

Mental Health Awareness Week



Aim

- To explore what mental health is, why it is important to look after our mental health and how we can do this.

What Does Mental Health Mean?

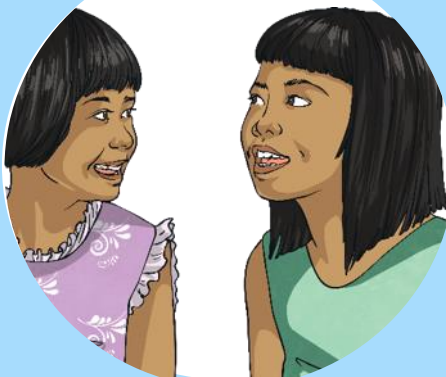
Mental health is all about how we are feeling, the thoughts we are having and how this affects the choices we make and how we behave.



It is also how able we are to cope with what is happening in our daily lives.



Mental Health and Me



Looking after our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical health.



There is a lot we can do to look after our mental health or to help us feel better if our minds aren't feeling so well.



It is important that people of all ages do whatever they can to look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Looking after Our Mental Health



Bringing nature into our lives.



Eating a balanced diet.



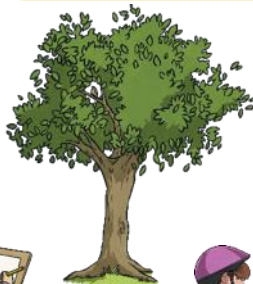
Learning a craft.



Spending time with people we are close to.



Getting physically active.



Talk to your partner about one way we can make looking after our mental health part of our daily lives.



Having a balance of activities.



Being kind.



Being mindful.



Getting enough sleep.

Mental Health Awareness Week



Each year, Mental Health Awareness Week is held to help people of all ages to explore what mental health is, what we can all do to look after our own and each other's mental health and understand that it is good to talk about how we are feeling.

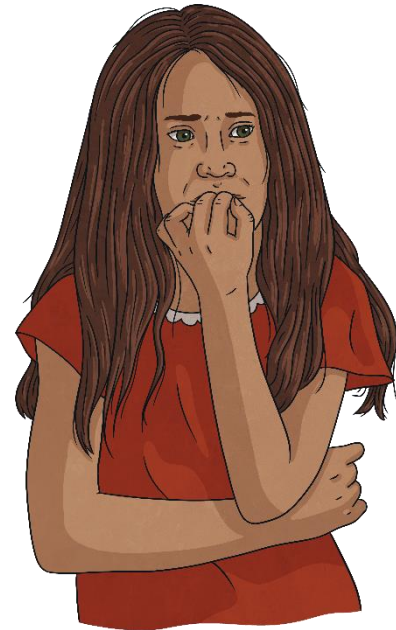
Anxiety and Mental Health

Every year Mental Health Awareness Week has a theme.
This year the theme is Anxiety.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling people may get if they are worried, frightened or nervous about something. They may experience this in their body or mind. They might:

- lack confidence to try new things;
- feel nervous or panicky a lot of the time;
- feel overwhelmed;
- find everyday tasks difficult;
- find it difficult to focus on anything else;
- feel angry or irritable;
- have unhelpful thoughts;
- avoid doing things they normally enjoy;
- have an uncomfortable feeling in their stomach;
- feel faint;
- experience a faster heart beat;
- feel very hot;
- have difficulty sleeping.



Anxiety and Mental Health

There are lots of words people might use to describe anxiety. Talk to the person next to you, can you think of any words that could be used to describe the symptoms we've been discussing?

Someone experiencing anxiety might say they feel:

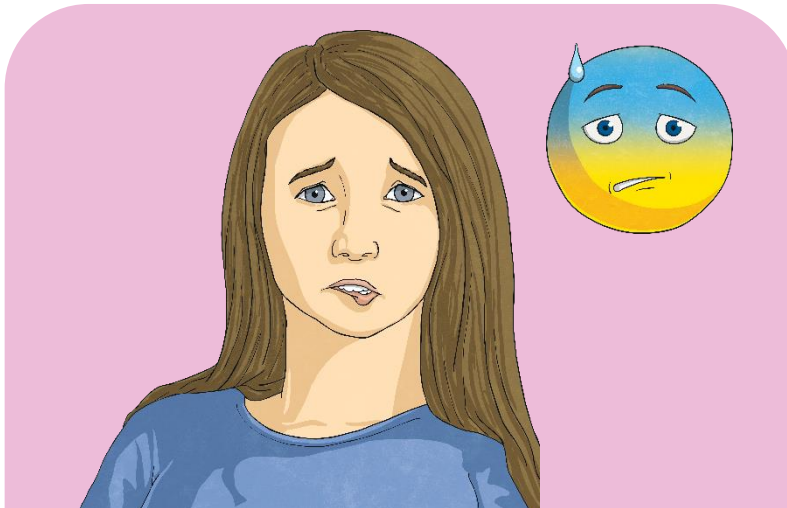
- wobbly;
- nervous;
- overwhelmed;
- like they have a busy mind;
- worried;
- panicky;
- scared;
- queasy;
- frightened;
- like they have butterflies in their stomach;
- alone.

We all feel lots of different emotions and every one of them is OK. If we feel uncomfortable emotions too often or for too long, it can start to affect the way we think, feel and behave. It is important to talk to people we trust about how we are feeling to get help.

Causes of Anxiety

There may be times when some anxiety can be helpful. It can help us focus on what we are doing. Can you think of any examples?

Freya plays football for her local team. At the weekend, her team is playing in the final of a local tournament. Freya is feeling nervous as she hopes it goes well and that they win.



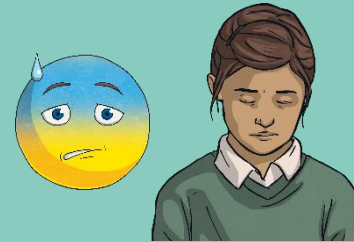
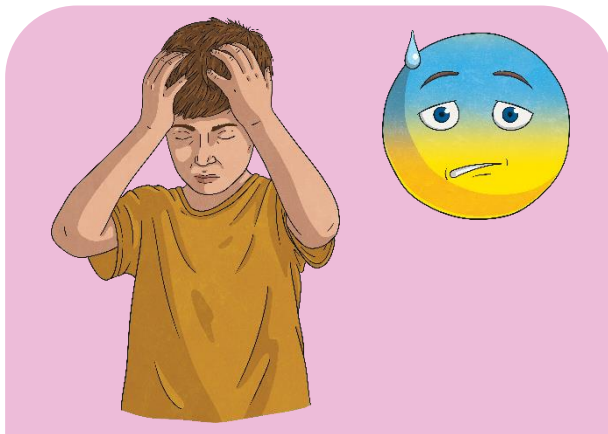
Nico is taking part in a spelling competition. He is trying hard to learn his words and is feeling anxious as the test approaches.

These children are feeling anxious about the big events they are working towards. These emotions may help them to focus and it is likely that these feelings will pass when the event is over.

Causes of Anxiety

There are many reasons why people experience anxiety and feel that this causes uncomfortable emotions.

Rodriguez enjoys going to the park with his friends. Recently, they have all started going on the climbing frame where the older children sit and chat. He feels anxious about this and has started avoiding going to the park with his friends.



Nina and her friends have been talking about what secondary school they will go to. Nina really likes one of the local schools but all her friends say they want to go to the other one. Nina feels worried about which school she should go to and this is starting to upset her. She is finding it difficult to concentrate on anything else.

Causes of Anxiety

There are many reasons why people experience anxiety and feel that this causes uncomfortable emotions.

These children feel anxious about something that is worrying them. This is causing them to experience emotions they feel are uncomfortable. They may find that when a solution is reached, these uncomfortable feelings ease.



If we feel anxious about anything, it is very important that we speak to a trusted adult about how we are feeling. If we notice someone close to us is experiencing anxiety, we can speak to a trusted adult to get help for them.

Causes of Anxiety

If someone experiences anxiety very often or for a long time, it can make things feel difficult. Anxiety can become something that they feel about most situations. Sometimes, people may find anxiety stops them doing things they used to do easily or even stops them doing things they usually enjoy.

Gino enjoys playing with friends in the park.
He attends an after school club.
He enjoys craft activities.
He walks to school with his friends.

If someone is experiencing anxiety, some or all of these things may feel difficult. Because we are all unique, we will all feel differently about different situations. It is important to show kindness and to respect how people around us feel about situations.



Helpful Strategies

If someone notices they are feeling anxious, there are strategies that can help.

- Recognise and name these feelings.
- Find routines that help to feel in control.
- If something is approaching that may cause anxiety, have a plan in place and some ideas about how this might be managed.
- Try to find enjoyable activities that can provide a distraction.
- Make a worry box to put worries in so they don't need to be held inside, then read through them with a trusted adult.
- Create a self-soothing box of calming activities or happy memories.
- Be as active as possible by running around or playing a game. This can help us to feel comfortable emotions.
- Focus on the positives. Make a positivity journal to celebrate strengths and reasons to be grateful.
- Use positive self-talk and remind yourself of things that make you special and brilliant.
- Do some calming breathing exercises.



Help to Feel Better

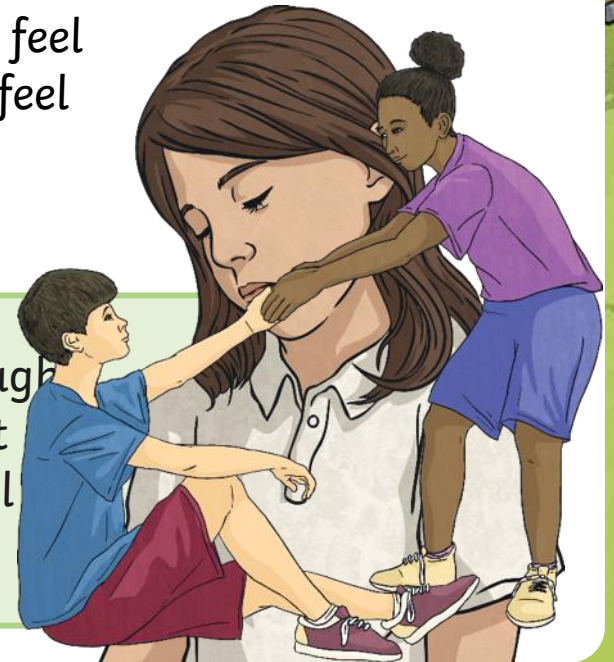
We all feel lots of different emotions each and every day.

This is OK because every feeling is OK.

Some of these emotions will feel comfortable and some will feel less comfortable.

However, if uncomfortable feelings affect our thoughts

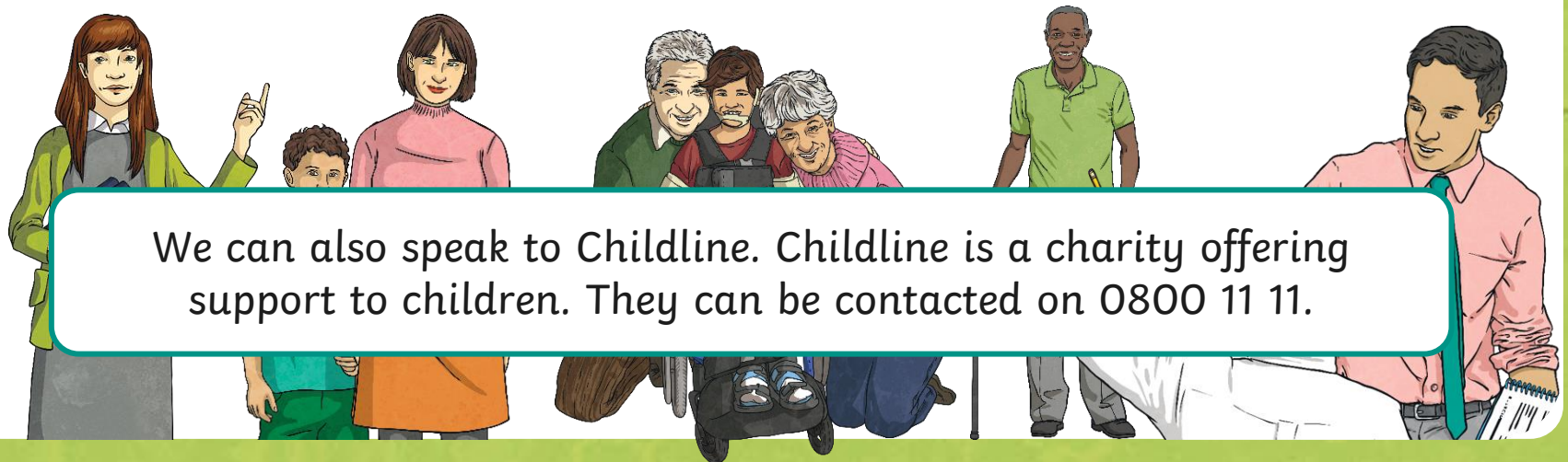
We might also need to ask for help for a friend or family member to feel better too.



Help to Feel Better

It is very important that if we are worried about anything at all, or are feeling emotions that are uncomfortable too often or for too long, we get help by speaking to an adult we trust.

Let's take a moment to think about an adult we could speak to. This needs to be someone we trust and someone who we could share things with.



We can also speak to Childline. Childline is a charity offering support to children. They can be contacted on 0800 11 11.

Reflection

Let's take a quiet moment to think about answers to these questions.

How can I show kindness and respect to help people around me feel good on the inside?

Reflection



Let's look after our mental health and take care of the mental health of those around us.

