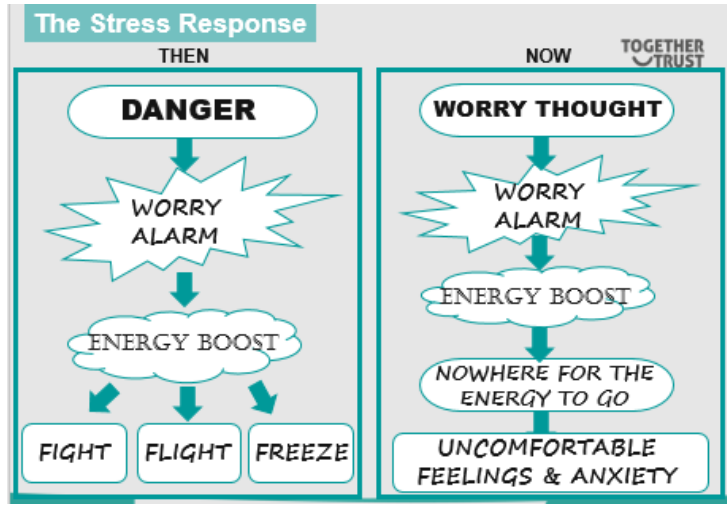


PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Worry and anxiety are primitive stress responses when the brain perceives a real or threatened danger. The energy boost created prepares the body for fight or flight. In primitive times, the physical activity of fighting or running away would allow the brain and body to return to their normal, relaxed state. Now, when we perceive a threat (real or imagined), we don't tend to have a huge physical response. There is nowhere for adrenaline and cortisol to go so we start to experience uncomfortable feelings and anxiety. The body needs about 20 minutes to recover from an acute stress reaction.



HOW TO RECOGNIZE ANXIETY IN YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Memory Issues
- Overthinking
- Avoidance
- Insomnia
- Sweating
- Rapid heartbeat
- Stomach Issues
- Headaches
- Panic attacks
- Trouble breathing
- Needing reassurance
- Procrastination
- Constant worrying
- Lack of patience
- Trouble concentrating

It is important for young people to be able to recognise the signs and understand what can make them feel worried, anxious or uncomfortable (triggers)

If a young person is struggling to communicate their worries, can they draw them? Will they text you them? Whisper them to worry dolls or a worry monster? They can also be creative, e.g. writing their worries on worry clouds, flower petals etc.

BREATHING ACTIVITIES

TOGETHER TRUST

Infinity Symbol: Breathe in (left loop), Breathe out (right loop). Start here.

Square: Hold for 4 (top), Breathe in for 4 (right), Hold for 4 (bottom), Breathe out for 4 (left). Start here.

Star: Breathe in (top), Breathe out (right), Breathe in (bottom), Breathe out (left).

Triangle: Breathe in for 3 (left), Hold for 3 (top), Breathe out for 3 (right).

Hand: Breathe in (thumb), Breathe out (index), Breathe in (middle), Breathe out (ring), Breathe in (pinky).

Remember to model the breathing activities and use them as part of a daily routine, not just as a reactive measure at times of stress.

GRATITUDE

Studies show that gratitude activities for children and young people can be a very powerful tool, with lots of benefits to mental and physical health.

Remember the importance of language – turn sorry into thank you – model gratitude – be thankful out loud.

Gratitude Game

-  Name a person you are thankful for
-  Name a place you are thankful for
-  Name a food you are thankful for
-  Name an object or animal you are thankful for
-  Anything of your choice



Random Acts of Kindness

Draw a picture for someone

Tell someone something you like about them



Gratitude Jar



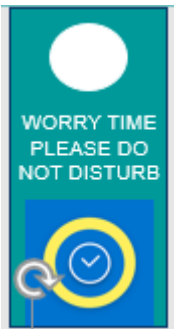
Gratitude Journal



At the end of the day, think of 3 good things



Schedule 'worry time' and stick to it



HOPE & OPTIMISM

Look for exceptions to thinking

- ❖ What went **well** over the past day/week/month?
- ❖ When/Where were you **not** worried about...?
- ❖ When/Where did you feel **less** worried?
- ❖ What helped you to cope? What was **different**?

Help them travel in time

Write a letter to their future self. Sentence starters may include always, never, make sure you, I hope you remember, remember the most important thing in life is...

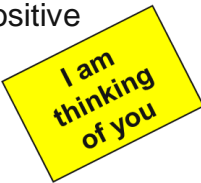
Make time for flow

Absorbing activities – jigsaws, YouTube, colouring

Reframe Thoughts

"It's all too hard" → "What are you finding hard at the moment?"

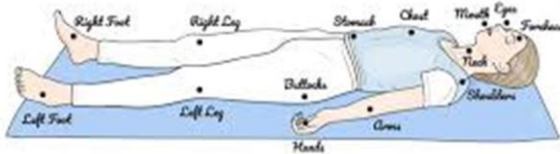
Give/hide positive affirmations



Make notes of things that the young person wants to do in the future. Put them in a box and decide when the box will be opened. Pull one out and do it!



Scrapbooks or treasure chests of happy memories



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Listen to some music together and see how many instruments you can each hear



Feel and count your heartbeat



Look for shapes in the clouds



Glitter shaker



Hand massage



5 things you can see
4 things you can touch
3 things you can hear
2 things you can smell
1 thing you can taste



Visualise yourself in a favourite place

GUIDED MEDITATIONS

Remember to read through first to check they are suitable