

# 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 touch
- 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 work as an anxiety-relieving breathing exercise
- Physical exercises:
  - Tense and hold the muscles in the body, as tight as they can, and release. Repeat until feeling calmer and more relaxed
  - Pushing a wall away – ask your child to stand in front of a solid wall and tell them to try and 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, and 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 focus from panic and anxiety to focusing on the senses. This confusion can help ease panic attacks

# Social Anxiety Coping Mechanisms



The Lotus Mental Health

[www.thelotusmentalhealth.org](http://www.thelotusmentalhealth.org)

## What is Social Anxiety?

Social anxiety is a type of anxiety disorder that is simply described as extreme and severe worry, fear, and nervousness in any or all, social situations. Those situations can include talking in front of people, working within a group, giving opinions, meeting new people – pretty much anything that involves other people.

Most people will feel some level of worry, nerves, or fear when they are faced with speaking in front of people who they aren't comfortable around, or when they meet new people or deal with a social situation. However, for those people with social anxiety, it becomes more than 'worry.' The fear that is felt can become so severe for a person with social anxiety that they often pull away completely from any or all social situations that they are faced with.

## What can you do?

Because social situations can't often be avoided, 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.