

# Dean Park Primary

## Anxiety in children

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We aim to explore what anxiety looks like in young children.

We will share strategies and suggestions of how best to support your child.



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# Anxiety in children

## What does anxiety look like?

Anxiety may present as a fear or worry, but it can also make children irritable and angry. Anxiety symptoms can include trouble sleeping, as well as physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches or stomach aches. Some anxious children keep their worries to themselves while others share them constantly.

Anxiety can be felt in many different parts of your body and it is important that we help our children to recognise these feelings. Some pupils may believe they are too ill to go to school, when in fact what they are feeling, is anxiety.

**. Common feelings are;**

- lightheaded/faint
- Shaky voice /sweaty hands
- breathing more quickly or slowly
- Tummy churning
- dry mouth
- headache
- worries shared before going to bed

**Things that can make a child feel anxious may be**

- meeting new people
- being afraid of the dark
- homework
- tests
- spiders
- dentists
- giving a talk
- performing in front of others
- illness or bad things happening
- change in family circumstances

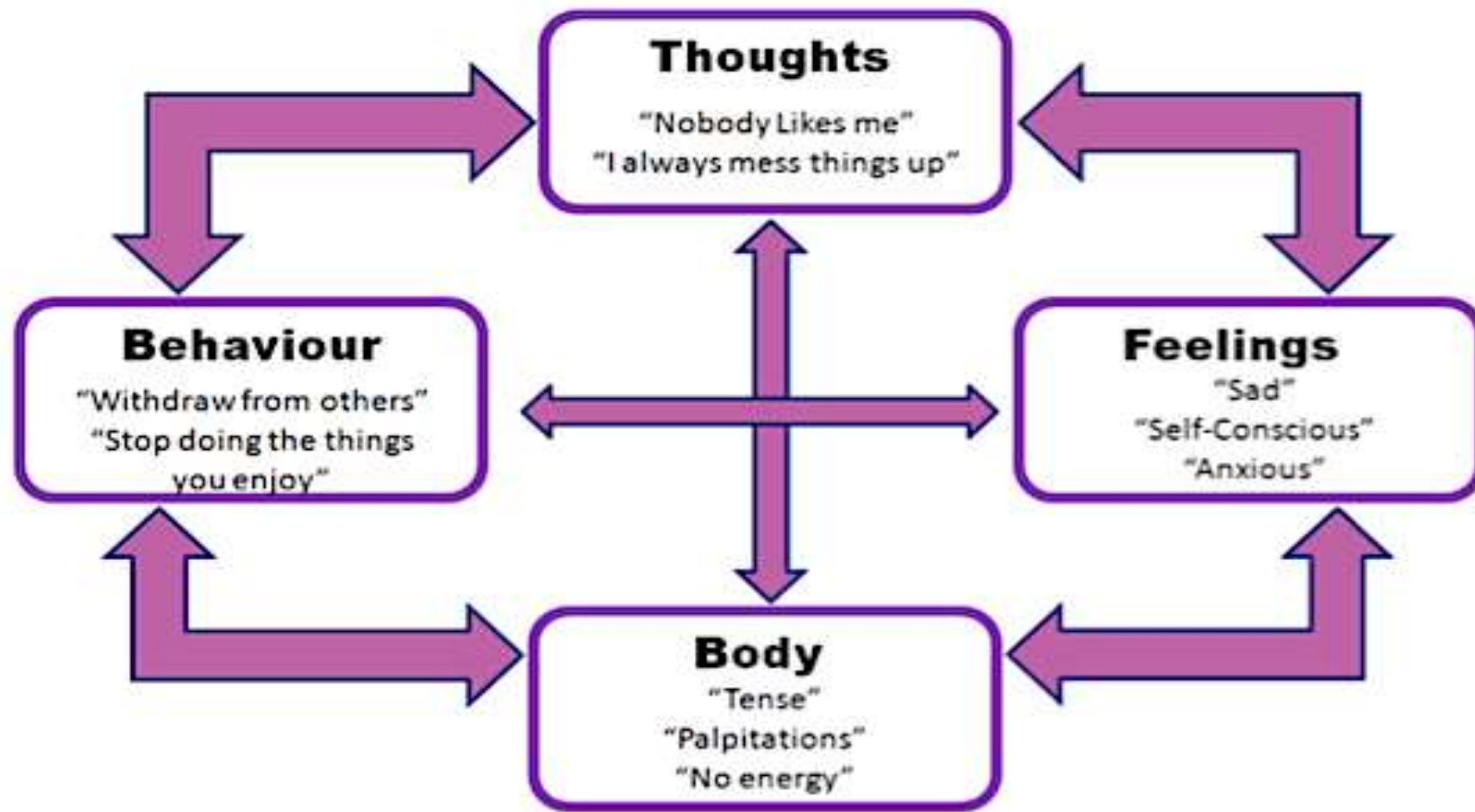
It is important that you acknowledge your child's worry regardless of how big or small a deal you perceive it to be.

A good phrase to use is,

**"I am sorry you are feeling like this".**

Anxious thoughts occur in many forms. (LIAM NHS)

- ❖ *Blow things up* - make small things more important than they really are
- ❖ *Expect to be perfect* - set high standards that you cannot meet.
- ❖ *Negative glasses* - can't see your strengths or the things that go well
- ❖ *Jump to conclusions* - prediction that things will go wrong or that you will fail
- ❖ *Positives don't count* - anything positive or good is not acknowledged
- ❖ *Snowballing* - one negative thing ruins everything else
- ❖ *Expecting to fail* - the mind reader or fortune teller
- ❖ Do you do any of the above? Sometimes we model these anxieties without even realising it. Discuss.



Worries and problems are part of everyday life. We all experience this at home, school, or work and most of the time we are quite good at coping with these.

Sometimes other problems seem more difficult because they happen often, never pass or feel overwhelming.

If you expect things to go wrong, then you might end up feeling stressed or anxious.

Unfortunately, some of the things we do to try and make things end actually make them feel worse.

- We may avoid things we find difficult
- Give up trying to do things
- Stop going out or spend more time and home on their own



Ways to support your child as recommended by the Edinburgh Wellbeing Academy training.

## **SUPPORT**

### **S- Show your child how to be successful**

Children learn by watching others, especially their parents. Be a positive role model for your child and show them how to approach and successfully cope with difficult situations rather than avoiding them. Be mindful not to share adult worries with your child. Remember that children may overhear things in the home.

### **U - Understand that they have a problem and need your help**

Coping with worries and problems is hard work and children sometimes don't know what to do or learn unhelpful ways of coping. Although you or others might find your child's behaviour difficult, it is important to remember that they are probably behaving like this because they don't know how to verbalise the worry. All behaviours are communication.

### **P - Prompt them to try**

Children get trapped in their old ways of thinking and behaving and will need you to remind them to use positive strategies. Eg positive self talk. The skill of helping yourself is something that needs practised in moments of calm.

## **O - Observe what they do**

Your child may have become caught in a negative trap where they find it hard to see the positive or successful things that happen. Observe what your child does and help them find the things that have gone well. Helping your child to find their successes will make them feel good about themselves, show them that they are making progress and will make them more confident to try again.

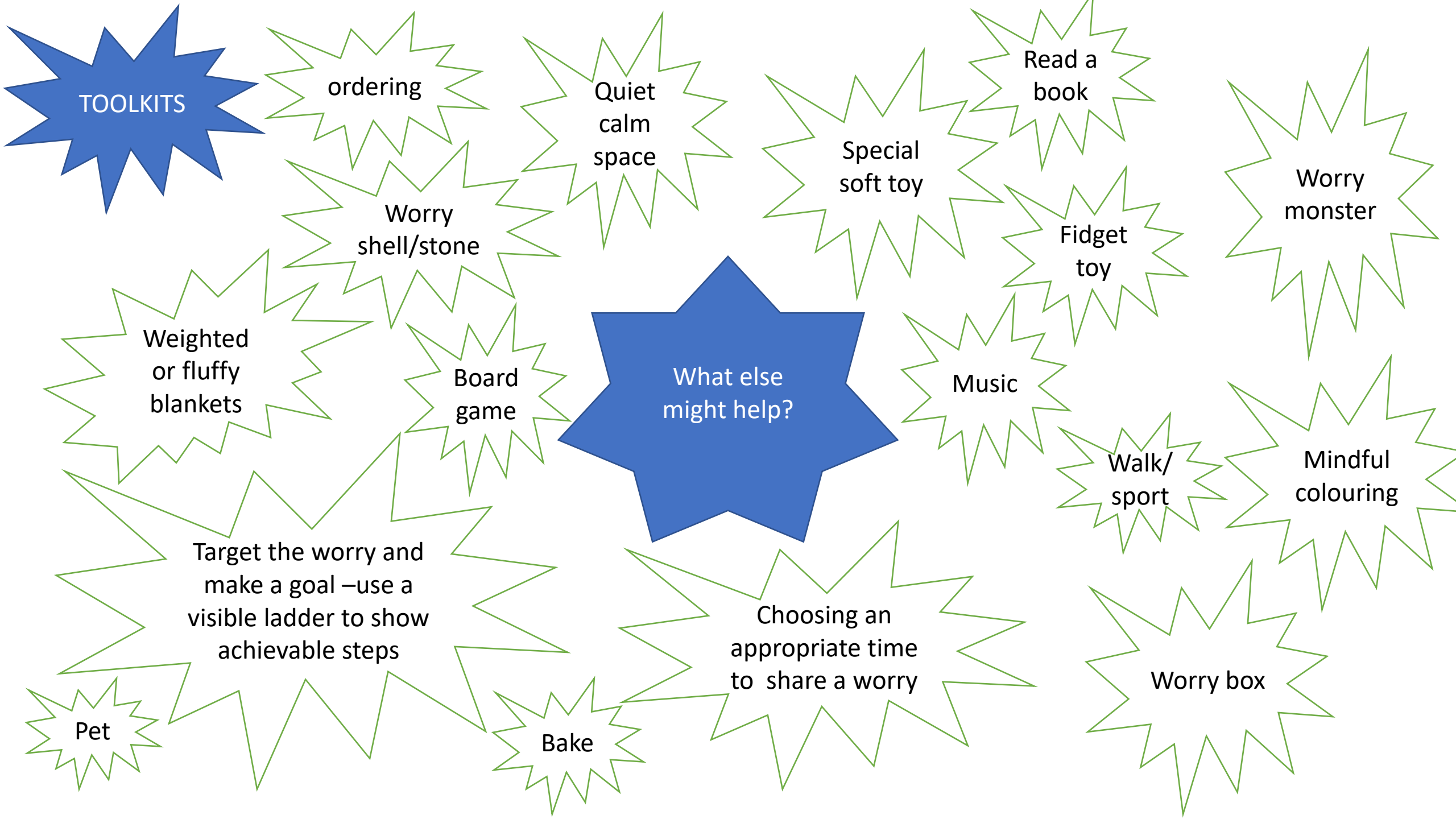
## **R - Reward and praise their efforts**

Give your child attention and practise using coping skills. Children often try harder if they know you are interested and will praise them. You can also use small rewards such as allowing them to stay up later, extra time to read a story, watch a film etc. Rewards do not have to cost money. Agree with your child what might be a special treat.

## **T - Talk about what they do**

Talking with your child can help them feel supported and understood. It builds self esteem by showing them that you are interested in what they say. Be cautious not to feed a child's anxiety.

**What do we mean by this? Discuss**



# 5 Point Scale Anxiety

## Feels like

- 5. I'm overwhelmed (cry/ begin pacing).
- 4. My stomach is starting to hurt and I'm having difficulty concentrating.
- 3. I'm feeling uneasy and I'm starting to sweat.
- 2. I feel ok.
- 1. I feel great.

## What I can do

- 5. I can leave the room with permission and go to my safe space.
- 4. I can ask to talk privately to an adult. I can listen to my iPod with calming music (headphones).
- 3. I can refer to my coping cards and use deep breathing.
- 2. Self-talk and reassure myself that I can do it!
- 1. No problem!

# 5-Point Scale for \_\_\_\_\_

Feels Like...

What I can do...

5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

## Use of a social story

It is ok to feel worried.

When I get worried I might get a sore tummy.

It is likely that I am feeling anxiety and am not unwell.

If I feel like this I will tell my trusted adult/parent.

I will use my coping toolkit to help me feel better.

In my toolkit I have ..... (photo of each item)

This feeling will pass.

For ages 7-11

# DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY



Poppy O'Neill

There are a number of activity books which may be helpful.

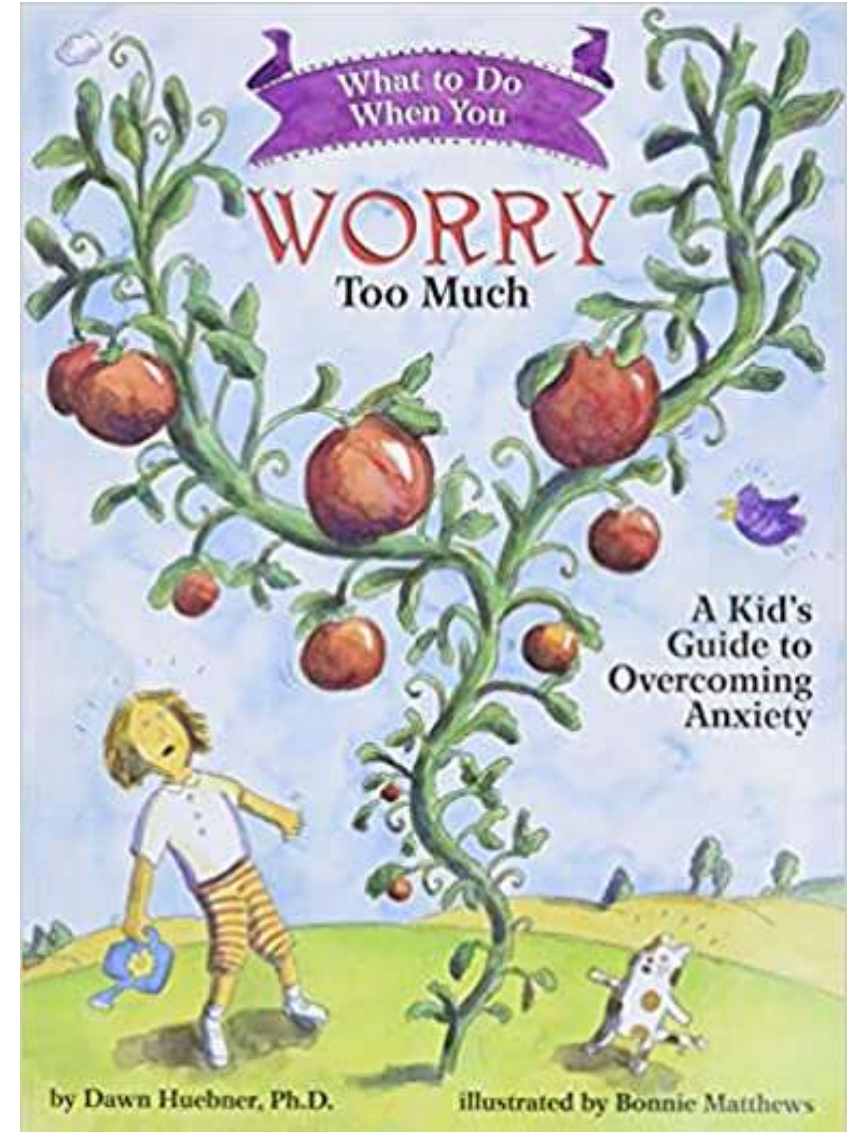
For children aged 7-11

# YOU'RE A STAR

A Child's Guide to Self-esteem



Poppy O'Neill

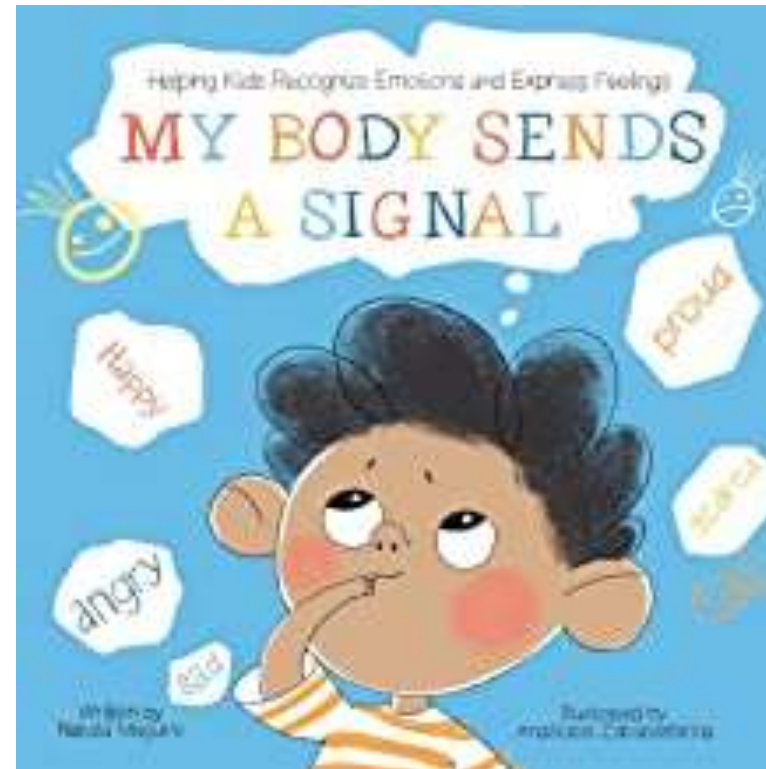


by Dawn Huebner, Ph.D.

illustrated by Bonnie Matthews



Visit the local library  
and order some books.





## School supports

- Building resilience whole school programme
- Zones of regulation whole school programme
  - Emotion talks
  - Low Intensity Anxiety Programme (LIAM)
    - Art therapy
    - School counsellor
    - School nurse



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# Centre for Psychological Therapies

Do you have a child with emotional difficulties such as anxiety or low mood?  
The Centre for Psychological Therapies may be able to help you.



The Centre of Psychological Therapies is based at the University of Edinburgh.

Who? – children and young people up to age 26

What? – training and research centre who offer therapy to help with emotional difficulties, such as low mood or depression or anxiety

How? – Cognitive Behaviour Therapy aims to break negative cycles of thoughts and feelings, looking at practical ways to improve mental health.

Cost – no set charge as the centre is a charity, however, donations are welcome.

Not part of the NHS but you must be registered with an Edinburgh GP.

You can self refer by emailing **CPT@ed.ac.uk**

# **NHS RESOURCES – Parent Anxiety Workshop**

What is it? A two part recorded information session:

- Part 1: Understanding Anxiety
- Part 2: Supporting Your Child With Anxiety How will it help?

The content of the workshop is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), the recommended treatment for managing anxiety and worries.

The information sessions will help you learn more about what anxiety is and how you can support your child to overcome it. How do I access it?

Click the links above or visit

Part 1: <https://vimeo.com/637899585/a4a632bd0c>

Part 2: <https://vimeo.com/637889751/e2d94cf5d5>

## **NHS Supporting Children with Anxiety.**

What is it? An online intervention that you can work through flexibly at your own pace. Access to the modules can be done anywhere and at any time on your computer, tablet or mobile phone. You work independently through these. There are two versions for parents, one for children and one for teens. How will it help? The modules are based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), the recommended treatment for managing anxiety. The programme aims to help parents and carers who are looking to support their young person in dealing with worry and anxiety, while learning helpful strategies to tackle their own anxiety.

How do I access it? <https://cyplothian.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>

Access Code: Lothian

CAMHS Early Intervention (TIPS-EIC) Team, NHS Lothian Supporting Children With Anxiety: Computerised CBT Useful websites, Books and Guides Visit Wellbeing Lothian For more information on your Mental health and well-being.

## **Useful resources**

CAMHS, NHS Lothian Self-Help Guides (available via NHS Lothian website): Supporting Your Child With Fears And Worries Guide

Part 1: Understanding and Talking about worries

Part 2: Anxiety Traps

Part 3: Overcoming Anxiety Part 4: Looking After Yourself Relaxation

Exercises for Children and Young People Websites Hands On:

<http://handsonscotland.co.uk/> Anxiety Canada: Online:

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/> Anxiety UK:

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Books Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries: A Self-help Guide for Parents (2019) by Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willett

# Question time and sharing of resources or experiences.

Recommended parent courses -

- \*Creating confident children. (Primary)

- \*Raising teens with confidence. (Secondary)

What to do if you are worried about your child-

Please contact the school at     [Admin@deanpark.edin.sch.uk](mailto:Admin@deanpark.edin.sch.uk)

