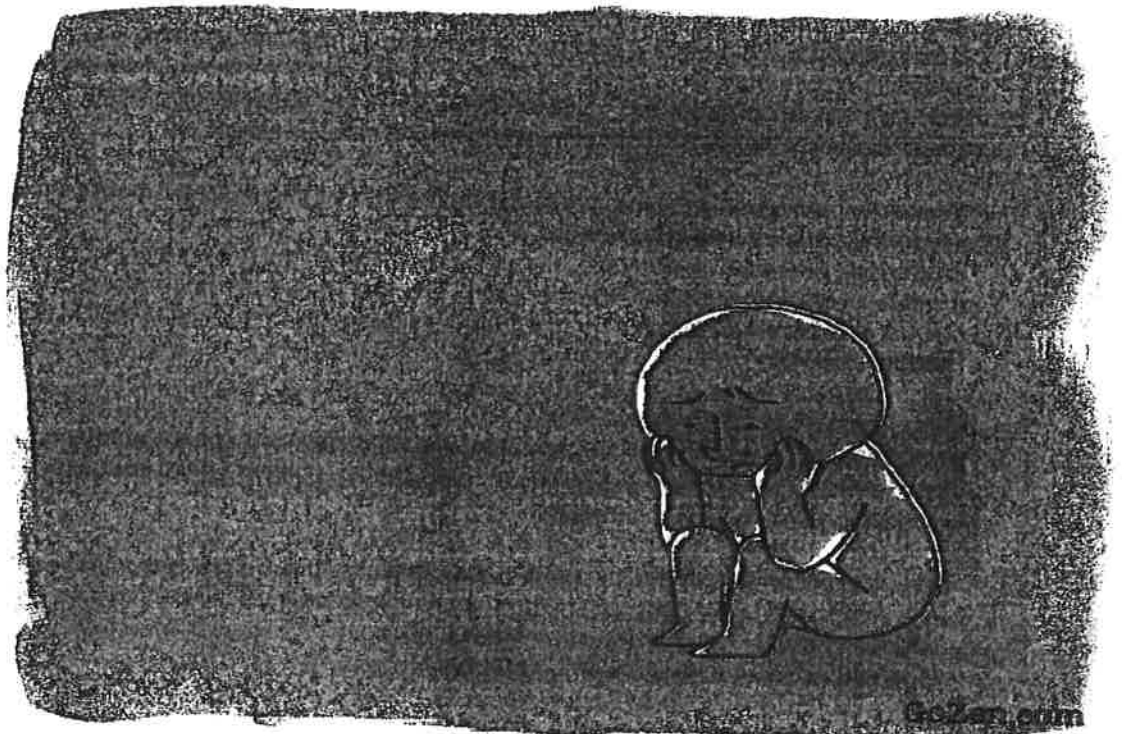
ANXIETY MANAGEMENT READING LIST

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1. 9 things every parent with an anxious child should try – information leaflet.
2. My Personal Relaxation Booklet
3. "What to do when you worry too much" (for 6-12 yr olds) by Dawn Huebner
4. "The Anxiety Workbook for Teens" by Lisa Schab
5. "Overcoming your child's fears and worries" by Cathy Cresswell
6. Moodjuice website www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/
7. "Getting through anxiety with CBT – a young person's guide" by Ben Gurney-Smith.

9 Things Every Parent with an Anxious Child Should Try



As all the kids line up to go to school, your son, Timmy, turns to you and says, "I don't want to take the bus. My stomach hurts. Please don't make me go." You cringe and think, *Here we go again*. What should be a simple morning routine explodes into a daunting challenge.

You look at Timmy and see genuine terror. You want to comfort him. You want to ease the excessive worry that's become part and parcel of his everyday life. First, you try logic. "Timmy, we walk an extra four blocks to catch this bus because this driver has an accident-free driving record!" He doesn't budge.

You provide reassurance. "I promise you'll be OK. Timmy, look at me... you trust me, right?" Timmy nods. A few seconds later he whispers, "Please don't make me go."

You resort to anger: "Timothy Christopher, you will get on this bus *RIGHT NOW*, or there will be serious consequences. No iPad for one week!" He looks at you as if you're making him walk the plank. He climbs onto the bus, defeated. You feel terrible.

If any of this sounds familiar, know you are not alone. Most parents would move mountains to ease their child's pain. Parents of kids with anxiety would move planets and stars as well. It hurts to watch your child worry over situations that, frankly, don't seem that scary. Here's the thing: To your child's mind, these situations are genuinely

threatening. And even perceived threats can create a real nervous system response. We call this response *anxiety* and I know it well.

1. Stop Reassuring Your Child

Your child worries. You know there is nothing to worry about, so you say, "Trust me. There's nothing to worry about." Done and done, right? We all wish it were that simple. Why does your reassurance fall on deaf ears? It's actually not the ears causing the issue. Your anxious child desperately wants to listen to you, but the brain won't let it happen. During periods of anxiety, there is a rapid dump of chemicals and mental transitions executed in your body for survival. One by-product is that the prefrontal cortex — or more logical part of the brain — gets put on hold while the more automated emotional brain takes over. In other words, it is really hard for your child to think clearly, use logic or even remember how to complete basic tasks. What should you do instead of trying to rationalize the worry away? Try something I call the *FEEL method*:

- **Freeze** — pause and take some deep breaths with your child. Deep breathing can help reverse the nervous system response.
- **Empathize** — anxiety is scary. Your child wants to know that you get it.
- **Evaluate** — once your child is calm, it's time to figure out possible solutions.
- **Let Go** — Let go of your guilt; you are an amazing parent giving your child the tools to manage their worry.

2. Highlight Why Worrying is Good

Remember, anxiety is tough enough without a child believing that *Something is wrong with me*. Many kids even develop anxiety about having anxiety. Teach your kids that worrying does, in fact, have a purpose.

When our ancestors were hunting and gathering food there was danger in the environment, and being worried helped them avoid attacks from the saber-toothed cat lurking in the bush. In modern times, we don't have a need to run from predators, but we are left with an evolutionary imprint that protects us: worry.

Worry is a protection mechanism. Worry rings an alarm in our system and helps us survive danger. Teach your kids that worry is perfectly normal, it can help protect us, and *everyone* experiences it from time to time. Sometimes our system sets off false alarms, but this type of worry (anxiety) can be put in check with some simple techniques.

3. Bring Your Child's Worry to Life

As you probably know, ignoring anxiety doesn't help. But bringing worry to life and talking about it like a real person can. Create a worry character for your child. In GoZen we created Widdle the Worrier. Widdle personifies anxiety. Widdle lives in the old brain that is responsible for protecting us when we're in danger. Of course, sometimes Widdle gets a little out of control and when that happens, we have to talk some sense into Widdle. You can use this same idea with a stuffed animal or even role-playing at home.

Personifying worry or creating a character has multiple benefits. It can help demystify this scary physical response children experience when they worry. It can reactivate the logical brain, and it's a tool your children can use on their own at any time.

4. Teach Your Child to Be a Thought Detective

Remember, worry is the brain's way of protecting us from danger. To make sure we're really paying attention, the mind often exaggerates the object of the worry (e.g., mistaking a stick for a snake). You may have heard that teaching your children to think more positively could calm their worries. But the best remedy for distorted thinking is not positive thinking; it's accurate thinking. Try a method we call the 3Cs:

- **Catch your thoughts:** Imagine every thought you have floats above your head in a bubble (like what you see in comic strips). Now, catch one of the worried thoughts like "No one at school likes me."

- **Collect evidence:** Next, collect evidence to support or negate this thought. Teach your child not to make judgments about what to worry about based only on feelings. Feelings are not facts. (Supporting evidence: "I had a hard time finding someone to sit with at lunch yesterday." Negating evidence: "Sherry and I do homework together—she's a friend of mine.")

- **Challenge your thoughts:** The best (and most entertaining) way to do this is to teach your children to have a debate within themselves.

6. Help Them Go from What If to What Is

You may not know this, but humans are capable of time travel. In fact, mentally we spend a lot of time in the future. For someone experiencing anxiety, this type of mental time travel can exacerbate the worry. A typical time traveler asks what-if questions: "What if I can't open my locker and I miss class?" "What if Suzy doesn't talk to me today?"

Research shows that coming back to the present can help alleviate this tendency. One effective method of doing this is to practice mindfulness exercises. Mindfulness brings a child from what if to what is. To do this, help your child simply focus on their breath for a few minutes.

7. Avoid Avoiding Everything that Causes Anxiety

Do your children want to avoid social events, dogs, school, planes or basically any situation that causes anxiety? As a parent, do you help them do so? Of course! This is natural. The flight part of the flight-fight-freeze response urges your children to escape the threatening situation. Unfortunately, in the long run, avoidance makes anxiety worse.

So what's the alternative? Try a method we call laddering. Kids who are able to manage their worry break it down into manageable chunks. Laddering uses this chunking concept and gradual exposure to reach a goal.

Let's say your child is afraid of sitting on the swings in the park. Instead of avoiding this activity, create mini-goals to get closer to the bigger goal (e.g., go to the edge of the park, then walk into the park, go to the swings, and, finally, get on a swing). You can use each step until the exposure becomes too easy; that's when you know it's time to move to the next rung on the ladder.

8. Help Them Work Through a Checklist

What do trained pilots do when they face an emergency? They don't wing it (no pun intended!); they refer to their emergency checklists. Even with years of training, every pilot works through a checklist because, when in danger, sometimes it's hard to think clearly.

When kids face anxiety they feel the same way. Why not create a checklist so they have a step-by-step method to calm down? What do you want them to do when they first feel anxiety coming on? If breathing helps them, then the first step is to pause and breathe. Next, they can evaluate the situation. In the end, you can create a hard copy checklist for your child to refer to when they feel anxious.

9. Practice Self-Compassion

Watching your child suffer from anxiety can be painful, frustrating, and confusing. There is not one parent that hasn't wondered at one time or another if they are the cause of their child's anxiety. Here's the thing, research shows that anxiety is often the result of

multiple factors (i.e., genes, brain physiology, temperament, environmental factors, past traumatic events, etc.). Please keep in mind, you did not cause your child's anxiety, but you can help them overcome it.

Toward the goal of a healthier life for the whole family, practice self-compassion. Remember, you're not alone, and you're not to blame. It's time to let go of debilitating self-criticism and forgive yourself. Love yourself. You are your child's champion.

Simple tools can help alleviate your child's anxiety. Start teaching your child coping skills with two animated lessons from www.gozen.com

Renee Jain is an award-winning tech entrepreneur turned speaker and certified life coach. She specializes in cultivating skills of resilience in both adults and children. Renee's passion is taking research-based concepts and transforming them into engaging and digestible learning modules. For children, she has created one-of-a-kind programs, GoStrengths! and GoZen!, to teach life skills via digital animation.

Anxiety and Phobia

What to do when you worry too much: a kid's guide to overcoming anxiety - Dawn Huebner (Book) Age 6 - 12

Published by the American Psychological Association What to Do When You Worry Too Much is an interactive self-help book designed to guide 6 - 12 year olds and their parents through the cognitive behavioural techniques most often used in the treatment of generalized anxiety. Metaphors and humorous illustrations make difficult concepts easy to understand, while prompts to draw and write help children to master new skills related to reducing anxiety. Engaging, encouraging, and easy to follow, this book educates, motivates, and empowers children to work towards change.

About the author: Dawn Huebner PHD is a graduate of the University of Michigan's Clinical Psychology program. Dr. Huebner works in private practice treating children with a variety of emotional, behavioural, and developmental concerns.

Anxiety and worry - Relax Kids (CD) Age 7-14

This pack includes a CD of 10 calming relaxations and a booklet of exercises to children and teenagers manage their worries and anxieties.

Activities such as progressive muscle relaxation, visual imagery, positive affirmations and breathing techniques are used as components for reducing anxiety and worry. These tracks can be used to help bring peace and calm to your child as well as provide stress management tools. Examples include:

- standing at the top of a mountain,
- floating on a balloon
- and creating positive mental pictures.

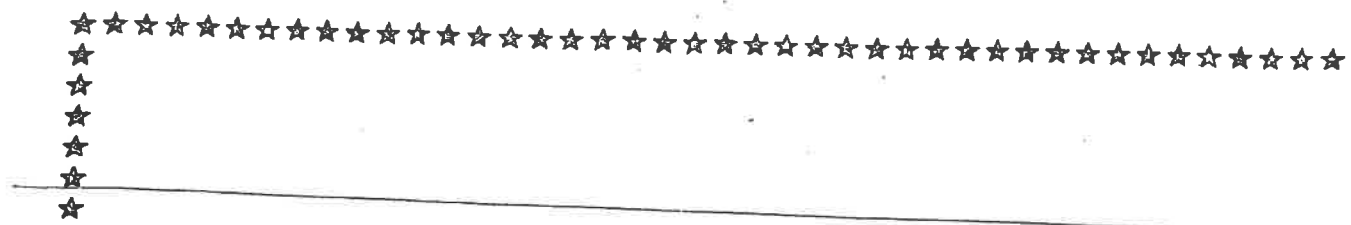
These relaxations aim to develop peace and calm as children are introduced to relaxation exercises and simple anxiety management techniques.

Getting through Anxiety with CBT: A young person's guide - Gurney-Smith, Ben (Book) Teen

When feelings of worry or being on edge linger around for longer periods of time, it can be very distressing. When edgy and worried feelings stay around much of the time, this is called anxiety. This guide is written for young people who want to understand more about anxiety and how Cognitive Behavioural Therapy could help them with this problem.

About the author: Dr Ben Gurney-Smith is a Principal Clinical Psychologist working with young people in Oxfordshire.

The anxiety workbook for teens: activities to help you deal with anxiety & worry - Schab, Lisa M (Book) Teen

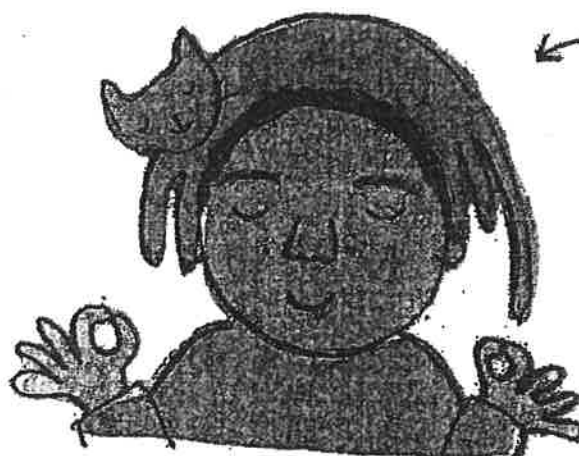


My Personal Relaxation

Name:

Preparing to use relaxation

- Make yourself comfortable.
- Find a quiet room. (Where there's space to stretch out).
- Make sure you will not be disturbed
- Make sure your room is warm but not stuffy
- Make sure that you are well supported either on the floor, a bed or a chair with a high back
- You may want to do some gentle loosening exercises first.



← totally
chilled
in
there

1. Breathing

When we feel anxious or tense our breathing becomes very shallow and fast, and can make us feel a bit sick.

The first thing to do is try and **STOP** breathing so fast!

Instead of taking lots of short breaths, try to take slow deep breaths.

Here's how:

- Focus on your breathing
- Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your tummy
- Breathe in slowly
- Think about your tummy and your chest moving out as you breathe in
- As you breathe out, feel your tummy and chest move back in

SLOWLY take nice deep breaths in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth.

Breathing Exercises:

Bubble Breathing..... breathing the fun way!!

A good way to practise breathing out slowly is to blow bubbles.

You can buy bubbles in the shop or make your own mixture using washing up liquid and a bit of water.

Try and breathe out slowly.

Remember ... If you get lots of tiny little bubbles you're blowing too fast

Blow out slowly & try and make one big bubble



3. Distract Yourself

Sometimes one of the best ways to relax is to distract yourself from your worries.

Here are some ways that you can use distraction...

1. Imagining a colour

Think about the colour yellow.... think about all the nice things you can think of that are yellow, the warm yellow of the sun on your face, the pale yellow of a sandy beach, the soft yellow feathers of a duckling. Think of the warmth of yellow

Now the yellow turns to orange.... imagine bright orange of flowers in the field, the flickering orange of an open flame, the warm soft orange of a ginger cat curled up on your lap. Think of the vibrance of orange

Now the yellow changes to red.... imagine bright red geraniums in a window box, warm red embers of coal, red specks of poppies sprinkled in a field. Feel the strength of red.

Now the red deepens to purple.... think of the pale lavender and violets in the garden, the bright purple of a gem in a ring, the deep purple of the sky at night. Feel the soothing power of purple.

Now the purple fades to blue.... picture the clear blue water of a sheltered bay, sky blue forget-me-nots, the high blue sunny skies. Feel the calm of blue.

Now let green slip into your mind.... imagine the green of the new spring grass, the damp green of misty hillsides, the clear bright green of flashing emeralds. Feel the freshness of green.

Then think about the colour that soothed you the most.

Yellow, Orange, Red, Purple, Blue, Green.

Stay with the colour and let it fill your mind, as you begin to relax.



2. Imagine Yourself In A Nice Calming Place:

When you start to become anxious or tense, imagine a place that is calm and peaceful. It can be a make believe place, or a place where you have happy memories. Keep this image in your mind as you practise your breathing exercises. Here is an example that someone could read to you as you relax.

The Beach:

Close your eyes. "Imagine you are on your own, strolling along a sandy beach early in the morning. The sun is shining brightly and the rays of the sun are warming you up. There is no-one around on the beach and you are on your own. The warm sand is soothing under your feet as you take in the fresh, clean air of the sea. The waves are rolling gently towards the beach and you can hear the freshness of the sea breeze just cooling you down.

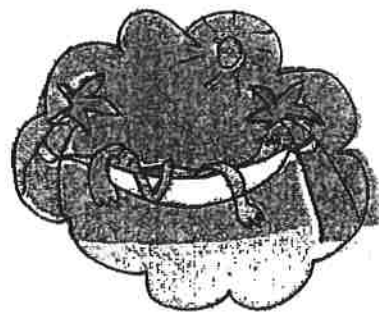
You begin to make your way slowly towards the edge of the sea as the sea water washes over your feet. Your feet feel cool and you feel refreshed and relaxed, just standing there for a minute. If you look out to sea, you can see a little fishing boat just sailing across the gentle sea and hear the hum of its engine. It is a peaceful sight as you watch the sun across the horizon and take in a few more deep breaths.

Slowly, you begin to make your way back up from the sea and across the beach, listening to the rolling waves and seagulls flying in the sky. Ahead of you are some palm trees, and you make your way towards them to have a rest. It's nice and cool under the shade of the palm trees as you sit, calm and relaxed. You look out to sea watching the gentle waves rolling in, the calm and peaceful sea, and the sunrays glistening over the water.

As you rest there, just take a few deep breaths of the cool air. Feel yourself calming down and being more at ease, as you sit there. As you watch the waves, let go of any worries or concerns you may have, let them flow away with the waves.

As you let go of all these worries and concerns, feel yourself becoming more and more calm and relaxed. Just give yourself a few moments to sit quietly and rest.

In a few minutes, imagine yourself getting up from where you are and making your way up from the beach. We will be returning to our starting point now, and in your own time, and at your own pace, open your eyes, take a deep breath, and give yourself a good stretch."



You Can Do It!!!

We hope that you have enjoyed the CHILL OUT ZONE and have found some of the skills useful.

Now whenever your thoughts, feelings and breathing get all out of control you know how to help yourself!!

You Know How To:

1. Breath Slowly

2. Distract Yourself

3. Relax Your Muscles



WELL
DONE!!!

2. Relaxing Your Body

When we become anxious or worried, our muscles become tense, our breathing gets faster and we sometimes get butterflies in our tummy.

We need to learn how to relax our muscles so that we have more control over the way our body feels.



Muscle relaxation exercises:

1. Massaging Your Head

- Put both your hands on your forehead with your fingers touching in the middle. Gently move your hands outwards towards your ears, repeat this a couple of times. Then move your hands gently down the sides of your nose and across your cheeks.
- Gently place your fingertips on each temple, use small circle movements to massage the sides of your head.

2. Massaging Your Shoulders & Neck

- Cup your hands around the sides of your neck, just below your ears. Then move your hands down your neck & over your shoulders, as though you are brushing away the tension.
- Cup your hands over your shoulders, just by your neck. Use small circle movements to massage your shoulders, don't press too hard.

3. Relaxing your muscles

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position and tighten the muscles in different parts of your body in turn.
- Hold the tension for 7-10 seconds and then relax the muscles for 15-20 seconds.
- Concentrate on the feeling in the muscles as it goes from tight to loose.

Protective Behaviours

19.05.15

Family Worker Meeting

Theme 1

We all have the right to feel safe all the time

Theme 2

We can talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small

Free thinking

This is a way to come up with new ideas on your own or as a group in a discussion.

Simple Free think

A simple question can be offered, such as, "when might it feel fun to feel scared... ?"

All ideas are listed and there may be some discussion about the list.

If using free thinks as a means to identify possible problems you may wish to prioritise two problems and then free think ideas as to how we may be able to overcome those problems.

Free-thinking with younger children

People working with younger children have noted that young children may not have a long concentration span, so discuss each idea as it is offered, rather than have a long list to come back to.

It can be fun to free think – ask the free thinking group for feedback on how it feels for them.

Fun ideas for free think practice

How can we keep ourselves safe EVEN IF

- We had to wash an elephant
- We had to brush a crocodiles teeth
- We had to put eye drops in a giraffes eyes
- We saw a spacecraft
- We fell in the water on a hot day
- We were watching a scary movie
- We lost our purse
- We were lost in the woods
- We tried to talk with someone about a problem and they did not listen
- We were being teased
- We spilt drink over the person next to us.