

Coping Mechanisms

In the midst of anxiety, encourage your child to try the following:

- 5-4-3-2-1 technique:
 - Name 5 things they can see
 - Name 4 things they can touch
 - Name 3 things they can hear
 - Name 2 things they can smell
 - Name 1 thing they can taste
- Breathing exercises:
 - Take a slow breath in through the nose
 - Hold it for 2 seconds
 - Breathe out through the mouth
 - Wait 5 seconds, and repeat until feeling calmer
 - Blowing bubbles can also help as an anxiety-relieving breathing exercise
- Physical exercises:
 - Tense and hold the muscles in the body, as tightly as they can, and then release. Repeat until the body feels relaxed
 - Pushing a wall away – ask your child to stand in front of a solid wall and tell them to push the wall away. As hard as they can, for as long as they can hold it, and when they stop, their muscles will relax.
- Counting:
 - Counting out loud can help but instead of counting in order, ask your child to repeat numbers, out of order. Brains are used to the familiarity of them being in order, when they are used out of order, it can confuse the brain long enough to calm them down
- Eating sour sweets – eating sour sweets can make the brain shift its focus from panic and anxiety to the senses – this confusion can also help ease anxiety attacks

Generalised Anxiety Disorder Coping Mechanisms



The Lotus Mental Health

www.thelotusmentalhealth.org

What is Generalised Anxiety Disorder?

Generalised Anxiety Disorder is a non-specific anxiety disorder, which put in simple terms means that a person is generally anxious about an unlimited number of different things – such as the health of themselves, and/or others, their appearance, speaking in front of others, being away from loved ones, having panic attacks, schoolwork, exam stresses, or just life in general, pretty much anything.

It is normal for most people to feel worry, or anxiety about many different things throughout life, but for people with generalised anxiety, those worries are pushed to the extreme and physical symptoms such as sickness, pains, illness or even breathing problems can arise.

Where other anxieties such as panic disorder, social and separation anxiety can have clear triggers, generalised anxiety is different, because it can appear from what seems like nothing.

What can you do?

Because of the unpredictability of generalised anxiety disorder, it can be helpful if both you and your child(ren) have coping mechanisms in place.

It is important to find what works for you and your child(ren), so here are a few examples to get you started...

Coping Mechanisms

If your child(ren) are feeling anxious, there are things that you can encourage your child to do that can help them. They are:

- Nobody should go through difficult times alone, and this is something that your child needs to learn to understand, because of this, it is important for your child to learn how to open up to people about how they are feeling. A parent, carer, brother, sister, grandparent, auntie, uncle, cousin, a trusted friend, a counsellor – it doesn't matter who, as long as your child feels comfortable talking to someone who they trust, about how they are feeling.
- Encourage your child to get the thoughts that are in their head – out. An effective way that they can do this by keeping a diary. Simply writing down how they are feeling can be really useful. Not only will that work because it helps them put a place for their negative thoughts, but it can also be used as a point of reference for any particular anxiety triggers that they didn't realise they had.
- Writing a letter – this might seem a bit daft, but if they can write letters to themselves, particularly after particular difficult anxiety attacks, they can use the letters to read back and see themselves, through their own words, that they have overcome anxiety attacks in the past, and therefore they know that they are capable of overcoming them.