

Anxiety ToolKit



Manchester
School Health
Service



All about me

Name

.....

DOB

.....

School

.....

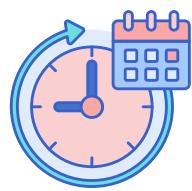
The Basics to your Wellbeing



How is your sleep?



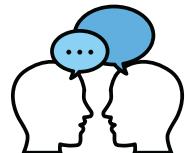
What is your diet like?



What is your routine like?



How do you keep active?



What are your relationships like? with family/friends etc?

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness, like when we are worried or scared, and this can be about things that are going to happen or things we think might happen in the future.

Anxiety can help us to avoid dangerous situations. You are not alone, everyone experiences feelings of anxiousness at some point, especially when we are going through stressful life events or changes. However anxiety can last from a few moments to many years and can vary from being mild to severe.

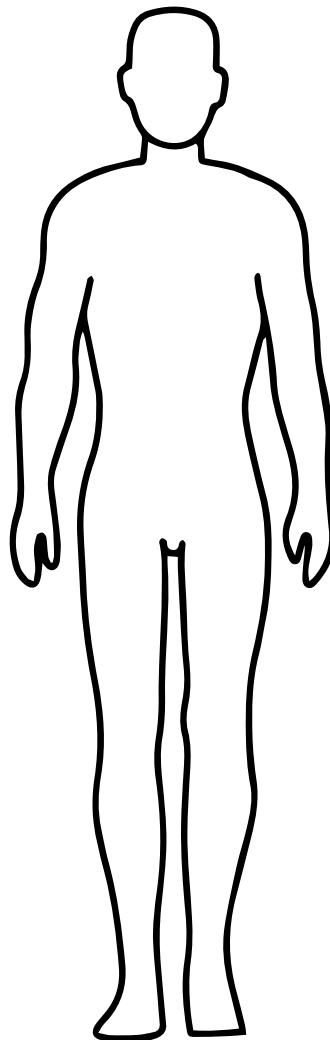
Anxiety disorders can be caused by a number of factors including medical, genetics, environmental, substance misuse, brain chemistry, or a combination of these. For a lot of young people, anxiety can be caused by the stress in their lives.

Exercise 1: What happens to you when you feel anxious?

When we feel anxious, the physical symptoms can be unpleasant and worrying. But it is important to remember that these are normal reactions to a stressful or feared situation.

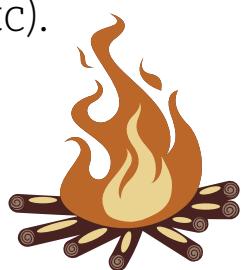


Make notes on the page about how you feel physically and mentally when you feel anxious



Freeze-fight-flight Response

When we feel in danger, we all have the same fight or flight response. This response was developed in the Stone Age. Back then, people faced many threats and so their bodies would go into survival mode (such as when they were threatened by dangerous animals, the cold, other people, hunger, being excluded from their tribe etc).



Our brains have not changed much since the Stone Age and we still have a lot of the programming within our brains that helped people survive.

The freeze-fight-flight response can help us when we are in danger, but the same response can be triggered by our own thoughts and worries.



What happens to you when you feel anxious?

Feeling: Dizziness/tunnel vision/light headed
Why? your thoughts may race to help assess threat and make quick decisions. You may find it hard to focus on anything else but the feeling of danger

Feeling: struggling to breathe
Why? you might feel as though you are choking or can't breathe because the muscles in your neck start to tighten

Feeling: Your breathing becomes fast and shallow
Why? your body is trying to get as much oxygen as it can to make sure that your muscles can work at their highest capacity

Feeling: your hands become cold
Why? this is because the blood flow is quickly going to your major muscles

Feeling: you may need to the toilet
Why? this is because as your stomach muscles tighten, they press on your bladder and bowel

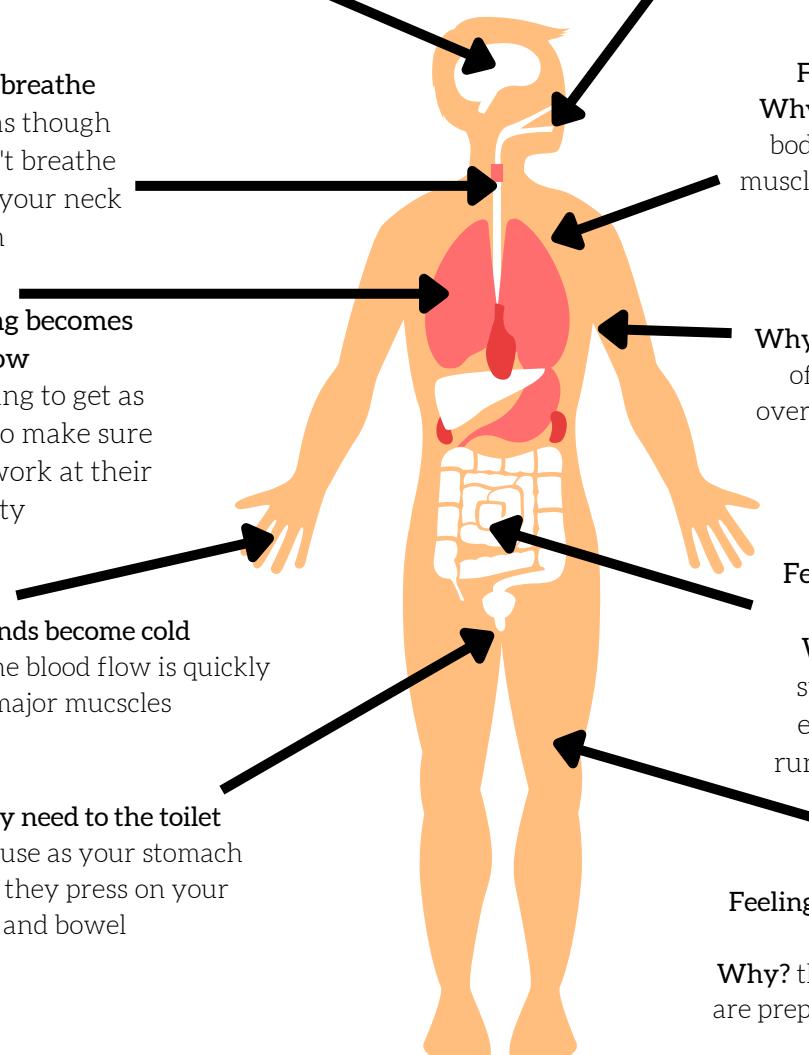
Feeling: Your mouth becomes dry
Why? this happens because your body is making sure all your energy is getting ready to fight or run and so your digestive system (including your salivary glands) switch off

Feeling: Your heart beats faster
Why? this is happening because your body is pumping your blood to your muscles quickly so that they can work to their maximum capacity

Feeling: you start sweating
Why? this is because you are using a lot of energy and so you are at risk of overheating, therefore your body starts sweating to cool you down

Feeling: You get butterflies or feel sick
Why? your digestive system is switching off to ensure all your energy is used for fighting or running. Blood flows towards your larger muscles

Feeling: your muscles become very tight
Why? this is happening because they are preparing for you to either run or fight



Outcomes from session 1

Can you name two things that you have learnt from today's session?

1

2

Wellbeing log

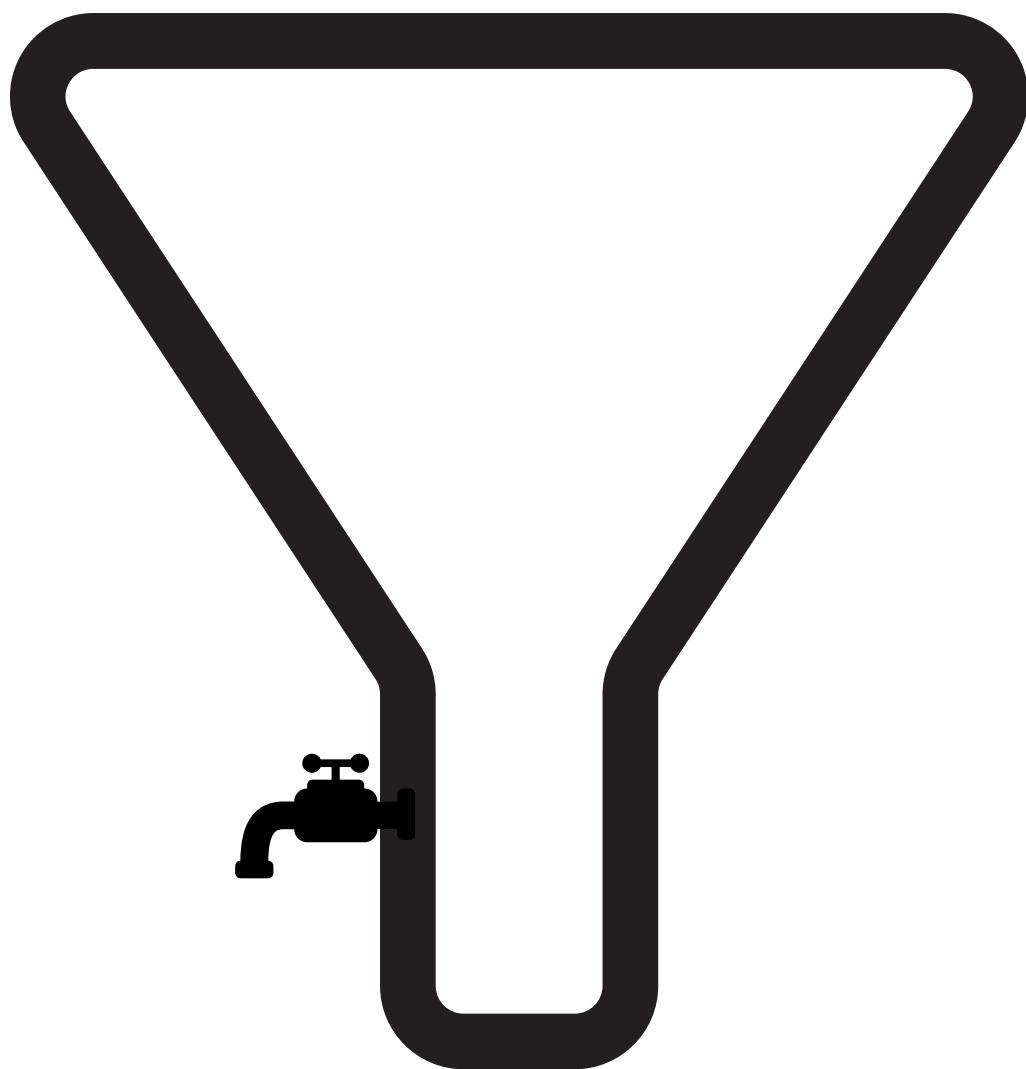
Make a note of how your **sleep**, **exercise**, **connections**, **routine** and **diet** have been this week. Also write down one word to describe your mood at the bottom for each day

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 Sleep							
 Exercise							
 Connections							
 Routine							
 Diet							
How do you feel today?							

Stress Bucket



Exercise: write down in your stress container what is going on for you such as at school and home with friends and family



The idea is that as your stress container starts filling up, we need to start emptying it by using healthy strategies (which turn the taps on). These healthy strategies can help you deal with stress and worries. If we don't utilise healthy ways to cope with stress, our stress container is at risk of overflowing and this can make life feel overwhelming and as a result our mental health will suffer.

Healthy and unhealthy coping strategies



Activity: using a red and green pen, circle which options you feel are healthy in green and unhealthy in red when your stress container is getting full and have a go at adding more ideas to the table!



reading

overeating

exercise



drinking alcohol

art

getting angry



watching TV

go to the cinema



go for a walk

eating well

spend time with friends

resting and
getting some
sleep

stretching

listening to music

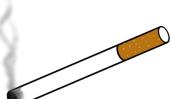


gaming

kicking something

engage in a hobby

being violent



create a schedule for school work



withdrawning from friends/family



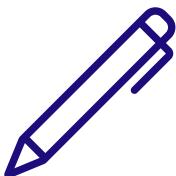
talk to people

Healthy



Unhealthy





Exercise: Lets look at the following questions

What evidence is there to support how I am feeling about the stressors in my container?

What can I change?

Is there anything I can't change?

What do I need to focus on?

Outcomes from session 2

Can you name two things that you have learnt from today's session?

1

2

Wellbeing log

Make a note of how your **sleep**, **exercise**, **connections**, **routine** and **diet** have been this week. Also write down one word to describe your mood at the bottom for each day

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 Routine							
 Diet							
How do you feel today?							

Lets talk about the basics

When we are not feeling good, often it is the basics that we let go of. Here we will talk about how important the basics are to maintaining good mental health and how if we neglect the basics we can leave ourselves vulnerable to poor mental health.

Routine

A lack of routine can lead to us feeling anxious and stressed, so by having a structure and routine to your day can help you to feel more in control of your life, help to form healthy habits, manage change better and reduce levels of stress.



Sleep

A good sleep routine is important so try reducing screen time before bed and do something relaxing before bed such as reading. Put your phone into night shift mode, keep your room tidy and if you have something worrying you before bed, try and write it down or make a to do list for tomorrow.



Nutrition

Eating well can improve your wellbeing and make you feel better. Try to eat regularly, include fruit, vegetables and wholegrain into your diet, stay hydrated and avoid caffeine close to bedtime (which is in chocolate, coffee, energy drinks, tea).



Exercise

Regular physical activity is linked not only with good physical health but also with lower rates of anxiety and depression. Exercise is great for your overall wellbeing, It doesn't have to be going to the gym or anything difficult, it could be simply going for a walk, or swapping getting the bus and walking to school, or even trying out a new activity.





Connection

Being 'connected' to people is fundamental to our wellbeing. Connecting with people helps build self-esteem and your sense of belonging. This includes staying in touch with friends, speaking to an adult you can trust, seeing people face to face, talking through your problems, supporting one another and using social media.

Do
something
you enjoy

This could be any number of things such as writing, dancing, playing a board game, cooking, baking, gaming, watching a TV show or movie, listening to your favourite music, volunteering, playing an instrument. It is so important to take time out each week to do something for YOU.



Please do not feel that you need to have a perfect approach to all of them, for example, you may not feel great about your routine but you might be keeping fit and active and spending time with people around you. You don't have to have everything together all the time, as when some aspects of our life aren't where we want them, other areas will be helping us out.

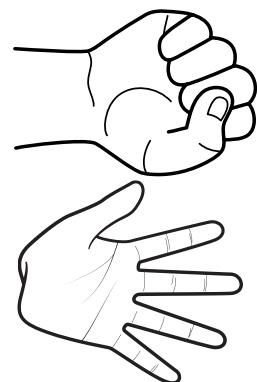
Breathing Exercises



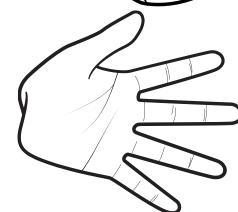
TIP: Try using these breathing exercises when you are feeling anxious or stressed. These tools are also great to use even when you are feeling ok, so that you know how to use these exercises when you need them the most!

- 1
- 2
- 3

Using your hands, breathe in through your nose and clench your fists together



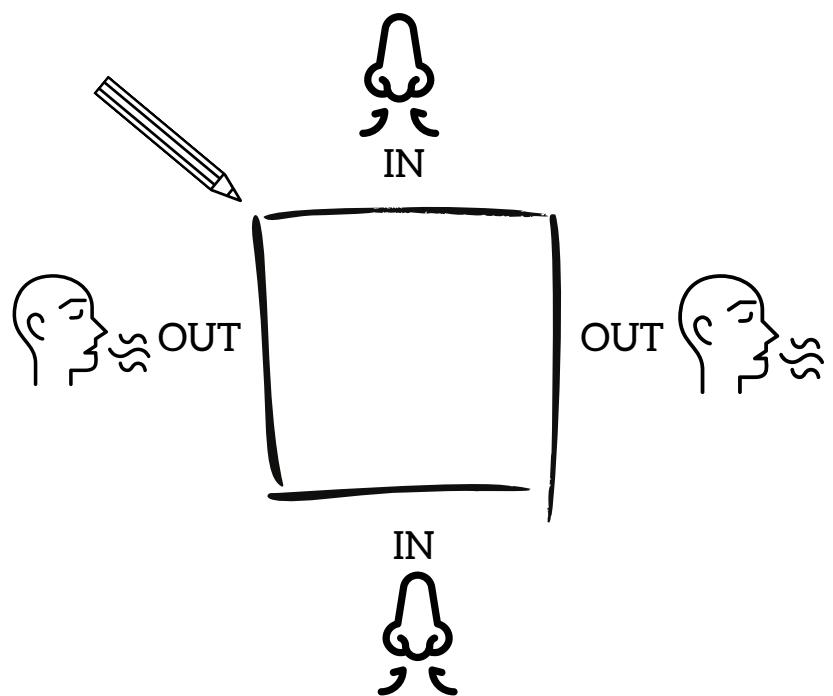
And then breathe out through your mouth and release your hands out



Repeat this for 20 seconds. You could also use your toes or your eyes, closing your eyes when you inhale and opening your eyes when you exhale

Exercise 2:

Draw out a square and as you draw the first side breathe in, then breathe out for the next side and then continue this until you have drawn a square. You could also draw circles, breathing in for one circle, then out for another.



Grounding Techniques



The purpose of this exercise is to try and distract you from your anxious feelings and help you focus on the present moment. When you are feeling anxious or stressed, try to complete the following grounding technique. You need to write down or think about:

5

Things you can see

4

Things you can touch

3

Things you can hear

2

Things you can smell

1

Thing you can taste

Outcomes from session 3

Can you name two things that you have learnt from today's session?

1

2

Wellbeing log

Make a note of how your **sleep**, **exercise**, **connections**, **routine** and **diet** have been this week. Also write down one word to describe your mood at the bottom for each day

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How do you feel today?							

Wellbeing Check in Session 4

Take a moment to reflect on the last few weeks. How do you feel that you have dealt with the changes and challenges?

(Feel free to write about any challenges that you have faced, how you have been feeling, anything you have found particularly hard)

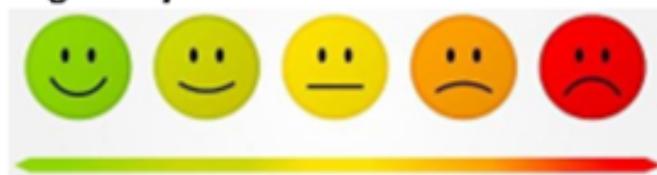
What have you learnt from these sessions?

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What is your understanding of mental health and anxiety?

--

How are you feeling today?



(Feel free to just circle an answer in the above diagram, you can write about how you are feeling or do both)

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Do you feel that following these sessions with your school nurse, do you need any additional support with your mental health?

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My Action Plan

My support network (Think about those around you, school staff, family, friends)



Self- reflection (Think about things you can do to manage feelings and triggers)



My signs and symptoms (Think about your thoughts, feelings and behaviours)



Self- regulation (Think about school support and external support that you can access)

