

Dear Parents & Carers,

As we are settling into our 'new normal' an increasing number of children are struggling emotionally which is causing heightened levels of general anxiety.

Following on from the fact sheet for Children and Coronavirus, we have put together a two-part information sheet. Part 1 has general advice along with where to find further information to support your child's emotional well-being.

Part 2, which will follow, is specific anxiety management advice.

With very best wishes

Liz and Emma

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Anxiety in children – taken from Action for Children

Anxiety presents itself in different ways depending on the child or young person. School aged children who are anxious may show it in their behaviours. They may:

Appear timid — stay close to their parents or caregivers when they are around other adults or children

Struggle to engage in play with children their own age.

Bedtime can also be an unsettling time for children who are anxious. They might have difficulty getting to sleep and staying asleep. Their sleep might be interrupted by nightmares and they may need a lot of reassurance and comfort from parents or caregivers.

When anxious feelings take over, it can feel scary and even life threatening for a child or young person, especially when experiencing an extreme form of anxiety such as a panic attack. These feelings can seem overwhelming and the child may not be able to think clearly. Parents or caregivers need to be supportive and reassure their children that the feelings they are experiencing in their bodies are physical symptoms of their anxiety and will not harm them

Two stories accompany this information sheet.
Stay at Home Superheroes and *The Kangaroo Who Couldn't Sit Still*.

Examples of strategies for managing anxiety

Make time to talk to your child. Listen to your child and accept that their worries are very real for them. Explain that worries are normal and everybody has them from time to time.

Try and get your child to spend less time on worries by creating a 'worry box' and arranging 'worry time'.

Get your child to do something fun to distract them from their worries. — Help your child to make a list of things that went right in their day to help them develop an optimistic outlook.

Support your child to focus on what they can do, rather than what they can't do. Encouraging them to say 'I can' will promote more positive thinking.

Encourage your child to talk back to their worries. Agreeing a 'code name' for the worry, for example 'The Annoying Grape', may make the worry feel more manageable.

Hand or foot massage

Relaxation and calming tips

Journaling - encourage your child to draw or write how they are feeling

Calm App - download for free

Audio stories at bedtime

Headspace App - meditation app

Mindful breathing for kids - YouTube

Cuddles and kind words

Sharing worries

Liz and Emma are here to talk suggestion through

Books for Children

The Invisible String - by Patrice Karst - available as a book or audio version on You Tube Kids

Worry Box - by Susanne Chiew

The Huge Bag of Worries - by Virginia Ironside

What to Do When You Worry Too Much - by Dawn Huebner



Working with young people aged 9-21 and their families, **Teens in Crisis** offers a range of services through counselling services CALL 01594 372777

Are you worried about your child's mental health, emotional well-being or behaviour?

Parenting can be hugely rewarding, it can also be really hard work especially if your child is unhappy or you are worried about them.

You're not alone

If your child is age 0-25 and lives in Gloucestershire, drop-in to our free, anonymous, confidential helpline during our open hours and talk to one of our trained parent support advisers. We care, we won't judge, and we will take you seriously

Please remember you can contact Liz or Emma to talk about any concerns you have for yourself or your children. Above all, remember you are not alone.

Liz and Emma