

# FACING FEARS

How to support a child feeling anxious

## Useful Apps:



SAM



FearTools



What's Up?



Fabulous - Daily Routine Planner



Stop, Breathe & Think Kids

Unless stated otherwise, apps are not supplied by the NHS and the NHS is not liable for their use.

# FACING FEARS

How to support a child feeling anxious

## WHEN TO BE CONCERNED?

It is typical for everyone to worry, it is part of being human.

When to be concerned:

- If the degree to which a young person feels low appears out of context or disproportionate to the reason why they might be feeling low
- If episodes are more frequent or prolonged and cause the young person distress
- If it impacts on their ability to cope with everyday life such as going to school, seeing friends or taking part in leisure activities

## WHAT TO DO:

- Normalise that anxiety is a natural emotion, the physical sensations of anxiety can be unpleasant but it will pass and won't cause any harm
- Encourage them not to avoid, as that makes anxiety worse. Instead, encourage the young person to face their fear - the more they face it, the easier it will become
- Help them reduce the body's fight/flight response by asking them to breathe out slowly and deeply for however long it takes. This tells that body that it is safe and reconnects the part of the brain that can process and think rationally
- Role model and demonstrate that you can do things even when you're anxious
- Watch a parent/carer workshop on how to support anxiety: [youtu.be/EMJ9sHtIFQ](https://youtu.be/EMJ9sHtIFQ)
- Watch a parent/carer workshop on coping and resilience skills: [youtu.be/K4OGOhNwML0](https://youtu.be/K4OGOhNwML0)
- Share concerns with your child's school/college
- Depending on the context and/or the origins of the anxiety being experienced, other services may be helpful e.g. family guidance if there is family breakdown or conflict
- There is a lot of information on the Sussex CAMHS website: [sussexcamhs.nhs.uk](https://sussexcamhs.nhs.uk)

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- Disrupted sleep (difficulties getting to or staying asleep, nightmares/night terrors)
- Persistent reassurance seeking
- Resistance to doing things; requiring a lot of cajoling or persuading
- Becoming distressed or agitated when facing fear or even thinking about facing the fear
- Some repeated patterns of behaviour or routines which seem to help the young person but don't make sense to others (e.g. repeated checking or counting)
- Some episodes of panicking such as getting distressed, racing heart rate, quicker breathing, upset tummy, feeling sick, feeling dizzy or faint
- Demanding things be done in certain ways or requesting others to do things for them
- Families might also find themselves struggling to do things as they normally would as they may make adjustments to accommodate how the young person is feeling or responding

#Recipes4wellbeing



[sussexcamhs.nhs.uk](https://sussexcamhs.nhs.uk)