

Understanding and Supporting Children with Anxiety .



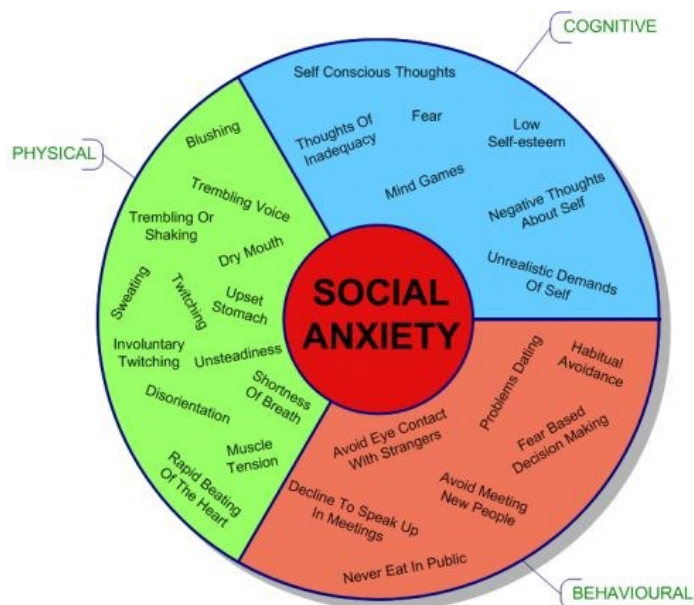
What is Anxiety

Anxiety is something we all experience from time to time. Most people can relate to feeling tense, uncertain and, perhaps, fearful at the thought of sitting an exam, going into hospital, attending an interview. You may worry about feeling uncomfortable, appearing foolish or how successful you will be. In turn, these worries can affect your sleep, appetite and ability to concentrate can be experienced in lots of different ways. If your experiences meet certain criteria your doctor might diagnose you with a specific anxiety disorder.

Some commonly diagnosed anxiety disorders are:

Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) – this means having regular or uncontrollable worries about many different things in your everyday life. Because there are lots of possible symptoms of anxiety this can be quite a broad diagnosis, meaning that the problems you experience with GAD might be quite different from another person's experiences.

Social anxiety disorder – this diagnosis means you experience extreme fear or anxiety triggered by social situations (such as parties, workplaces, or any situation in which you have to talk to another person). It is also known as social phobia.



Panic disorder – this means having regular or frequent panic attacks without a clear cause or trigger. Experiencing panic disorder can mean that you feel constantly afraid of having another panic attack, to the point that this fear itself can trigger your panic attacks.

Phobias – a phobia is an extreme fear or anxiety triggered by a particular situation (such as social situations) or a particular object (such as spiders).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – this is a diagnosis you may be given if you develop anxiety problems after going through something you found traumatic. PTSD can cause flashbacks or nightmares which can feel like you're re-living all the fear and anxiety you experienced during the actual event.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) – you may be given this diagnosis if your anxiety problems involve having repetitive thoughts, behaviours or urges.

Health anxiety – this means you experience obsessions and compulsions relating to illness, including researching symptoms or checking to see if you have them. It is related to OCD.

Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) – this means you experience obsessions and compulsions relating to your physical appearance.

Top tips for support:

- Talk with the student about what strategies he find most helpful. This is an important way of establishing a working partnership.
- Check the student's Passport if they are on the SEN register or fill in a Student Support Referral Form if concerned

Living with anxiety can be very difficult, but there are steps you can take that might help.

This page has some suggestions for you to consider:

- Talk to someone you trust
- Try to manage your worries
- Look after your physical health
- Try breathing exercises
- Keep a diary
- Try peer support
- Complementary and alternative therapies

References: Click the links below;

- mind.org
- youngminds.org.uk
- anxietyuk.org.uk