



## Fresh CAMHS core training offer 2016

# 'Anxiety: When to worry'

**Dr Jo Steward (Clinical Psychologist)**





# Today will cover...

- How anxiety is seen or presents in children and adolescents.
- Psycho-educational information to use.
- Anxiety management and self-soothing strategies for a range of developmental levels – primary to secondary school.
- When and how to refer to Fresh CAMHS.





# What is anxiety?

- Anxiety is a normal emotion
- Being anxious can be healthy at times
- It varies greatly from person to person





# What is anxiety?

- Anxiety only becomes a problem when it interferes with our performance in our everyday lives.
- We need to manage anxieties – we cannot get rid of it.
- We can't stop the waves but we can learn to surf





# The Caveman Story!

The body's reaction to fear (being scared) is called the “**fight or flight**” response.

1) *You could run as fast as you can - **flight***



2) *You could pick up your club and you could **fight** with the tiger*



3) *You could do nothing – **freezing***





# How common is anxiety in children and young people?

- Fears and worries are a normal part of growing up.
- Anxiety is one of the most common causes of distress in children and young people.
- In an average school class, **5** pupils will have experienced (clinical) anxiety.





# What does anxiety look like for us?

- Imagine an anxiety provoking situation i.e. job interview, driving test
- How do you feel **physically**?
- What **emotions** are around, what do you notice about the way that you are feeling?
- What **thoughts** are going through your mind?
- How are you **behaving** (what are you doing or what do you want to do)?

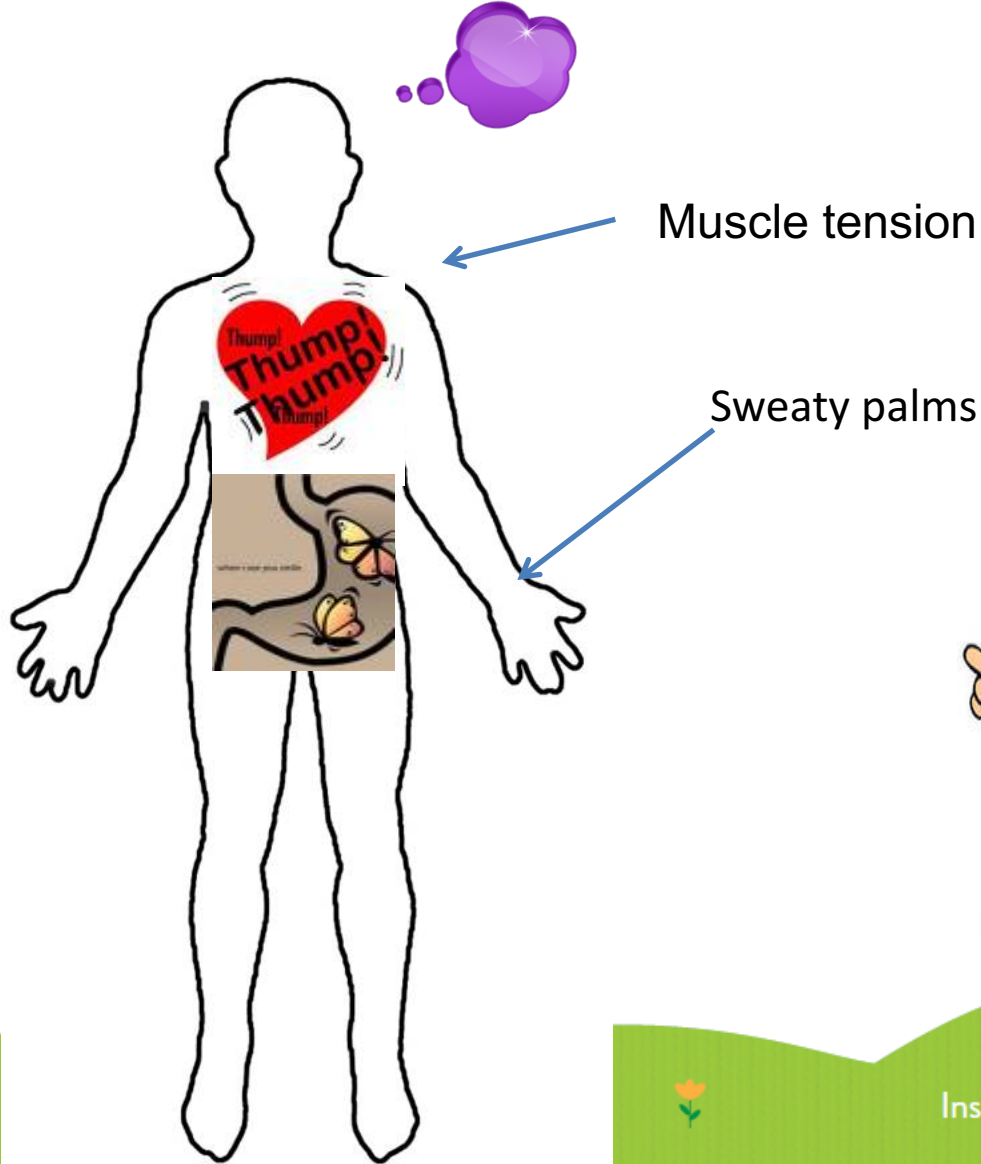






# Starting conversations...

What does anxiety look like for us?







# Ways of measuring anxiety

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No worry/  
very relaxed

lots of worry/  
very tense





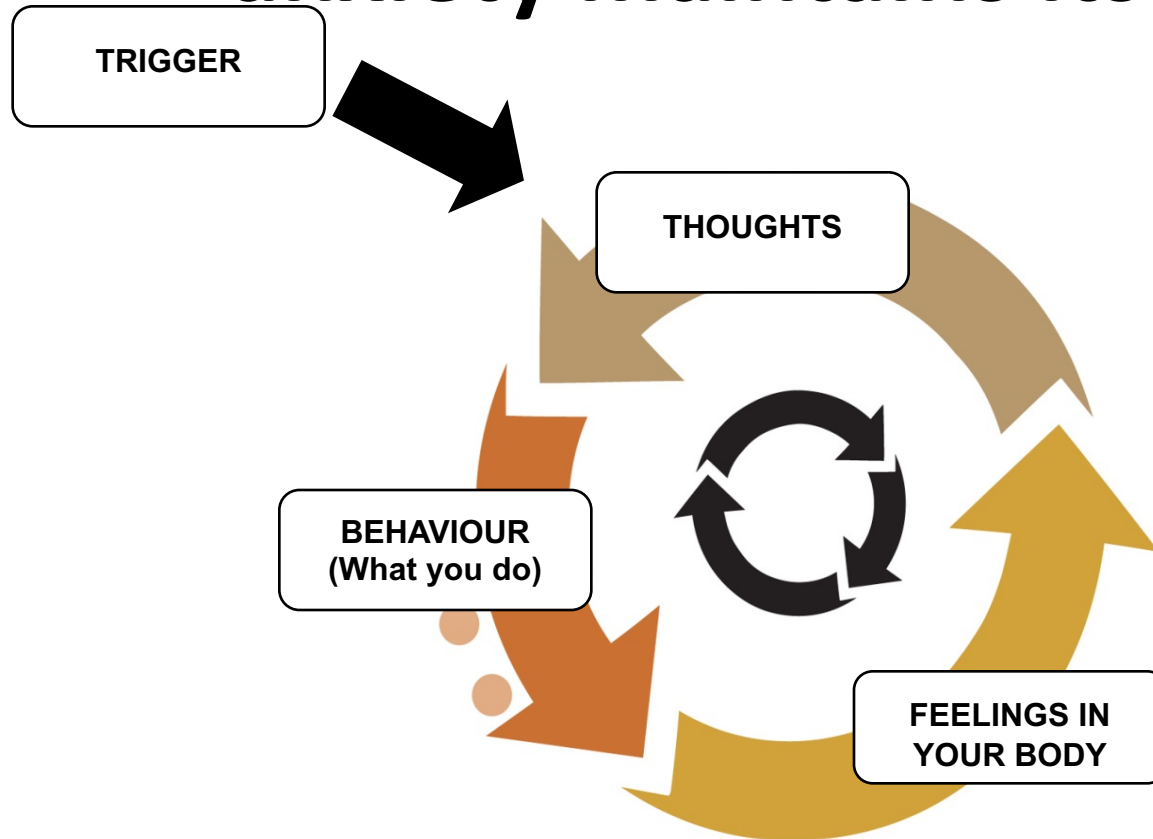
# Self care

- Sleep
- Eating healthily
- Rewards - short-term, long-term
- Relaxation
- Taking breaks
- Exercise





# Understanding how anxiety maintains itself





# The Anxiety Roundabout

- The roundabout is a way of making sense of anxiety and the different parts of anxiety that we have noticed:-
  - *Thoughts*
  - *Feelings in your body (physiology)*
  - *Behaviour (what you do)*
- It is easy to “get stuck” on the roundabout
- The different parts of anxiety work together to keep anxiety going and going etc.





# Strategies for overcoming anxiety

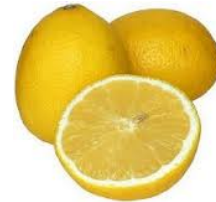
- Physiological response
- Managing negative thoughts, thinking errors
- Behavioural change





# Physiological response

- When we get worried or anxious our breathing speeds up and becomes shallower.
- Becoming aware of our breathing and learning to **slow down** and **deepen** each **breath** allows us to feel more **relaxed**.
- Use the rating scale, before and after
- Practice by: Squeezing lemons  
Candles
- Distraction tasks
- Relaxation music







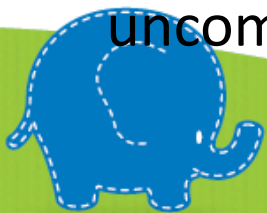
# Self soothing

The way that this sense is designed means that we get an almost immediate (and often involuntary) emotional response to smells as well as being able to focus our conscious minds on them. We are nearly always smelling the environment without thinking about it...and we rarely think to close this sense off by pinching our noses. In this way we can see that our emotions are potentially being influenced by what we smell, even if we are not always aware of this!



## Smell & Memory

- Sense of smell is important in promoting a sense of comfort and familiarity. We often catch hints of a scent in the air that can instantly make us feel nostalgic and happy or sick and uncomfortable.





# Mindfulness

- Breathing
- Guided imagery





# Imagery

Alder Hey Children's  
NHS Foundation Trust



Inspired by Children



# Overcoming negative thinking

- Some of our thoughts are not helpful. They make us feel more anxious or worried.
- These thoughts make us think that things will go wrong and make us expect that bad things will happen.
- Teaching your child to **identify** and **replace** these thoughts with **coping self talk** will help your child to feel better.





# Overcoming negative thinking

- Coping talk (self-affirming statements)
  - I'll try my best
  - I can do it
  - I can cope
  - I am brave
  - If I need help, people will support me
  - I've prepared, none of us know the exam paper





# Overcoming negative thinking

- Reality testing
- What's the evidence for the negative thought?
- What's the evidence against the thought?
- What's a more balanced perspective?

(Greenberger and Padesky, 1995)



Dr. Christine Padesky







# Anxious thoughts

- Can we control our thoughts?
- Thought suppression (Exercise, white bear)
- Worry time, worry box
- When can we encourage distraction? (Exercise alphabet, animals)





# Anxious thoughts

- Do we really need to pay attention to our anxious thoughts?
- Cognitive fusion and de-fusion (Exercise)
- ‘The Unwelcome Party Guest’ an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy metaphor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYht-guymF4>





# Supportive Adult Approach

Think of yourself as a **driving instructor!**

- Aim to **guide** your child to the exits off the roundabout without taking the wheel yourself
- Focus on building their anxiety-related “driving skill” and confidence
- Beware of “**false exits**”
  - *Some kinds of reassurance*
  - *Avoidance/escape*





# Supportive Adult Approach

- 1. Be patient and reassuring** – Have a positive and confident attitude about the child's ability to handle the situation.

Do not pressure, punish, scold or shame the child for the worries, as these approaches are likely to make the child feel more anxious.

*Imagine if your driving instructor didn't believe you could get it right or shouted at you!*

- 2. Praise the child's brave behaviour** – Whenever the child faces an uncomfortable situation praise him/her for their braveness.





## Supportive Adult Approach

**3. Set up a reward system** – You may want to set up a reward chart with the child for particularly brave behaviours.

**4. Ignore/minimise attention to expression of physical symptoms** – It is important to strike a balance between being supportive and not giving these expressions of anxiety too much of a focus.





# Supportive Adult Approach

- 5. Model non-anxious behaviour** – It is important to think about whether significant others around the child are modelling anxious behaviours. Remember children learn from observing others.
- Child will absorb the fears of those around them.
  - Parental management of their own anxieties, and showing their child how they manage.

*Be a role model: Showing a child that you can overcome fears or worries is really powerful*







# Supportive Adult Approach

Overall, it is important to remain:

- **Calm** and **confident** about the child's ability to cope with anxiety-provoking situations: *What would it be like if your driving instructor seemed nervous?!*
- Try to be **patient, reassuring and positive**
- Try to **minimise** the amount of **attention** you give to anxiety
- Try **not** to encourage **avoidance**
- Remember that with **support** from important adults around them most children will grow out of their fears





# Strategies for overcoming anxiety

Final points to keep in mind.....

Anxiety can get worse before it gets better

## Why?...

- You can think of worry like a bully, when you start to challenge worry/anxiety, it can work harder.
- Give child the message that it will get easier as they get stronger and anxiety gets weaker.

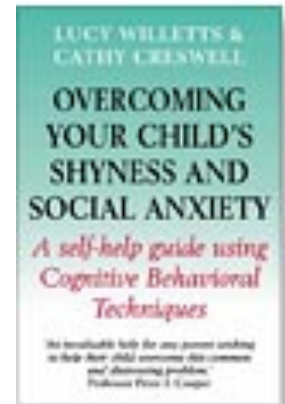
Anxiety is normal but it's important to build the skills to cope with it and manage it.





# Resources

- [www.freshcamhs.org](http://www.freshcamhs.org)
- <http://liverpoolcamhsfyi.com/>
- <http://www.talkliverpool.nhs.uk/>
- [www.ypas.org.uk/](http://www.ypas.org.uk/)
- [www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk)
- Free mindfulness exercises
- <http://www.overcoming.co.uk/>





## Local services

- **Young People's Advisory Service (YPAS)**

36 Bolton Street, Liverpool, L3 5LX

0151 707 1025

- **ADHD Foundation**

Support to the family when one of the family have a diagnosis of ADHD

- **PSS**

- **Barnados – Action with Young Carers**

- **Alder Hey CAMHS**

- **Merseyside Youth Association - OKUK**





# When and how to seek help



## Consider:

- Intensity/degree of difficulty
- Affect that the problem is having on YP and/or family's life
- YP's ability to recover/coping skills
- YP - do they want help?
- Discuss with a Teacher or GP





# When and how to refer to CAMHS

Ring the **Single Point of Access** with any enquiries or to discuss a referral (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

**0151 293 3662**

**All referral requests must be made in writing to:**

Single Point of Access (SPA), Fresh CAMHS Building,  
Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Eaton Road, Liverpool,  
L12 2AP

Fax: **0151 293 3698** (safehaven fax)

Email: [camhs.referrals@alderhey.nhs.uk](mailto:camhs.referrals@alderhey.nhs.uk) (safehaven email)

