

ANXIETY

Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling that everyone experiences sometimes. You might describe it as feeling very nervous or “wound up”.

General anxiety symptoms can last for extended periods of time – it could go on for a couple of weeks or longer. It's more than just being nervous.

You might have anxious thoughts about yourself, other people, and how you think other people feel about you. You might also have anxious thoughts about the world around you and what's coming in the future.

Last week we looked challenging our unhelpful thoughts with questions.



This week we will take a look at managing your (or your child's) worry, as anxious people can spend a lot of time worrying. We need to remember that worry is only useful when it reminds you (or your child) to do something – otherwise it is just your thoughts getting stuck in an unhelpful loop. One of the most frustrating things about anxiety is that it can make you feel like you have no control over how much you worry. Managing how much you worry can lower your anxiety.

One way you can do this is to set aside 'worry time'. This can help you to feel in control of your worry, so it does not feel overwhelming.

Worry time:

- Decide a time in the day that is worry time – this should last about 10 to 15 minutes
- At other times, remind yourself that you have worry time put aside already and try not to think about your worries until then
- Once your worry time arrives, start timing yourself, so it doesn't go on for longer than 15 minutes
- During worry time, let yourself worry – don't even try to come up with solutions. Focus entirely on being worried.
- Stop as soon as your worry time is finished – or earlier, as you might run out of worries before the 15 minutes is up.



Have a go at introducing worry time for yourself, your child, or as a family. Doing it as a family, normalises the concept of worrying and shows your child that worrying is normal and we all worry about things every day. Model your thoughts in front of your child by saying: 'I am worried about.....but this is not helpful as it is not reminding me to do something. I will save my worrying about this until worry time. I can even write it down so it will be there when I have my worry time' or 'I am worried about this.....that is good because it has reminded me I need to do this.....'

Next week, we will be looking at ways to improve the quality of our lives as a means to cope with worries and anxiety. As always, I am very happy to receive any feedback on impact of any of the strategies. Please share the strategies with other families too.

Working together to keep our children safe and happy.

Halina Rooney

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