



Understanding Anxiety For Parents & Carers

www.tewv.nhs.uk/CAMHStraining

August 2022

What is anxiety

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future.

Anxiety is a natural human response when we perceive that we are under threat.

It can be experienced through our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations

'Anxiety' is a single word that represents a broad range of emotional intensity

Low range -
adaptive/normal

High range -
pathological /
maladaptive



When is it a problem?

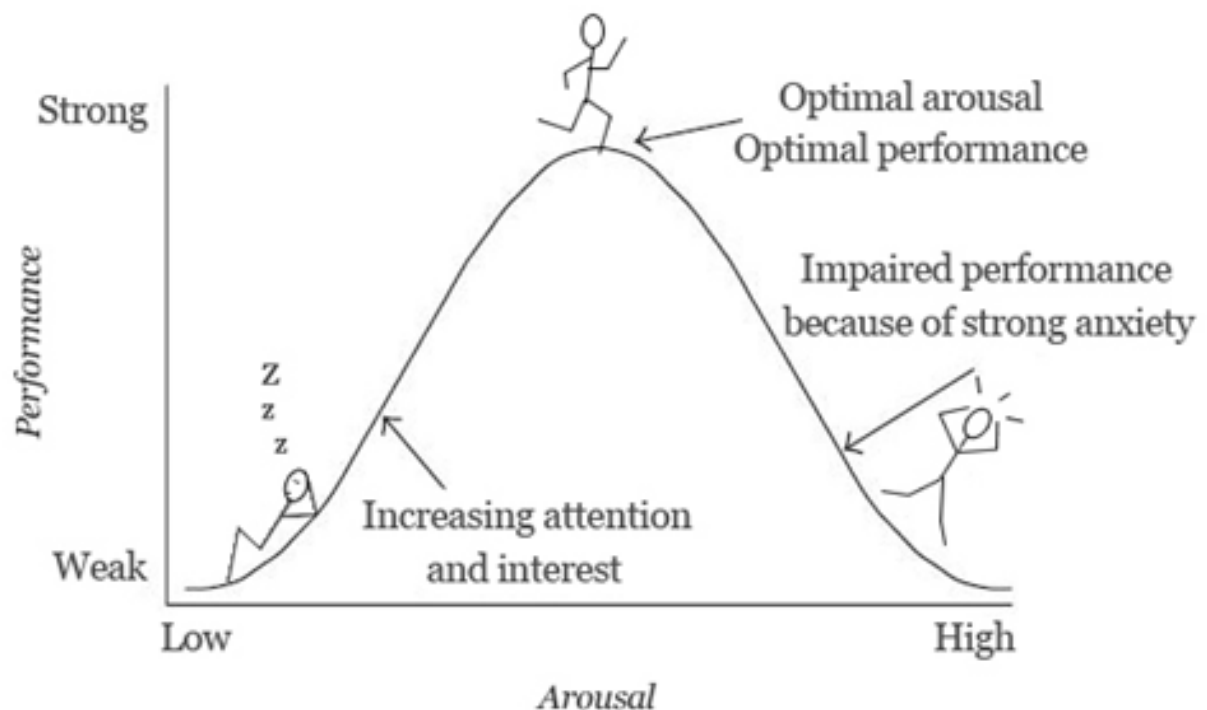
Duration

Frequency

Intensity

Interferes with a
persons functioning
and causes
significant distress

Is anxiety helpful?



Data

1 in 12 young people age
5-19 report an emotional
disorder

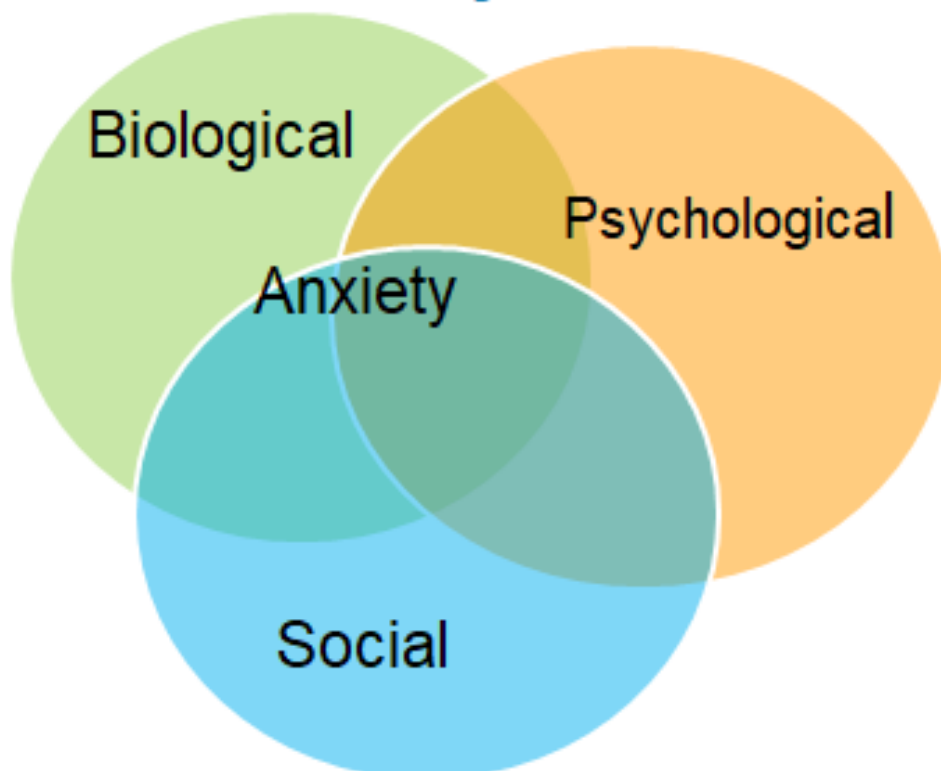
Half of mental health
disorders start by the age of
15 and 75% by 18

(Data from MHFA England May 2020)

1 in 8 children
experience mental
disorder (5-19)

(Data from NHS England)

What causes anxiety



Common symptoms experienced in terms of:

- ❖ Thoughts
- ❖ Feelings
- ❖ Behaviours
- ❖ Physical sensations

Physical sensation

Poor sleep	Chest pain
Shaking	Choking feeling
Tremors	Butterflies
Going pale	Nausea / sickness
Shortness of breath	Headaches
Palpitation	Dizziness
Feeling detached	Poor appetite
Pins & needles	Feeling hot & cold
IBS	Sweating

Thoughts

What if.....?	I can't do it
I must	I need to get out
I cant	It's not going to work
I should	I'm not clever enough
I'm useless	I'm going to faint / pass out
Everyone will laugh	

Feelings

Bouts of low mood

Irritability

Tiredness

Tearful

Poor concentration

Dread

Scared

Nervous

Depressed

Fear

Behaviours

Avoidance

Restricting functioning

Restlessness

Inability to relax

Needing structure and routine

Nervousness

Jumpy twitchy

Obsessive

Withdrawn

Argumentative

Irritable

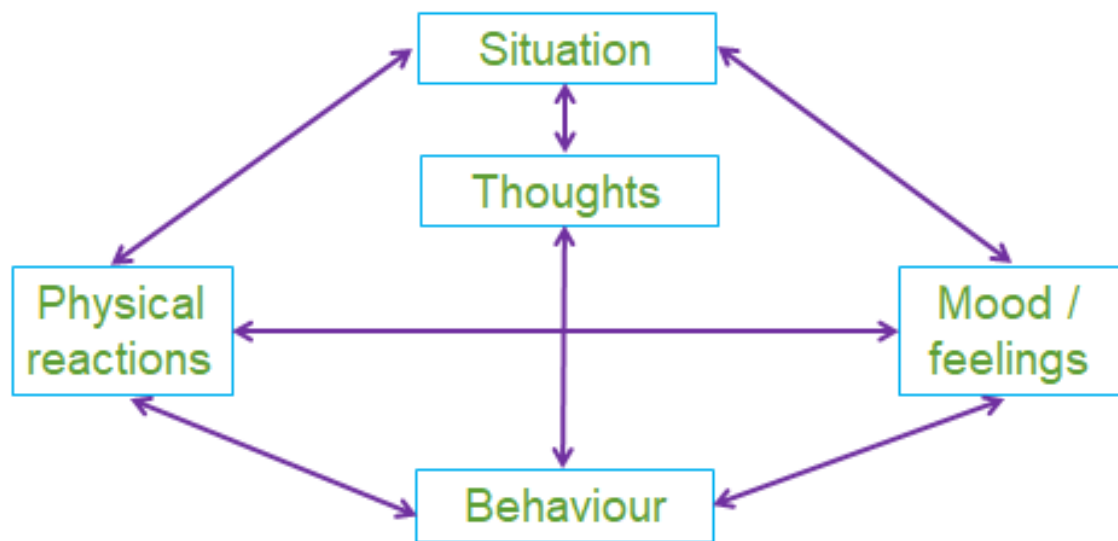
Safety behaviours checking

Collecting

Making lists

Superstitious behaviour

CBT Model



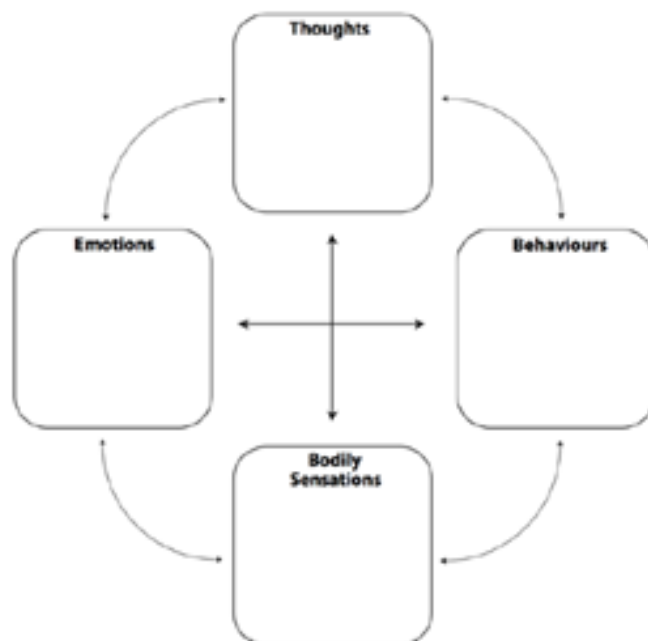
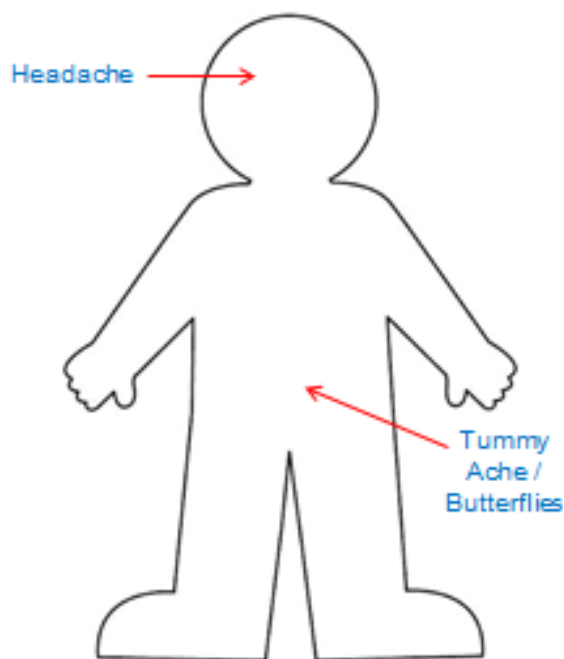
How anxiety is maintained

**Negative
Automatic
Thoughts**

**Avoidant
behaviour**

**Excessive
reassurance**

Useful tools



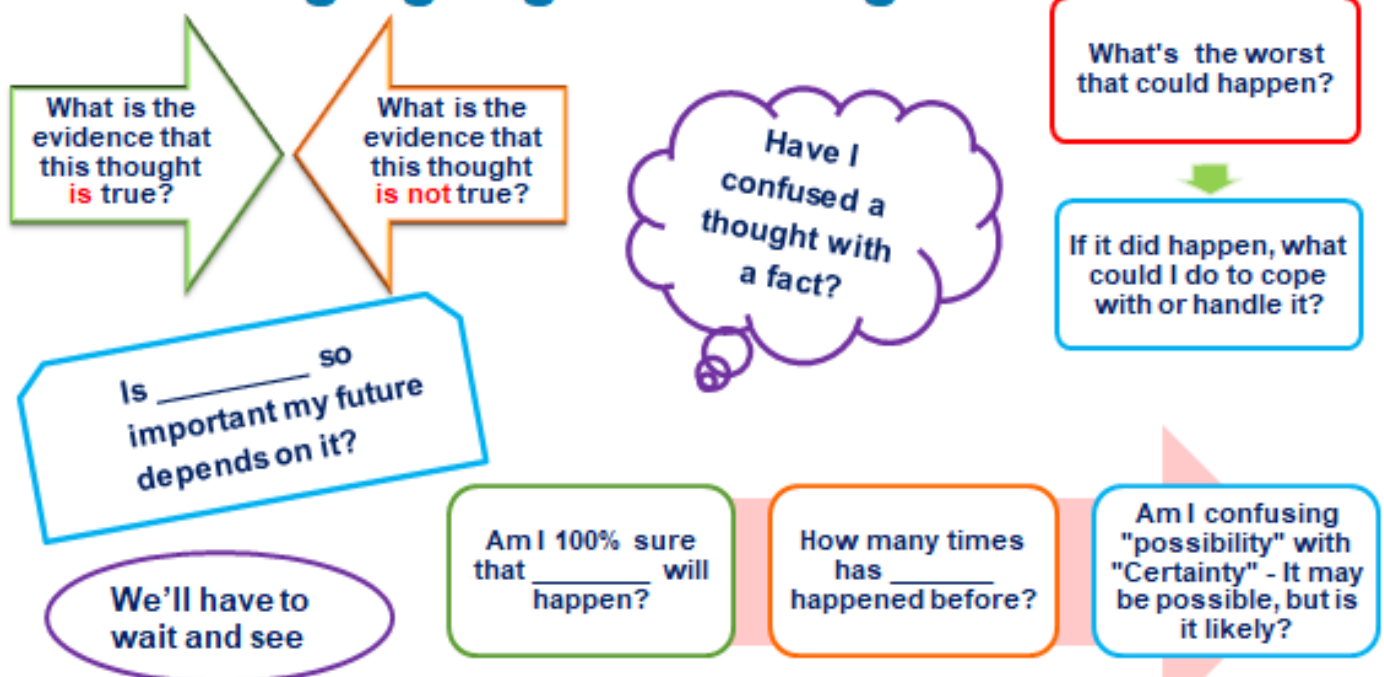
Negative Automatic Thoughts

Automatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They just seem to come into your mind without any effort
Distorted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are not always supported by the things you know to be true
Unhelpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They keep you feeling depressed and make it difficult to change
Plausible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You accept them as facts and do not question them
Involuntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You do not choose to have them and they are very difficult to stop

Unhelpful Thinking



Challenging negative thoughts



Avoidance

Avoidance behaviors are **things that people do, or don't do**, to reduce anxiety in certain situations. Avoidance behaviors can take three different forms

Avoidance

Avoidance behaviours involve the complete avoidance of the feared situation.

Escape

When total avoidance is impossible, escape behaviours may be used.

Safety behaviours

When neither avoidance nor escape are possible, safety behaviours may be used to reduce feelings of anxiety.

Cognitive behavioural model for the treatment of anxiety disorders

Maintenance of an anxiety disorder



Excessive reassurance

Subtle dance between responding to emotional need and feeding their anxiety give enough but not too much

Why is reassurance in this case not our friend?

Bottomless pit

Sticky plaster

Keeps anxiety alive

Questions to ask

Is that you or your worry? I am going to support you, not the anxiety

What if you didn't do your homework perfectly - what would happen?

Maybe you did make a mistake on your exam; what could you do to cope with that?

It sounds like your anxiety is acting up. What could you do to boss it back? Could you maybe do some relaxed breathing? Are there any helpful thoughts that you can tell yourself?

What do you think? How could you handle that?

I guess you'll just have to wait and find out

When that happened last time, what did you do?

What do you think mother, father, sister, friend would do?

What do you think action hero would do in this situation?

Anxiety disorders in children

Generalised
anxiety
disorder

Separation
anxiety
disorder

Social
phobia

Panic
disorder

Specific
phobia

Obsessive
compulsive
disorder

What can help?

Reassure but avoid excessive reassurance

Modelling

Recognises avoidance/escape/safety behaviours

Encourage problem solving

Explain what anxiety is and how to recognise it

Who does the worry belong too?

Be a thought detective

Drawing writing creative expression

Distract

Make small step plans

Relaxation / mindfulness

Regular exercise

Worry box/book/worry time

Good sleep routine

Step plan

Below are the steps on Jack's fear stairs

1 = No fear

10 = Extreme fear

Goal: To be able to go near dogs without feeling so scared

Step	Situation	Fear rating
11	Stroking a big dog not on a lead	10
10	Stroking a big dog on a lead	9
9	Holding a puppy	9
8	Stroking a puppy that someone else is holding	8
7	Standing beside, but not touching a dog on a lead	7
6	Standing 4 feet away from a dog on a lead	6
5	Standing 8 feet away from a dog on a lead	5
4	Standing across the street from a dog on a lead	4
3	Looking at a dog through a window	3
2	Watching a film with dogs in it	2
1	Looking at a photo / picture of dogs	2



Breathe



Walk



Focus of attention



Relax



Exercise



Talk



Friends



Music

Smartphone Apps



[Think Ninja](#)

Designed for children and young people (10-18 yrs) to give skills and knowledge about mental health and emotional wellbeing



[Daylio](#)

Daily mood and micro diary



[SAM](#)

Understand and manage your anxiety



[Relax Melodies](#)

Sleep aid



[Headspace](#)

Meditation and sleep



[What's up? – A Mental Health App](#)

For when you need a little extra help getting through those tough days



[Mind of my own](#)

Helps young people express views and feelings



[MyLife Meditation](#)

[by Stop.Breathe.Think](#)

Meditation and mindfulness

Referral to CAMHS

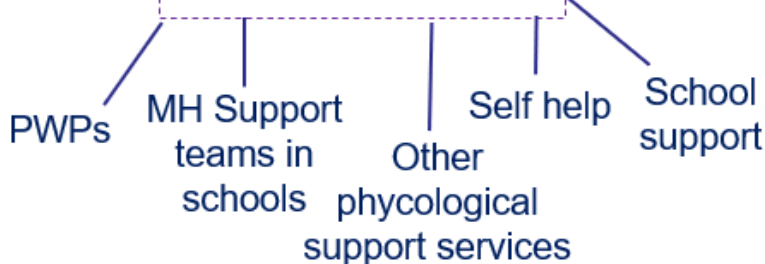
Frequency

Intensity

Duration

Input

Low - Moderate



Moderate - Severe



Single Point of Contact (SPoC)

SPOC

0300 2000 000

South Tees: tewv.stspoc-camhs@nhs.net
North Tees: tewv.ntspoc-camhs@nhs.net

Useful websites/links/references

- ❖ www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- ❖ www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/anxiety.asp
- ❖ www.getselfhelp.co.uk
- ❖ www.youngminds.org
- ❖ www.annafreud.org
- ❖ www.minded.org.uk
- ❖ www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone
- ❖ www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk
- ❖ www.kooth.com
- ❖ www.Charliewaller.org

Books

- ❖ **The Huge Bag of Worries Paperback** – 6 Jan 2011 by Virginia Ironside
- ❖ **Think good, feel good** – by Paul Stallard
- ❖ **Coping with an anxious or depressed child** by Dr Sam Cartwright-Hatton practical advice about managing child's anxiety. Includes worksheets, tips and how you can engage the school in helping your child.
- ❖ **The Theory & Practice of Anxiety Management** – Dr Eddie McNamara
- ❖ **'Cool Kids' Parent's Workbook** (child version)
- ❖ **Helping your child with fears and worries** – Parent Led CBT book
- ❖ **What to do when you worry too much/ Don't worry be happy** – For primary school aged children