



Jody Timms & Natalie McNamara

Supporting Teens with Anxiety

What will we cover?

- Introduction to the counselling service
- What is anxiety?
- How to notice Anxiety in your child
- Stress and ways to manage it
- Exam stress
- What Parent's can do to help
- Questions



Looking after ourselves

- Housekeeping
- Avoiding distractions
- Respecting each others privacy
- Valuing different experiences
- All questions are welcome, there's no such thing as a silly question
- Fire alarm



Introduction

Jody & Natalie

What is Counselling?



- A talking therapy which people seek when they want to work on something which is impacting their lives.
- The Counselling process provides a safe place where your child can get things off their chest.
- It can help to make sense of what is happening, resolve complicated feelings and find ways of coping when things are difficult.
- Counselling helps you to understand yourself, your thoughts, feelings and patterns of behaviour in greater depth and can help to empower you and encourage growth.

“Counselling is much more than a chat, the power of talking shouldn’t be underestimated.”

What we can help with?



We can support student's with:

- Anxiety / Low mood
- Stress
- Self esteem / confidence
- Bereavement
- Relationships (with friends, family and others)
- Bullying
- Amongst other issues which may not be listed

To access this service speak to your children's head of year. They will refer your child into the service with your permission.

What are your expectations?

- What would you like from today's session?



What is Anxiety?



Anxiety is a normal human response which presents when we feel we are in danger.

It can make us feel nervous, scared or worried

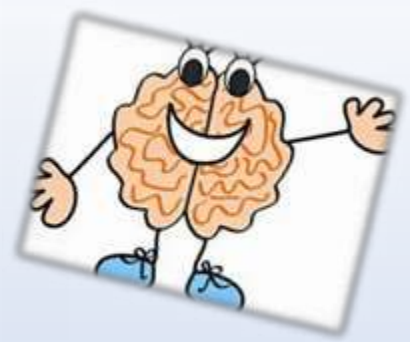
It can sometimes become overpowering and impact our lives in a negative way

Anxiety often causes physical symptoms such as racing heartbeat, stomach ache etc

Being anxious can feel difficult and lonely

Many people recover from anxiety with support

Why Do We Need Anxiety?



- Anxiety alerts a bodily alarm system that warns us when we are in danger. For example; If there was a fire or if someone was going to hurt us.
- Anxiety keeps us safe and alive, it helps us to remain cautious, organised and can help us to perform well.
- Anxiety can help to put things into perspective.
- Having anxiety can help us to recognise what is not working in our lives.
- It can also help us to find balance in our lives.

When Does Anxiety Become Unhelpful?

- Anxiety can become unfriendly and overpower our thought process
- It can cause intrusive thoughts.
- Anxiety that consumes us can cause long term health conditions.
- When you stop doing things you enjoy because you feel anxious or worried, this is a sign that anxiety is becoming unfriendly.
- If the anxiety starts to cause chronic stress.
- When we experience ongoing physical symptoms such as feeling restless, irritable, shaking/trembling, feeling dizzy or sweating more.
- When we give it too much POWER!



Understanding Stress

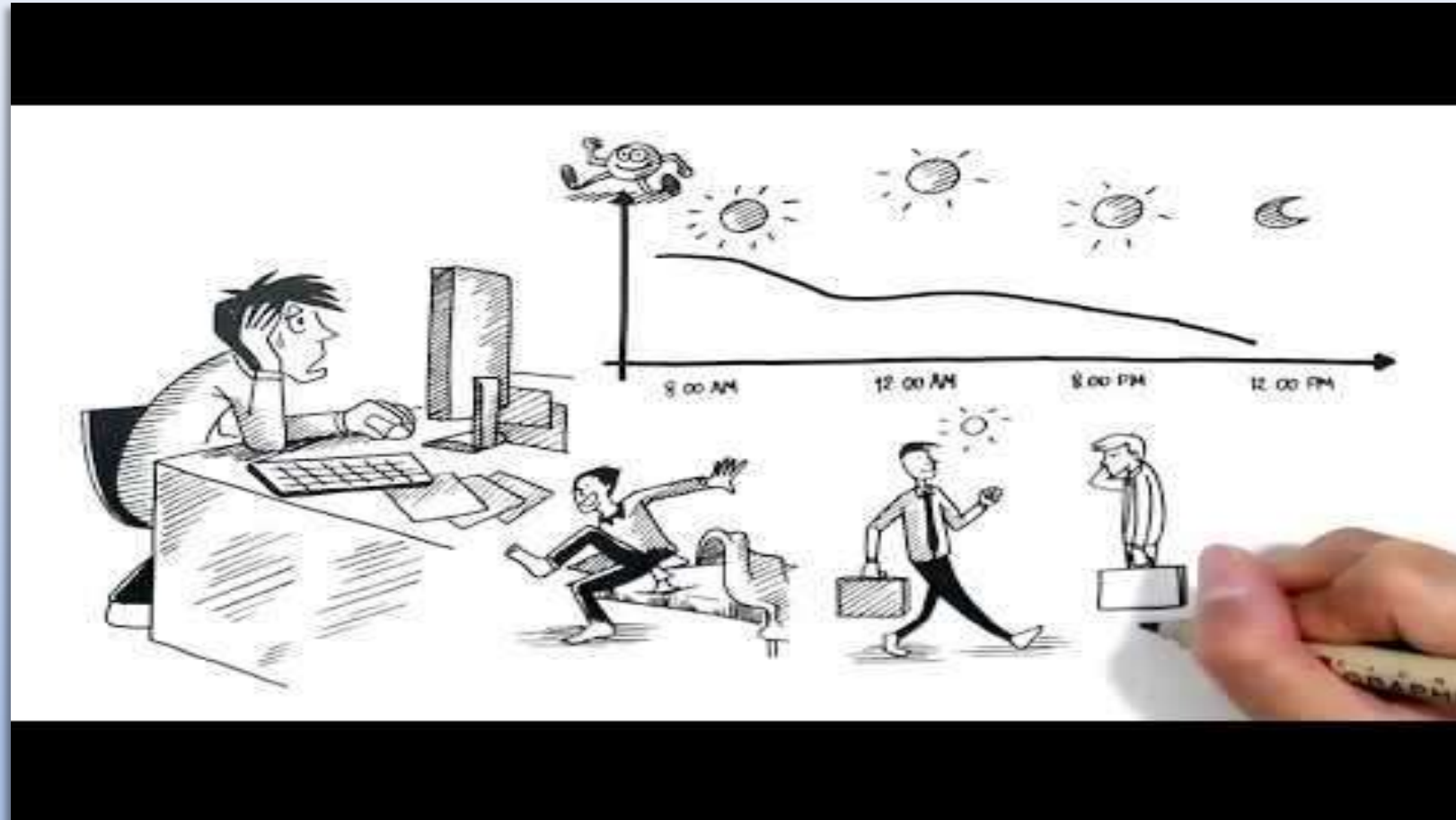
Stress has a lot of the same symptoms as anxiety. Stress doesn't last as long as anxiety, it's usually temporary and triggered by an event such as Exams.

Anxiety is persistent and when the worries don't tend to go away, stress can lead to anxiety. Symptoms include

- Not sleeping well
- Low mood or negativity
- Feeling hopeless about the future
- Nail biting, skin picking, hair pulling, teeth grinding
- Tears and tantrums
- Sleeping or eating more/less than normal



The Stress Bucket



The Basics

- Recognise that as a parent you too will be feeling the stress
- Sleep, eat and drink plenty
- Encourage time to relax
- Prepare and get organised e.g Revision timetable
- Prioritise time when revising
- Take regular breaks, find enjoyment in between revision
- Don't over revise
- Prepare with mock exams

Exam busting tips



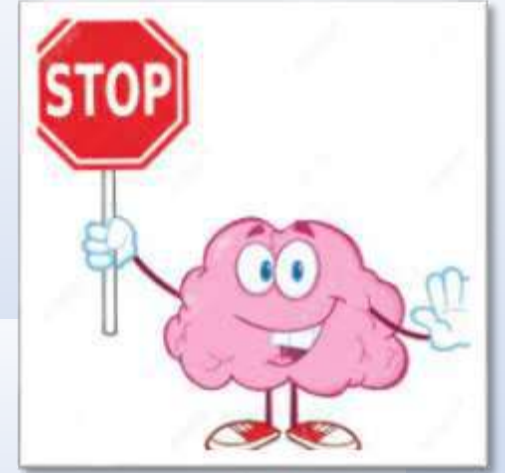
- Break the revision down in to bite sized chunks
- Find a way of revising which suits you we all learn differently Visual, kinaesthetic, auditory
- Encourage a Revision buddy
- Use positive reinforcements such as praise to try and motivate your child
- If you recognise that your child is struggling, try and work out a plan together that suits them. Contact School with concerns communication is key

Special Educational Needs

- Be aware of the young persons challenges and needs
- Extra time might be needed, smaller, quieter room
- To do lists and plans can help
- Advocate for your children, make a list of essentials, make a plan of what they might need
- Prepare your child, make a list of every exam and when they are happening

Stop...

- Nagging
- Complaining about weaknesses
- Putting them down
- Comparing them to others
- Punishing them
- Spoon feeding them
- Focusing on the grades



Start...

- Listening without judging or interrupting
- Hear their fears (Anxiety is driven by fear)
- Allow them to make mistakes
- Help them to learn and support them as best you can
- Communicate and connect and listen to your child (Car journeys, walking or notes)
- Give praise for being and doing
- Reiterate that you are there to help



What not to say

A survey carried out by Childline found that the majority of children were experiencing exam pressure from their Parents or care givers.

Try to avoid:

- Remember how well your Brother, Sister, Cousin did
- These grades will impact the rest of your life
- We will be disappointed if you don't achieve X
- You must try harder
- Do more revising



The Importance of Validation & Empathy

Can you place yourself in their shoes?

Empathy is the ability to share the feelings of another person. This means fully embracing and working to understand their experience and to really try and 'place yourself in their shoes.'

Validation is the act of recognising that the way someone feels is valid or reasonable

Validation and Empathy brings growth, connection and resilience

- They are loved and valued for what and who they are
- They belong
- They are important and have a say in their future
- They have some influence over what happens in their lives

So how can we use empathy and validation?

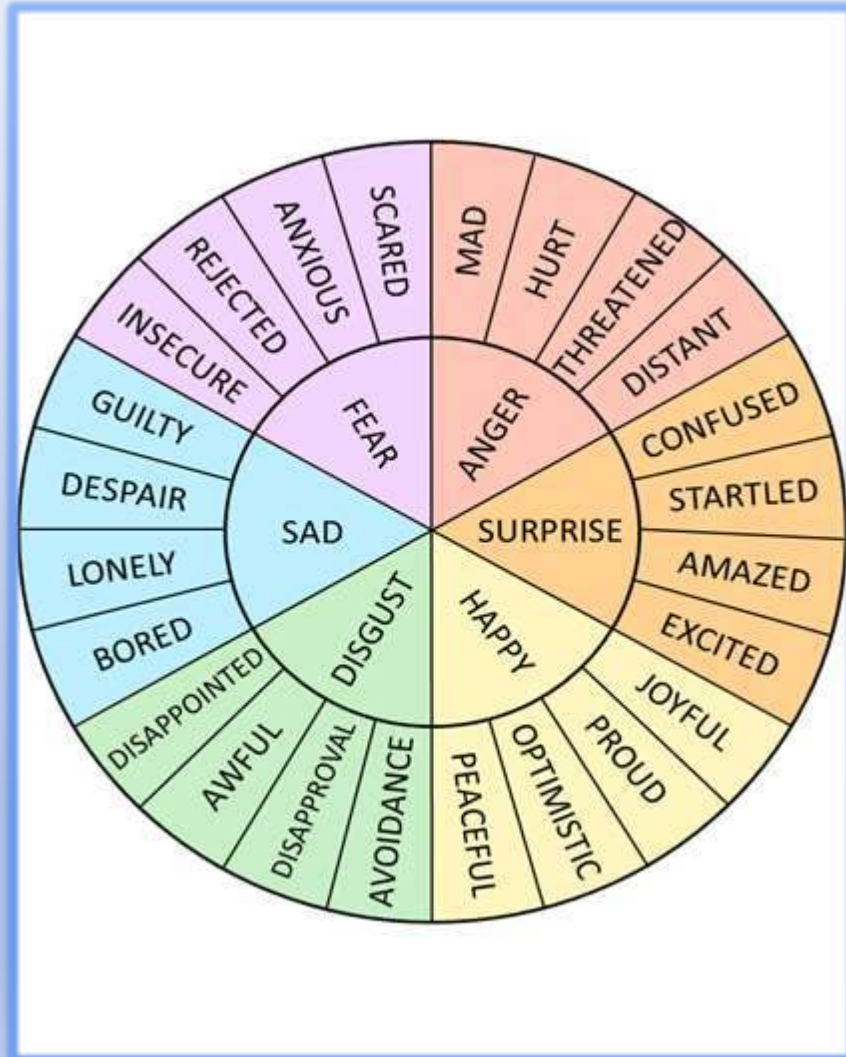
Empathy

- Stop what you are doing, give your child your full attention
- Give appropriate eye contact and body language
- Find feelings behind the words
- Allow them time to talk and listen to them
- Avoid commanding, questioning and instructing
- Focus on feelings
- Empathy builds self esteem and resilience

Validation

- Actively listen, use eye contact nod your head and make physical contact
- Show no judgment. Judgement may bring withdrawal and cause to withhold there problems
- Acknowledge their feelings and show empathy
- If relevant, use your own experiences to validate how they may be feeling. This will build trust and connection
- Do not try to fix the problem, sometimes children just want to be heard.

The Feelings Wheel



The feelings wheel helps us to identify our feelings and put a name to them



BOX BREATHING



Box breathing is a great way to reduce anxiety. Breathing techniques work because they calm the nervous system



Stay Grounded Using Your 5 Senses

Spice Your Soul, Take a Few Deep Breaths, and Focus on the Following:

- 5 Things You Can See 
- 4 Things You Can Feel 
- 3 Things You Can Hear 
- 2 Things You Can Smell 
- 1 Thing You Can Taste 

Grounding exercises help us to connect to the present moment and calm the nervous system when we are faced with anxiety



switching from 'you' to 'i'-statements

@afreemindspace

you

I

"You are always busy with your phone."

"I feel unappreciated when you are always on your phone."

"Why should I always do what you say?"

"I wish to be considered once a while too."

"Friends are more important to you than your family."

"When we don't get to spend time together as a family, I feel unwanted and disconnected from you."

"You always do this to me..."

"I feel overwhelmed doing things for you..."

"You have no time for me."

"I feel like I am doing this alone."

I statements prevent us from sounding directive or like we are criticising the other person



Resources

- GP
- Counselling/NHS or Private
- Self help books
- Audio books
- Clear Fear App

Questions?